

WRITINGS OF ROBERT M MCCHEYNE

by Robert M. Mccheyne

A collection of theological writings, sermons, and essays by Robert M. Mccheyne, compiled for study and devotional reading.

63 Chapters

Table of Contents

1. 00.00. McCheyne, Robert M. - Library
2. 01.1. Bethany
3. 01.2. Introduction: The Tomb of Lazarus
4. 01.3. Chapter I. Reasons for Sickness
5. 01.4. Chapter II. Jesus Loved Martha, Mary and Lazarus
6. 01.5. Chapter III. Christ's Love to Lazarus
7. 01.6. Chapter IV. Martha's Testimony
8. 01.7. Chapter V. Mary and Jesus.
9. 01.8. Chapter VI. Jesus' Prayer
10. 01.9. Chapter VII. The Resurrection.
11. 02.01. Letters to Inquirers and Young Converts
12. 02.02. Prefatory Note
13. 02.03. To A Stranger.
14. 02.04. Letters To A Soul Seeking Jesus.-No. I.
15. 02.05. Letters To A Soul Seeking Jesus.-No. II.
16. 02.06. Letters To A Soul Seeking Jesus.-No. III.
17. 02.07. Letters To A Soul Seeking Jesus.-No. IV.
18. 02.08. Letters To A Soul Seeking Jesus.-No. V.
19. 02.09. Letters To A Soul Seeking Jesus.-No. VI.
20. 02.10. To E. R., Asking Counsel.
21. 02.11. To J.T.
22. 02.12. To A.T.
23. 02.13. To One Awakened.
24. 02.14. To A Soul Inquiring After Jesus.
25. 02.15. To The Same.
26. 02.16. To A Soul That Had Begun To See Christ.
27. 02.17. To One Who Had Lately Taken Up The Cross.
28. 02.18. To M. B.,
29. 02.19. To One Complaining Of The Plagues Of The Heart
30. 02.20. Children Called To Christ
31. 02.21. The Barren Fig-Tree.
32. 02.22. Jehovah Tsidkenu
33. 02.23. I Am Debtor.
34. 02.24. Fountain Of Siloam.
35. 02.25. The Sea Of Galilee.
36. 02.26. To Yonder Side.
37. 02.27. The Child Coming To Jesus.
38. 02.28. On J. T.
39. S. Earnest Heed to the Message

40. S. Electing Love
41. S. Holding Christ Fast
42. S. I Will Pour Water
43. S. Lightning from the East
44. S. The Ark
45. S. The Call of Abraham
46. S. The Conviction of Sin
47. S. The Difficulty and Desirableness of Conversion
48. S. The Free Obedience of Christ
49. S. The Hireling and the True Shepherd
50. S. The Improvement of Affliction
51. S. The Inward Experience of Believers
52. S. The Lord and His Rewards
53. S. The Lord's Dealings with His People
54. S. The Marks and Blessings of Christ's Sheep
55. S. The Pilgrim's Staff
56. S. The Salvation of God
57. S. The Spirit Committed to God
58. S. The True Pleasantness of Being a Child of God
59. S. The True and False Shepherd
60. S. The Word Made Flesh
61. S. Time is Short
62. S. Watching Unto Prayer
63. S. Who Shall Separate Us?

00.00. McCheyne, Robert M. - Library

McCheyne, Robert M. - Library McCheyne, Robert M. - Bethany McCheyne, Robert M. - Letters to Inquirers and Young Converts S. A Right to the Tree of Life

S. Adoption S. Called with an Holy Calling S. Chosen to Salvation S. Christ the Door into the Church S. Christ the Way, the Truth and the Life

S. Conversion S. Earnest Heed to the Message S. Electing Love S. Holding Christ Fast S. I Will Pour Water S. Lightning from the East

S. The Ark S. The Call of Abraham S. The Conviction of Sin S. The Difficulty and Desirableness of Conversion S. The Free Obedience of Christ S. The Hireling and the True Shepherd S. The Improvement of Affliction S. The Inward Experience of Believers S. The Lord and His Rewards S. The Lord's Dealings with His People S. The Marks and Blessings of Christ's Sheep S. The Pilgrim's Staff S. The Salvation of God S. The Spirit Committed to God S. The True and False Shepherd S. The True Pleasantness of Being a Child of God S. The Word Made Flesh S. Time is Short S. Watching Unto Prayer S. Who Shall Separate Us?

01.1. Bethany

BETHANY OR THE SICKNESS, DEATH, AND RESURRECTION OF LAZARUS. BY THE Rev. R. MURRAY M'CHEYNE.

PHILADELPHIA:

PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION, NO. 265 CHESTNUT STREET.

Stereotyped by Wm. S. Ston, No. 19 St. James Street, Philadelphia.

01.2. Introduction: The Tomb of Lazarus

INTRODUCTION.

BETHANY—THE TOMB OF LAZARUS. The following description of modern Bethany is extracted from a very interesting volume, published by the Board of Publication, entitled “Narrative of a Mission of Inquiry to the Jews, from the Church of Scotland, in 1839.” The authors of the volume were the Rev. A. A. Bonar and the Rev. R. M. M’Cheyne.

It seems to form an appropriate Introduction to this little volume.—

[EDITOR OF THE PRESB. BOARD OF PUBLICATION.]

Descending and leaving the Jericho road, we came quite suddenly upon Bethany, called by the Arabs Azarieh, from the name of Lazarus. We found this ever-memorable village to be very like what we could have imagined it. It lies, almost hidden in a small ravine of Mount Olivet, so much so that from the height it cannot be seen. It is embosomed in fruit-trees, especially figs and almonds, olives and pomegranates. The ravine in which it lies is terraced, and the terraces are covered either with fruit-trees or waving grain. There are not many houses, perhaps about twenty, inhabited, but there are many marks of ancient ruins. The house of Lazarus was pointed out to us, a substantial building, probably a tower in former days, and selected to bear the name of the house of Lazarus by traditionists, who did not know how else than by his worldly eminence such a man could draw the special regard of the Lord Jesus. They did not know that Christ loveth freely. The sepulchre called the Tomb of Lazarus attracted more of our attention. We lighted our tapers, and descended twenty-six steps cut in the rock, to a chamber deep in the rock, having several niches for the dead. Whether this be the very tomb where Lazarus lay four days, and which yielded up its dead at the command of Jesus, it is impossible to say. The common objection, that it is too deep, seems entirely groundless, for there is nothing in the narrative to intimate that the tomb was on a level with the ground, and besides, it seems not unlikely that there was another entrance to the tomb farther down the slope. A stronger objection is, that the tomb is in the immediate vicinity of the village, or actually in it; but it is possible that the modern village occupies ground a little different from the ancient one. However this may be, there can be no doubt that this is “Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha, nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off.” How pleasing are all the associations that cluster around it! Perhaps there was no scene in the Holy Land which afforded us more unmingled enjoyment: we even fancied that the curse that everywhere rests so visibly upon the land had fallen more lightly here. In point of situation, nothing could have come up more completely to our previous imagination of the place to which Jesus delighted to retire at evening, from the bustle of the city, and the vexatious of the unbelieving multitudes—sometimes traversing the road by which we had come, and perhaps oftener still coming up the face of the hill by the footpath that passes on the north of Gethsemane. What a peaceful scene! Amidst these trees, or in that grassy field, he may often have been seen in deep communion with the Father. And in sight of this verdant spot it was that he took his last farewell of the disciples, and went upward to resume the deep, unbroken fellowship of “His God, and our

God,” uttering blessings even at the moment when he began to be parted from them. Luke 24:51
And it was here that the two angels stood by them in white apparel, and left us this glorious
message, “The same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner
as ye have seen him go into heaven” Acts 1:11.

01.3. Chapter I. Reasons for Sickness

CHAPTER I.

"Now a certain man was sick named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.) Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, be whom thou lovest is sick. When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby."—John 2:1-4.

"Man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward." Sickness goes round — it spares no family, rich or poor. Sometimes the young, sometimes the old, sometimes those in the strength of their days, are laid down on the bed of sickness. "Remember those that suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body." The reasons why God sends sickness are very various:

1. In some it is sent for the conversion of the soul. Sometimes in health the word does not touch the heart. The world is all. Its gayeties, its pleasures, its admiration, captivate your mind. God sometimes draws you aside into a sick-bed, and shows you the sin of your heart, the vanity of worldly pleasures, and drives the soul to seek a sure resting-place for eternity in Christ. O happy sickness, that draws the soul to Jesus! Job 33:1-33; Psalms 107:1-43.

2. Sometimes it is for the conversion of friends. When the Covenanters went out to battle, they kneeled down on the field and prayed; and this was one of their prayers: "Lord, take the ripe, and spare the green." God sometimes does this in families. He cuts down the praying child, the child that was half ridiculed, half wondered at, that the rest may think, and turn, and pray.

3. Sometimes it is a frown of judgment. When worldly people go long on in a course of sin, against the light of the Bible and the warnings of ministers, God sometimes frowns upon them, and they wither suddenly. "He, that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." Proverbs 29:1. "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." 1 Corinthians 11:30.

4. Another case is now before us—that of a child of God sick, that Christ might be glorified in him.

I. The case — the person: "A certain man was sick named Lazarus."

Lazarus was evidently a child of God, and yet Lazarus was sick. How he had come by his grace we are not told. His name is not mentioned before. If we may be allowed to guess, it seems probable that Mary was the first in the family who knew the Lord (Luke 10:1-42) then perhaps Martha left her "much serving" to come also and sit at Jesus' feet; and both prevailed on their brother Lazarus to come also. At all events he was a child of God. He was in a godly family. All the house were children of God — one in nature and one in grace. Happy family at Bethany, going hand in hand to glory! Yet here the hand of sickness entered in — Lazarus was sick. He was peculiarly loved by Christ: "He whom thou lovest." "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." Like John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, so Jesus had a

peculiar love for Lazarus. I cannot tell you why. He was a sinner, like other men; but perhaps when Jesus washed and renewed him, He gave him more of his own likeness than other believers. One thing is certain—Jesus loved him, and yet Lazarus was sick.

1. Learn not to judge others because of affliction. Job's three friends tried to show him that he must be a hypocrite and a bad man, because God afflicted him. They did not know that God afflicts his own dear children. Lazarus was sick; and the beggar Lazarus was full of sores; and Hezekiah was sick, even unto death; and yet all were peculiarly dear to Jesus.

2. God's children should not doubt his love when he afflicts. Christ loved Lazarus peculiarly, and yet he afflicted him very sore. A surgeon never bends his eye so tenderly upon his patient, as when he is putting in the lancet, or probing the wound to the very bottom. And so with Christ; he bends his eye most tenderly over his own at the time he is afflicting them. Do not doubt the holy love of Jesus to your soul when he is laying a heavy hand upon you. Jesus did not love Lazarus less when he afflicted him, but rather more — "even as a father correcteth a son in whom he delighteth." Proverbs 3:12. A goldsmith when he casts gold into the furnace looks after it.

II. The place: "Of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha."

Bethany is a sweet retired village, about two miles from Jerusalem, in a ravine at the back of the Mount of Olives. It is at this day embosomed in fig-trees, and almonde trees, and pomegranates. But it had a greater loveliness still in the eyes of Christ— it was "the town of Mary and her sister Martha." Probably the worldly people in Jerusalem knew Bethany by its being the town of some rich Pharisee who had his country villa there — or some luxurious noble, who called the lands after his own name; but Jesus knew it only as "the town of Mary and her sister Martha." Probably they lived in a humble cottage, under the shade of a fig-tree; but that cottage was dear to Christ. Often, as He came over the Mount of Olives and drew near, the light in that cottage window gladdened His heart. Often He sat beneath their fig-tree telling them the things of the kingdom of God. His Father loved that dwelling; for these were justified ones. And angels knew it well; for night and day they ministered there to three heirs of salvation. No wonder He called the place "the town of Mary and her sister Martha." That was its name in heaven. So is it still. When worldly people think of our town, they call it the town of some rich merchant—some leading man in public matters—some great politician, who makes a dash as a friend of the people; not the town of our Marthas and Marys. Perhaps some poor garret where an eminent child of God dwells, gives this town its name and interest in the presence of Jesus.

Dear believers, how great the love of Christ is to you! He knows the town where you live—the house where you dwell — the room where you pray. Often he stands at the door — often he puts in his hand at the hole of the door: "I have graven thee on the palms of my hands: thy walls are continually before me." Like a bridegroom loving the place where his bride dwells, so Christ often says: There they dwell for whom I died. Learn to be like Christ in this. When a merchant looks at a map of the world, his eye turns to those places where his ships are sailing; when a soldier, he looks to the traces of ancient battle-fields and fortified towns; but a believer should be like Jesus—he should love the spots where believers dwell.

III. The message.

1. They “sent unto him.” This seems to have been their very first recourse when the sickness came on — “his sisters sent unto Jesus.” They did not think a bodily trouble beneath his notice. True, He had taught them that “one thing was needful,” and Mary had chosen that good part which could not be taken from her; yet they knew well that Jesus did not despise the body. They knew that He had a heart to bleed for every kind of grief; and therefore they sent to tell Jesus. This is what you should do: “Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.” Psalm 1:15. Remember there is no grief too great to carry to him, and none too small: “In everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, make your requests known unto God.” “Cast thy burden on the Lord.” Whatever it be, take it to Jesus. Some trust Christ with their soul, but not with their body — with their salvation, but not with their health. He loves to be sent for in our smallest troubles.

2. The argument: “He whom thou lovest is sick.” If a worldly person had been sending to Christ, he would have sent a very different argument. He would have said: He who loves thee is sick. Here is one who has believed on thy name. Here is one that has confessed thee before the world—suffered reproach and scorn for thy sake. Martha and Mary knew better how to plead with Jesus. The only argument was in Jesus’ breast: “He whom thou lovest is sick.” (1.) He loved him with an electing love. Freely from all eternity Jesus loved him. (2.) With a drawing love. He drew him from under wrath — from serving sin. (3.) With a pardoning love. He drew him to himself, and blotted out all his sin. (4.) With an upholding love. “Who could hold me up but thou?” He for whom thou diedst—he whom thou hast chosen, washed, and kept till now—” he whom thou lovest is sick.”

Learn thus to plead with Christ, dear believers. Often you do not receive, because you do not ask aright: “Ye ask, and receive not because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.” Often you ask proudly, as if you were somebody; so that if Christ were to grant it, he would only be fattening your lusts. Learn to lie in the dust, and plead only his own free love. Thou hast loved the for no good thing in me:—

“Chosen, not for good in me;

Wakened up from wrath to flee;

Hidden in the Saviour’s side; By the Spirit sanctified.” Do not deny thy love. “Have respect unto the work of thine own hands.”

3. A holy delicacy in prayer. They lay the object at His feet, and leave it there. They do not say: Come and heal him; come quickly, Lord. They know His love—they believe His wisdom. They leave the case in his hands: “Lord, he whom thou lovest is sick.” “They cast them down at Jesus’ feet, and he healed them.” Matthew 15:30. They did not plead, but let their misery plead for them. “Let your request be made known unto God.” Php 4:6.

Learn that urgency in prayer does not so much consist in vehement pleading, as in vehement believing. He that believes most the love and power of Jesus, will obtain most in prayer. Indeed the Bible does not forbid you using all arguments, and asking for express gifts, such as healing for sick friends. “My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live.” Mark 5:23. “Lord! am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.” Matthew

8:8. Still there is a holy delicacy in prayer, which some believers know how to use. Like these two sisters, lay the object at his feet, saying: "Lord, he whom thou lovest is sick."

IV. The answer.

1. A word of promise: "This sickness is not unto death." This was an immediate answer to prayer. He did not come—He did not heal; but He sent them a word enough to make them happy: "This sickness is not unto death." Away the messenger ran, crossed the Jordan, and before sunset perhaps he enters breathless the village of Bethany. With anxious faces the sisters run out to hear what news of Jesus. Good news! "This sickness is not unto death!" Sweet promise!— the hearts of the sisters are comforted, and no doubt they tell their joy to the dying man. But he gets weaker and weaker; and as they look through their tears at his pale cheek, they begin almost to waver in their faith. But Jesus said it, and Jesus cannot lie: if it were not so, He would have told us. "This sickness is not unto death." At last Lazarus breathes his latest sigh beside his weeping sisters. His eye is dim — his cheek is cold — he is dead; and yet Jesus said: "Not unto death!" The friends assemble, to carry the body to the rocky sepulchre; and as the sisters turn away from the tomb, their faith dies—their hearts sink into utter gloom! What could he mean by saying, "not unto death?"

Learn to trust to Christ's word, whatever sight may say. We live in dark times. Every day the clouds are becoming heavier and more lowering. The enemies of the Sabbath are raging. The enemies of the Church are becoming more desperate. The cause of Christ is everywhere threatened. But we have a sweet word of promise: "This sickness is not unto death." Darker times are coming yet. The clouds will break and deluge our country soon with a flood of infidelity, and many will be like Mary; heart-broken. Has the Lord's word failed? No, never! "This sickness is not unto death." The dry bones of Israel shall live. Popery shall sink like a mill-stone—widowhood and loss of children shall come to her in one day. The kings of Tarshish and the isles shall bow their knee to Jesus. Jesus shall reign till all his enemies are put under His feet, and the whole world shall soon enjoy a real Sabbath.

2. The explanation: "But for the glory of Gal, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." Some might ask, Why, then, was Lazarus sick? Answer; "For the glory of God." Christ was thereby in an eminent manner made known. (1.) His amazing love to His own was seen, when He wept at the grave. (2.) His power to raise the dead. He was shown to be the resurrection and the life when he cried, "Lazarus, come forth." Christ was more glorified far than if Lazarus had not been sick and died.

(1.) So in all the sufferings of God's people. Sometimes a child of God says: Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? I will teach—preach—do great things for thee. Sometimes the answer is: Thou shalt suffer for my sake.

(2.) It shows the power of Christ's blood—when it gives peace in an hour of trouble—when it can make happy in sickness, poverty, persecution, and death. Do not be surprised if you suffer, but glorify God.

(3.) It brings out graces that cannot be seen in a time of health. It is the treading of the grapes that brings out the sweet juices of the vine; so it is affliction that draws forth submission, weanedness from the world, and complete rest in God. Use afflictions while you have them.

01.4. Chapter II. Jesus Loved Martha, Mary and Lazarus

CHAPTER II

"Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. When He had heard therefore that he was sick, He abode two days still in the same place where He was. Then after that saith He to his disciples, Let us go into Judea again. His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again? Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him." - John 11:5-10.

Jesus loved Martha, and Mary, and Lazarus.

1. These are the words John. He knew what was in the heart of Christ, for the Holy Spirit taught him what to write, and he leaned upon Jesus' bosom, and knew the deepest secrets of Jesus' heart. This, then, is John's testimony; "Jesus loved Martha, and Mary, and Lazarus." You remember they had sent this message to Jesus: "He whom thou lovest is sick." Some would have said, that was a presumptuous message to send. How did they know that Lazarus was really converted, that Jesus really loved him? But here you see John puts his seal upon their testimony. It was really true, and no presumption in it: "Jesus loved Martha, and Mary, and Lazarus."

How is it saints know when Jesus loves them? Answer; Christ has ways of telling his own love peculiar to himself. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." How ridiculous is it to think that Christ cannot make known His love to the soul! I shall mention one way—By drawing the soul to Himself: "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." Jeremiah 31:3. "Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness; yea, I sware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine." Ezekiel 16:8. "No man can come unto me except the Father draw him." John 6:44. Now when the Lord Jesus draws near to a dead, carnal sinner, and reveals to him a glimpse of his own beauty — of his face fairer than the sons of men — of his precious blood — of the room that there is under his wings; and when the soul is drawn away from its old sins, old ways — away from its deadness, darkness, and worldliness, and is persuaded to forsake all, and flow toward the Lord Jesus — then that soul is made to taste the peace of believing, and is made to know that Jesus loves him. Thus Lazarus knew that Christ loved him. I was a worldly, careless man — I mocked at my sisters when they were so careful to entertain the Lamb of God — I often was angry with them; but one day he came and showed me such an excellence in the way of salvation by him—he drew me, and now I know that Jesus has loved me. Do you know that Christ loves you? Have you this love-token, that He has drawn you to leave all and follow Him — to leave your self-righteousness, to leave your sins, to leave your worldly companions for Christ — to let all go that interferes with Christ? Then you have a good token that he has loved you.

2. Jesus loved all the house. It seems highly probable that there was a great difference among the family—some of them were much more enlightened than others—some were much nearer Christ and some more like Christ, than others; yet Jesus loved them all. It would seem that Mary was the most heavenly-minded of the family. Probably she was brought first to know and love the Lord Jesus Christ. She sat at the feet of Christ, when Martha was cumbered about much serving. She was also evidently more humbled under this trying dispensation than her sister was; for it is said: "She fell down at his feet" She seems also to have been filled with livelier gratitude; for it was she that took a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Christ, and wiped his feet with her hair. She did what she could. She seems to have been a tery eminent believer—very full of love, and of a teachable, meek, quiet spirit. And yet Jesus loved them all—Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. Every one that is in Christ is beloved by Christ—even weak members.

Good news for weak disciples. You are very apt to say: I am not a Paul, nor a John, nor a Mary. I fear Jesus will not care for me. Answer: He loved Martha, and Mary, and Lazarus. He loves the weakest of those for whom he died. Just as a mother loves all her children, even those that are weak and sickly; so Christ cares for those who are weak in the faith—who have many doubts and fears—who have heavy burdens and temptations. Be like Christ in this. "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations"—"We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." Romans 14:1; Romans 4:1. There is much of an opposite spirit, I fear, amongst us. I fear that you love our Marys, and Pauls, and Johns—you highly esteem those that are evidently pillars; but can you condescend to men of low estate? Learn to stoop low, and to be gentle and kind to the feeble. Do not speak evil of them—do not make their blemishes the subject of your common talk. Cover their faults. Assist them by counsel, and pray for them.

II. Christ's delay: "When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was."

Here seems a contradiction—Jesus loved them, and yet abode two days. You would have expected the very reverse; Jesus loved them, and therefore made no delay, but hastened to Bethany. This is the way with man's love. Human love will not brook delay. When you love any one tenderly, and hear that he is sick, you run to see him, and to help him. These were two important days in the cottage of Bethany. The messenger had returned, saying: "This sickness is not unto death." They knew that Jesus loved them, and loved their brother tenderly; and therefore they expected him to come every hour. Martha, perhaps, would begin to be uneasy, saying, "Why does he tarry? why is he so long in coming? can anything have kept him?" "Do not fret," Mary would say. "You know that he loves Lazarus, and he loves us; and you know he is true, and he said: 'This sickness is not unto death.'" The dying man grew weaker, and at length breathed his last sigh into their affectionate bosoms. Both the sisters were overwhelmed: He loved us, and yet he tarried two days. So with the woman of Syrophenicia.

Such are Christ's dealings with his own still. Although He loves, He sometimes on that very account tarries. Do not be surprised, and do not fret.

Reasons of delay :—

1. Because He is God. He sees the end from the beginning. Known unto Him are all his works from the foundation of the world. Although absent in the body, He was present in the sick man's room at Bethany. He saw every change on his pale features, and heard every gentle sigh. Every tear that stole down the cheek of Mary He observed, put into His bottle, and wrote in His book. He saw when Lazarus died. But the future was before Him also. He knew what He would do—that the grave would yield up its dead, and that he would soon turn their weeping into songs of rejoicing. Therefore he stayed where he was, just because he was God. So, when Christ delays to help his saints now, you think this is a great mystery—you cannot explain it; but Jesus sees the end from the beginning. Be still, and know that Christ is God.

2. To increase their faith. First of all he gave them out a promise to hold by. He sent word by their messenger: "This sickness is not unto death." This was an easy and simple word for them to hold by; but, ah! it was sorely tried. When he got worse and worse, they clung to the promise with a trembling heart; when he died, their faith died too. They knew not what to think. And yet Christ's word was true, and thus their faith was increased ever after. They were taught to believe the word of Christ, even when all outward circumstances were against them. So Matthew 8:18. One evening Christ gave commandment on the Sea of Galilee to depart to "the other side;" and as they sailed he fell asleep. Here was a simple word of promise to hold by in the storm. But when the storm came down, and the waves covered the ship, they cried, "Master, save us; we perish." And he said: "Where is your faith?" By that trial the faith of the disciples was greatly increased ever after. So it is with all trials of faith. When God gives a promise, He always tries our faith. Just as the roots of trees take firmer hold when they are contending with the wind; so faith takes a firmer hold when it struggles with adverse appearances.

3. To make His help shine brighter. Had Christ come at the first and healed their brother, we never would have known the love that showed itself at the grave of Lazarus—we never would have known the power of the great Redeemer in raising up from the grave. These bright forthshinings of the glory of Christ would have been lost to the Church and to the world. Therefore it was good that he stayed away for two days. Thus the honour of his name was spread far and wide. The Son of God was glorified. "This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise." This is God's great end in all his dealings with his people; that He may be seen. For this reason He destroyed the Egyptians: "That the Egyptians may know that I am the Lord."

If Christ seems to tarry past the time He promised, wait for Him; for He will come, and will not tarry. He has good reason for it, whether you can see it or not. And never forget that He loves, even when He tarries. He loved the Syrophenician even when he answered her not a word.

III. Christ's determination: "After that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judea again."

1. The time: "After that." After the two days were over. Christ waits a certain time without helping his own, but no longer. Christ waits a certain time with the wicked before destroying them. He waited till the cup of the Amorites was full, before he destroyed them. He waited on the fig-tree a certain time. If it does not bear fruit, then, "after that, thou shalt cut it down." O, wicked man! you have a certain measure to fill—when that is filled, you will sink immediately into hell. When the sand has run, you will be cast away. So Christ has his set time for coming to his own. "After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight." Hosea 6:2.

(1.) In conversion: “Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.” 1 Peter 5:6. When God awakens a soul by the mighty power of his Spirit, he takes his own time and way of bringing the soul to peace. Often the sinner thinks it very hard that Christ should be so long of coming; often he begins to despair, and to think there is something peculiar in his case. Remember! Wait on the Lord! It is good to wait for Christ.

(2.) In answering prayer. When we ask for something agreeable to God's will, and in the name of Christ, we know that we have the petitions which we desire of him. But the time he keeps in his own power. God is very sovereign in the time of his answers. When Martha and Mary sent their petition to Christ, he gave them an immediate promise; but the answer was not when they expected. So Christ frequently gives us the desires of our heart, though not at the peculiar time we desired, but a better time. Do not be weary in putting up prayers—say for the conversion of a friend. They may be answered when you are in the dust. Hold on to pray. He will answer in the best time. “Be not weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”

(3.) In his own second glorious coming. Christ said to the Church long ago: “Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” And still the time is prolonged. The Bridegroom seems to tarry; but he will come at the due time. He waits for infinitely wise reasons; and the moment that he should come, the heavens shall open, and he will appear.

2. The objection. The objection was, that it was dangerous to him and to them, because the Jews had sought to stone him before. Another time Peter made objection to Christ, saying: “Be it far from thee, Lord. This shall not be unto thee.” But he turned and said unto Peter, “Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me, for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.” How selfish are even godly men! The disciples did not care for the distress of Martha and Mary. They did not care for the pain of their friend Lazarus. They were afraid of being stoned, and that made them forget the case of the afflicted family. There is no root deeper in the bosom than selfishness. Watch and pray against it. Even the godly will sometimes oppose you in what is good and right. Here, when Christ proposed that they should go into Judea again, the disciples opposed it. They were astonished at such a proposal. They, as it were, reprov'd Him for it. Think it not strange, dear brethren, if you are opposed by those who are children of God, especially if it be something in which you are called to suffer.

3. Christ's answer. The path of duty Christ here compares to walking in the daylight. “If a man walk in the day, he stumbleth not.” As long as a man has got a good conscience, and the smile and presence of God, he is like one walking in the daytime; he plants his foot firmly and boldly forward. But if a man shrink from the call of God, through fear of man, and at the call of worldly prudence, he is like one walking in darkness: “He stumbleth, because there is no light.”

Oh, that you who are believers would be persuaded to follow Jesus fearlessly wherever he calls you! If you are a believer, you will often be tempted to shrink back. The path of a Christian is narrow, and often difficult. But what have you to fear? Have you the blood of Christ upon your conscience, and the presence of God with your soul? Are there not twelve hours in the day? Are we not all immortal till our work is done?

01.5. Chapter III. Christ's Love to Lazarus

CHAPTER III.

"These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him. Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him."—John 11:11-16.

I. Christ's love to a dead Lazarus.

1. He calls him friend. An eminent infidel used to say that neither patriotism nor friendship was taught in the Bible. He only proved that he neither knew nor understood the Bible. How different the sentiment of the Christian poet, who says, "The noblest friendship ever shown, The Saviour's history makes known."

Ah! it is an amazing truth that Jehovah-Jesus came and made friends of such worms as we are. True friendship consists in mutual confidence and mutual sacrifices.

Thus God dealt with Enoch: "Enoch walked with God three hundred years." Enoch told all to God, and God told all to him. Blessed friendship—between Jehovah and a worm! So God treated Abraham. Three times in the Bible he is called "the friend of God." 2 Chronicles 20:7; Isaiah 41:8; James 2:23. "He raised up the righteous man from the East, and called him to his foot." The God of glory appeared unto Abraham, and we find God saying, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" Genesis 18:17. So God dealt with Moses: "The Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And God said to him, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." Exodus 33:11; Exodus 33:14. "And when Moses went in before the Lord to speak with him, he took the veil off." Exodus 34:35. Thus did Christ deal with his disciples. Though He was the holy Lamb of God, yet He says: "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." John 15:15. He admitted them to the closest fellowship; so that one leaned on his breast at supper, and another washed his feet with ointment. He told them freely all that he had learned in the bosom of his Father—all that they were able to bear; of the Father's glory—the Father's love. Thus he dealt with Lazarus:

"Our friend Lazarus." Often, no doubt, they had sat beneath the spreading fig-tree at the cottage of Bethany, and Christ had opened up to them the glories of an eternal world. This is what you are invited to, dear friends—to become the friends of Jesus. When men choose friends, they generally choose the rich, or the wise, or the witty—they ask those that will invite them back. Not so with Christ. He chooses the poor, the foolish, babes, and makes them friends—those of whom the world is ashamed. The world changes friends. In the world, if a rich friend was poor—if overtaken by a sudden failure, and plunged in deepest poverty—friends, like butterflies in the rain, fly quickly

home—they look cold and strange, as if they did not see you. Not so Jesus, the friend that sticketh closer than a brother. A true friend does not hide any thing from another which it would be good for him to know. Neither does Christ: "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?"

2. Even when dead: "Our friend Lazarus." Few people remember the dead. They are "a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again"—"The place that knows them shall know them no more for ever:" In some of the countries where I have been, there are immense burying-grounds where cities have been, but where not a living being now remains. There is not one to remember their name, or to shed a tear over their memory. Even among yourselves, how soon are the dead forgotten! Although you loved them well when living—"lovely and pleasant in their lives;" yet when they are out of sight, they are soon out of mind. But Christ's dead are never forgotten. There is one faithful Brother, who keeps in mind the sleeping dust of all his brothers and sisters. Death makes no change in the love of Christ—death cannot separate us from his love—death does not take us off his breastplate. "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth."

Ah, my friends! this is to take the sting away from death. You will, no doubt, be forgotten by the world; if you are Christ's, they never loved you, and will be glad when you are gone. Living sermons are no pleasant objects in the world's eye. They will be glad when you are under the sod. Even believers will forget you. Man is a frail creature, and memory is fading. But Christ never will forget you. He that said, "My faithful martyr Antipas!" when all the world had forgotten him, remembers all his sleeping saints, and will bring them with him.

II. The mistake. In the last chapter we had a specimen of the selfishness of the disciples—here of their stupidity. They were beloved disciples—had left all to follow Christ—sincerely believed his word, and loved his person; and yet what remains of blindness in the understanding! "If he sleep, he shall do well."

1. To sleep, was the common expression for the death of saints in the Old Testament. Thus God said to Moses: "Thou shalt sleep with thy fathers." And to Daniel: "Many of those that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake." To King David: "Thou shalt sleep with thy fathers." 2 Samuel 7:12. "Now shall I sleep in the dust." Job 7:21. "Lest I sleep the sleep of death." Psalms 13:3. Surely, if they had thought a little, they might have found the meaning!

2. What would have been the use of going to awake him out of a refreshing sleep? Did they think so lightly of their Master, as that he would run into personal danger to awaken a sleeping man? Do not wonder when disciples mistake the meaning of Christ's words. They have done so before, and may do it again. Every gracious man is not an infallible man. Learn to search patiently into the meaning of His words, by comparing Scripture with Scripture, and especially going to Him for light. When you are reading in a dark room, and come to a difficult part, you take it to the window to get more light. So take your Bibles to Christ.

What was the cause of their mistake? Answer: Fear. They did not want to go into Judea again. They were afraid of being stoned. They saw their Master was bent upon going, and they wanted to dissuade him. They misunderstood his words, because of the averseness of their hearts to his will. This is the great reason of all blindness in divine things: "Through the blindness of their hearts"—"If any man will do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine." The reason why many of you do not understand your lost condition, is not that it is not taught in the Bible, not that the

words are difficult, (the Bible is a plain, simple book) but it is that you do not wish to be convinced of sin—you do not want your fine dreams of your own goodness and safety to be dashed to pieces. The reason why many of you do not understand the way of forgiveness, is that you do not like it—your heart is averse from God’s way—you cannot bear to have all your righteousness accounted rags, and to be beholden entirely to the righteousness of One. The reason why many saints among you cannot see your rule of duty plain, is that you are averse from the duty. You want to have your own way, and you cannot understand the Scriptures that contradict it. This was the case with the apostles. This is frequently the case in entering into marriage, or a servant fixing on a place. When once a strong desire is formed in the heart, it blinds the mind to the Scriptures. O, pray for a pure heart, that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will—that you may walk worthy of the Lord, to all pleasing!

III. The explanation. Christ here explains two things,—1. His words; and, 2. His absence.

1. Jesus said plainly, “Lazarus is dead!” His disciples had shown great selfishness— great blindness of heart—great stupidity; and yet he was not angry, neither did he turn away. But he said plainly, “Lazarus is dead.” When he had been teaching them many things, he said: “Have ye understood all these things?” Matthew 13:51. Another time, when he had been telling them of the Father’s house, Thomas said: “Lord, we know not whither thou goest.” With the same admirable patience and gentleness he said: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” He “can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way.” Perhaps some of you feel dead and ignorant—you need not keep away from Christ on that account. Take your blind eyes to him, that he may give you sight. He wants you to understand his way and his will.

2. He explains his absence: “I am glad I was not there.” The objection would immediately arise in the breast of his disciples; If Lazarus be dead, why did our Master stay these two days? Therefore he explains that it was for their sakes. Had Christ been there, he felt that he must have healed Lazams. Had he been there, Lazarus had not died. Christ could not have stood in the cottage of Bethany, and looked on the face of his dying friend, and seen the silent tears of Mary, and heard the imploring words of Martha without granting their desire. Therefore he says: “I am glad I was not there.” Ah! learn the amazing love of Christ to his own. He cannot deny their prayer. When Moses was pleading with God, God said: “Let me alone.” God could not destroy Israel so long as Moses pleaded for them. So God had to tell Jeremiah, “Pray not for this people.” And so when God wants to destroy, he shuts up his saints that they cannot pray. Jesus kept away, that he might not be overcome by their prayer. The uplifted hand of a believing Mary is too much for Jesus to resist. The tearful eye of an earnest believer is “terrible as an army with banners.” “Turn away thine eye from me, for thou hast overcome me.” But why was he not there? “For your sakes, to the intent ye may believe.” In the last chapter, we saw he delayed for the sake of the cottagers at Bethany; here is another reason—“For your sakes.” “All things are for your sakes.” 2 Corinthians 4:15. For the sake of believers this world was created—the sun made to rule the day, and the moon to rule the night. Every shining star was made for them. All are kept in being for your sakes. Winds rise and fall—waves roar and are still —seasons revolve—seed-time and harvest, day and night, all for your sakes. “All things are yours.” All events are for your sakes. Kingdoms rise and fall, to save God’s people. Nations are his rod—his saw and axe to hew out a way for the chariot of the everlasting Gospel; even as Hiram’s hewers in Lebanon, and the Gibeonite drawers of water were

building up the temple of God. The enemies of the Church are only a rod in God's hand. He will do his purpose with them—then break the rod in two, and cast it away. Specially all the providences of believing families are for your sakes. When Christ is dealing with a believing family, you say, That is no matter of mine—what have I to do with it? Ah, truly if you are of the world, you have no part or lot in it! But if you are Christ's, it is for your sake, to the intent that ye may believe. The dealings of Christ with believing families are very instructive, his afflictions and his comforts—his way. O learn to bear one another's burdens, to see more of Christ's hand among you, to the intent ye may believe!

"There's not a plant that grows below But makes his glory known; And thunders roll and tempests blow By order from his throne."

IV. The zealous disciple: What voice is that? It is Thomas—unbelieving Thomas.

1. True love to Christ here. He saw that Christ was determined to go—he saw the danger—he counted the cost. "Well," says he, "Let us go also." Strange, that following the Lamb of God should endanger our very life; yet in how many ages of the Church it has been so! "The time will come when whosoever killeth you, shall think that he doeth God service." What a cloud of witnesses has Scotland seen, all saying, like Thomas, "Let us go and die with him!" Ah, we do not know the value of Christ, if we will not cleave to him unto death!

2. True zeal toward others: "Let us go." He does not say, like Peter, "I am ready to go with thee;" but, "Let us go." Whenever we clearly apprehend the path of duty, we should persuade others to come along with us. It is not enough for a believer to go in the way himself—you must say, "Let us go." Se Israel: "Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord." Jeremiah 1:4. So Moses to Hobab: "Come thou with us." So the converted Gentiles: "O house of Israel, come ye and let us walk in the light of the Lord." A Christian should be like a river that fertilizes while it runs, carrying ships, and all that floats upon its bosom, along with it to the ocean.

Yet sin mingled with it. Jesus spoke not of dying; on the contrary, he spoke of "not stumbling." But Thomas was full of unbelief, and full of fear. He heeded not the word of Christ. Learn how much sin and weakness mingles with our love and zeal, and what infinite need we have of one who bears the iniquity of our holy things.

01.6. Chapter IV. Martha's Testimony

CHAPTER IV.

"Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already. Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off: And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world." - John 11:17-27.

I. Christ orders all events for His own glory. One day, when Christ had healed a man deaf and dumb, the multitude cried: "He hath done all things well." Ah! this is true indeed of the Lord Jesus Christ. "He is head over all things to the Church." He that died to redeem us from hell, lives to make all things work together for our good. "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds. He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names." Psalms 147:3-4. The same hand that was nailed to the cross for us, brings out Arcturus and the Pleiades, and guides the sun in his journey—and all for us. A striking example of this we have now before us.

1. In the time: "He found that he had lain in the grave four days already." We saw that when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he remained two days in the same place where he was. Then slowly and calmly he left the secluded glens of Mount Gilead, and, crossing the Jordan, came on the fourth day to the village of Bethany. The shady ravines of Mount Olivet wore an aspect of gloom. The village was silent and still, and perhaps around the cottage door of Lazarus a group of mourners sat upon the ground. Jesus and the disciples halted a little way from the village, as if unwilling to break in upon the scene of deep sorrow. At length a passing villager tells them that Lazarus is dead, and this is the fourth day he has been lying in the cold rocky tomb. The disciples looked at one another, and wondered. Four days dead! Why did our Master tarry? Why did we lose two days on the other side of Jordan? The sisters also thought Jesus came too late. "If thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." The Jews also wondered. Yet Jesus came at the right time. Had he come later, the sensation would have passed away—the death of Lazarus would have been forgotten in the whirl of the world. We soon forget the dead. Had he come sooner, the death of Lazarus would not have been known. He came in due time. He orders all things for his glory—he doeth all things well.

2. In the place: "Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem." The place of this wonder of grace was also chosen with infinite skill. Bethany was a retired village, in a shady, secluded ravine entirely removed from the bustle and noise of the city; so that there was opportunity for Christ to exhibit

those tender emotions of pity and love—weeping and groaning—which he could not have done in the bustle of a crowded city. And yet Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs, or two miles, so that many Jews were present as witnesses; and the news of it was carried in a few hours to the capital, and spread over all Jerusalem and Judea. Had it been done in a corner, men would have derided and denied it. But it was done within half an hour's walk of Jerusalem, so that all might ascertain its reality. Christ chooses the place where he does his wonders wisely and well—all to show forth his own glorious name. He chooses the spot where to break the alabaster box, so that the ointment may be most widely diffused.

3. In the witnesses: "Many of the Jews." From verses 45 and 46, we learn that the company were far from being all friends of Christ. Perhaps they would not have come if they had known Christ was to be there. But they were friends of Martha and Mary, and though they did not like their serious ways, yet in an hour of affliction they could not but visit them, to give them such comfort as they were able. This is the way of the world. There is much natural kindness remaining in the bosom even of worldly men. Christ knew this, and therefore chose this very time to arrive. Ah, friends, He doeth all things well. You often wonder, often murmur, at the way that He takes you. Learn that if you are His, He will make all things work together for your good, and His own glory. Learn to trust Him, then, in the dark—in the darkest frowns of providence—in the most painful delays. Learn to wait upon Him. "It is good for a man both to hope and quietly wait for the salvation of God." He is good to the soul that waiteth for Him.

II. The weak believer. Jesus and his disciples had halted a little way from the village, wider the shade of the trees; but word soon came to the ear of Martha that the Saviour was come. She immediately hastened to meet him. Ah! who can tell what love and compassion must have appeared in his eye—what holy calmness on his brow— what tenderness upon his lips? He was the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the valleys. Yet Martha is not hushed at the sight. She bursts out into this impassioned cry; "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." Observe,

1. Her presumption. "If thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." How did she know this? What promise of the Bible could she name upon which this expectation was grounded? God had promised that his own shall never want bread—any good thing; that he will supply all their need—that they shall never perish—that he will be with them in time of trouble; but nowhere has he promised that they shall not die. On the contrary, "Israel must die." David prays: "Make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days." And Job: "I would not live alway."

2. Her limiting of Christ: "If thou hadst been here." Why so? Am I a God at hand, and not afar off? "Is my hand shortened at all, and have I no power to redeem?" She forgot the centurion of Capernaum: "I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof, but speak the word only." Matthew 8:8. She forgot the nobleman's son at Capernaum: "Sir, come down, ere my child die." "Go thy way, thy son liveth." John 4:46. Her grief and anguish kept her from calmly remembering the works and power of Jesus.

3. Her unbelief: "But I know that even now." This was faith, and yet unbelief. She believed something, but not all, concerning Jesus. She believed in him as an advocate and intercessor, but not that all things were given into his hands—that he is Lord of all—head over all things to the Church. Her grief, and confusion, and darkness, hid many things from her.

4. And yet she came to Jesus. Though grieved, she was not offended; she did not keep away from him. She poured out all her grief, her darkness, and complaint, into his bosom. This is just the picture of a weak believer—much of nature and little grace—many questionings of Christ's love and power, and yet carrying your complaints only to him. It was not to the Jews Martha told her grief, it was not to the disciples—it was to Jesus himself.

Learn that afflicting time is trying time. Affliction is like the furnace—it discovers the dross as well as the gold. Had all things gone on smoothly at Bethany, Martha and Mary had never known their sin and weakness; but now the furnace brought out the dross.

Learn to guard against unbelief. Guard against presumption—making a Bible-promise for yourself, and leaning upon a word God has never spoken. Guard against prescribing your way to Christ, and limiting him in his dealings. Guard against unbelief, believing only part of God's testimony. "O foolish, and slow of heart to believe all that God hath spoken." Remember, whatever your darkness may be, to carry your complaint to Jesus himself.

III. Jesus reveals himself. Not a feature of Christ's face was ruffled by the passionate cry of Martha. He was not angry, and did not turn away, but opened up more of himself than he had ever done. "Thy brother shall rise again." He comforts her by the assurance that her brother shall rise again, and then leads her to see that all the spring and source of that is in himself. Two things he shows in himself.

1. I am the resurrection: "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." Christ here reveals himself as the Head of all dead believers. (1.) He shows what he is: I am the author or spring of all resurrection. The fountain of the resurrection is in my hand. It is my voice that shall call forth the sleeping dust of all my saints. It is my hand that shall gather their dust, and fashion it like my own glorious body. All this is mine. At my command Enoch was translated. I also carried away Elijah. I will raise the myriads of sleeping believers also. Believest thou this? Believest thou that he who has sat so often under thy roof and fig-tree—at thy table—that he is the resurrection? (2.) He shows the certainty that all dead believers shall live; "He that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall be live." If I am the resurrection, then surely I will raise every one for whom I died. I will not lose one of them.

Here is comfort for those of you who, like Martha, weep over the believing dead. Thy brother shall rise again. Jesus, who died for them, is the Resurrection. That great work of gathering and raising their scattered dust is committed to Jesus. "They shall be mine, in that day when I shall make up my jewels." Oh, what unspeakable comfort it will be to be raised from the grave by Jesus! If it were an angel's voice we might wish to lie still; but when the voice of our Beloved calls, how gladly shall we arise!

"Sweet thought to me!

I shall arise, And with these eyes My Saviour see."

Oh, what unspeakable terror it will give to you that are Christless, to hear the voice of Jesus breaking the long silence of the tomb!

2. I am the life: "He that liveth and believeth in me shall never die." Christ here reveals himself as the Head of all living believers. (1.) He directs her eye to himself: "I am the life." This name is

frequently applied to the Lord Jesus: "In him was life, and the life was the light of men." John 1:4. "For the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us."—"When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." Colossians 3:4. And therefore Jesus says: "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." In my hand is the source of all natural, spiritual, and eternal life. Every thing that lives derives its life from me. Every living soul—every drop of living water flows from my hand. I begin—I carry on—I give eternal life. (2.) He shows the happy consequence to all living believers. "They shall never die." Their life suffers no interruption by the death of the body. Death has no power to quench the vital flame in the believer's soul. If I be the life, I will keep all mine, even in the valley of the shadow of death. They shall never perish. Believest thou this?

Here is comfort to those of you who, like Martha, tremble at the sight of death. Ah! it is a ghastly sight when it comes—the terror of kings, and the king of terrors. There is something dreadful in the still features—the silent lips—the glazed eye—the cold hand, that no more returns our fond pressure, but rather sends a chill through the blood. Ah! you say, must we all thus die? Where is the Gospel now? Answer: Jesus is the life—the spring of eternal life to all his own. Believe this, and you will triumph over the grave.

IV. Martha's confession.

1. When her faith flowed out. When the south wind blows softly upon a bed of spices, it causes the fragrant odours to flow out. So when Jesus breathed on this believer's heart, saying: "I am the resurrection and the life," it drew from her this sweet confession: "Yea, Lord, I believe." This shows how faith and love spring up in the heart. Some of you seek for faith much in the same way as you would dig for a well; you turn the eye inward upon yourself, and search amidst the depths of your polluted heart to find if faith is there; you search amid all your feelings at sermons and sacraments to see if faith is there; and still you find nothing but sin and disappointment. Learn Martha's plan. She looked full in the face of Jesus; she saw his dust-soiled feet and sullied garment, and his eye of more than human tenderness. She drank in his word: "I am the resurrection and the life;" and in spite of all she saw, and all she felt, she could not but believe. The discovery that Jesus made of his love and power, as the head of dead believers, and the head of living believers, revived her fainting soul, and she cried: "Yea, Lord, I believe." Faith comes by hearing the voice of Jesus.

2. Upon what her faith flowed out: upon the person of Jesus. It seems probable that Martha did not comprehend all that was implied in the words of the Lord Jesus. Something she saw, but much she did not see. Still on this one thing her faith fastens—that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. So do you, brethren, when glorious promises are unfolded, whose full meaning you cannot comprehend; embrace Jesus and you have all; "for all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen, to the glory of God by us." Much you cannot comprehend, for it doth not yet appear what we shall be; yet take a whole Christ into the arms of your faith, and say: "Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world."

01.7. Chapter V. Mary and Jesus.

CHAPTER V.

"And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee. As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him. Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him. The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there. Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept."

- John 11:28-35 I. The calling of Mary.

1. Observe, Martha is the messenger. Martha had got a little comfort from that sweet word of Jesus, "I am the resurrection and the life." Her faith had been revived by the question, "Believest thou this?" The swelling tide of sorrow in her breast was calmed: "And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary." Those who have been comforted by Christ themselves, are the fittest messengers to bring comfort to others. "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." 1 Corinthians 1:3-4. God takes his ministers through divers trials and consolations, just that he may make them fitting messengers to comfort others. O! it is then we can tell others of the excellence of the apple tree, when we have been sitting under its shadow, and eating its pleasant fruits.

Martha was but a weak believer compared with Mary, and yet she is made the channel of conveying the joyful news to her. It is a great mistake to think that none but eminent believers are made useful in the Church of God. God often feeds eminent believers by a weak ministry. The minister has often less grace than those to whom he ministers. Especially when eminent believers are cast down and perplexed, frequently a very small means is used to lift them up again.

2. She called her secretly. The last time the Saviour was in Judea, they took up stones to stone him to death; and probably some of the Jews who were sitting beside Mary were among his bitter enemies. Martha therefore came in, and whispered softly into Mary's ear, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee." She feared the Jews. Jesus had done much for her, and she was tender of his safety and of his cause. Thus does it become those of you for whom Jesus has done much to be tender of his honour, tender of his name and cause. You will feel as a member of his body, and that you have no interest separate from him.

3. The message: "The Master is come, and calleth for thee." Mary was sitting sad and desolate in the cottage at Bethany. It was now the fourth day from the funeral, and yet no comfort came. The

place of Lazarus was empty; the house looked desolate without him, and Jesus had not come. He had sent them a message—that this sickness was not unto death; yet his word was broken, and he had not come. Mary knew not what to think. Why does he tarry beyond Jordan? she would say to herself: has he forgotten to be gracious? Suddenly her sister whispers, “The Master is come, and calleth for thee.” Christ was near the cottage before she knew. So it was that morning at the Lake of Tiberias, when “Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus;” or that evening when the two disciples went to Emmaus and Jesus drew near, but their eyes were holden that they did not know him. So does death come upon the believer in Jesus. “The Master is come, and calleth for thee.” So will Jesus come to his weeping, desolate Church, and this cry shall awake the dead. “The Master is come, and calleth for thee.”

II. Mary's going.

1. She arose quickly. It is evident that Mary was the more deeply affected of the two sisters. Martha was able to go about, but Mary sat still in the house. She felt the absence of Christ more than Martha. She believed his word more, and when that word seemed to fail, Mary's heart was nearly broken. Ah! it is a deep sorrow when natural and spiritual grief come together. Affliction is easily borne if we have the smile of Jehovah's countenance. Why does the mourner rise, and hastily drying her tears, with eager step leave the cottage door? Her friends who sat around her she seems quite to forget. “The Master is come.” Such is the presence of the Lord Jesus to mourners still. The world's comforters are all physicians of no value. Miserable comforters are they all. They have no balm for a wounded spirit. “The heart knoweth its own bitterness.” But when the Master comes and calls us, the soul revives. There is life in his call—his voice speaketh peace. “In me ye shall have peace.” Mourners should rise up quickly, and go to Jesus. The bereaved should spread their sorrows at the feet of Christ.

2. The place: “Now Jesus was not yet come into the town.” Jesus had probably come far that day—perhaps all the way from Jericho. He had journeyed onwards on foot, till he came to the foot of the Mount of Olives, and halted beneath the trees that skirt the village of Bethany. He did not go into the town till he had finished the work for which he came. Perhaps he was hungry and thirsty, as he was that day when he sat beside Jacob's well, and said, “Give me to drink.” But he did not mention it now. His mind was intent upon his work—the raising of dead Lazarus, and the glorifying of his Father's great name. “I have meat to eat that ye know not of.” “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.” Christ's delight in saving sinners; and doing good to his own, overcame his sense of hunger, and thirst, and weariness. Oh! see what a ready high priest we have to go to. And see what is our true happiness, namely, to do God's holy will, not much minding bodily comforts. They have most of the mind of Christ, and most of the joy of Christ, who prefer his service to bodily rest and refreshment.

3. The Jews followed Mary. We saw that it was natural kindness that brought them to Bethany; and so natural kindness makes them follow Mary now. They could not comprehend her spiritual grief, and thought she was going to the grave to weep there. Yet this was the means of leading some of them to the spot where they were born again. “Many of the Jews believed on him.” How wonderful are God's ways of leading men to Christ! “And I will bring the blind by a way that they know not: I will lead them in paths that they have not known.” One soul is led by curiosity, like Zaccheus, to go and hear a particular minister, and the word is sent home with power. Another

goes in kindness to a friend, and is arrested and sent home with a bleeding heart. His name is Wonderful—his ways are wonderful—his grace is wonderful. Learn that it is good to cleave to the godly, and to go with them. They may lead you to where Jesus is.

III. The meeting with Jesus.

1. Mary's tender humility. With eager footstep Mary hurried over the rocky footpath. Jesus was standing in the same place where Martha met him and as she approached, he bent his compassionate eyes upon her. Mary saw, and fell at his feet. What a crowd of feelings were in her breast at that moment! She wondered why he had not come sooner. That was a dark mystery to her. She knew he was her Saviour, and the Son of God. She knew that he loved her; and yet she fell at his feet. She felt that she was a vile sinner, worthy to be trampled on. She felt that she was a worm, and that all her hope was in Jesus. Ah! brethren, it is sweet to be able to take Mary's place. The most eminent believers are the lowliest. Paul said: "I am the chief of sinners;" and, "I am less than the least of all saints." The nearer you take anything to the light, the darker its spots appear: and the nearer you live to God, the more you will see your own utter vileness.

2. Mary repeats Martha's complaint: "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." From this it is plain that the two sisters had been often conversing upon Christ's absence; and they had agreed upon this, that if Christ had been there, their brother had not died. It was both presumptions and unbelieving. Perhaps Mary learned it from Martha. We are very apt to learn unbelief from one another. The Bible says: "Exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day." But believers frequently discourage one another.

3. Jesus' compassion; (1.) When he saw, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled. This is humanity. His eye affected his heart, when he saw her weeping—her whom he loved so well—so eminent a believer—one whom he had washed and justified. When he saw the Jews weeping—mere worldly friends—he groaned within himself. So when he came near, and beheld the city, he wept over it; when he saw the widow of Nain, he had compassion on her; when he saw the multitudes of Galilee, like sheep without a shepherd, he had compassion on them. All this shows his perfect humanity. He is bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. (2.) He asked, Where have ye laid him? This also was human. As God he knew well where they had laid him; but he wanted them to lead him to the grave. (3.) Jesus wept. When he saw the cave, and the stone, and the weeping friends, "Jesus wept" He wept because his heart was deeply touched. It was not feigned weeping—it was real. He knew that he was to raise him from the dead, and yet he wept because others wept. He wept as our example, to teach us to weep with one another. He wept to show what was in him. "We have not a high-priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace; that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Hebrews 4:15-16.

01.8. Chapter VI. Jesus' Prayer

CHAPTER VI.

"Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him! And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me." - John 11:35-42.

Jesus saw Mary weeping, and the Jews weeping, he groaned within himself, and said, "Where have ye laid him?" They said, "Come and see." And as they led him along the path to the cave in the rock, "Jesus wept." Amazing sight! "Jesus wept" He was the Son of God, who thought it no robbery to be equal with God—infinite in happiness—and yet he weeps, so truly does he feel the sorrows of his own.

I. The feelings of the Jews at this sight.

1. Wonder at his love. "Behold how he loved him!" These Jews were as yet only worldly men, and yet they were amazed at such an overflow of love. They saw that heavenly form bowed down at the grave of Lazarus—they heard his groans of agony—they saw the tears that fell like rain from his compassionate eyes. They saw the heaving of his seamless mantle; but, ah! they saw not what was within. They saw but a little of his love—they did not see its eternity. They did not see that it was love that made him die for Lazarus. They did not know the fulness, freeness, vastness of that love of his. And yet they were astonished at it. "Behold how he loved him!" There is something in the love of Christ to amaze even worldly men. When Jesus gives peace to his own in the midst of trouble—when the waves of trouble come round the soul—when clouds and darkness, poverty and distress overwhelm his dwelling—when he can yet be glad in the Lord, and say: "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation;"—then the world are forced to say, "Behold how he loved him!" When Jesus is with the believer in death—standing beside him, so that he cannot be moved—overshadowing him with his wings—washing him in blood, and filling him with holy peace, so that he cries, "To depart, and be with Christ, is far better"—then the world cry, "Behold how he loved him!" "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!"

Another solemn day is coming when all of you who are believers shall be separated, and stand on the right hand of the throne, and Jesus shall welcome you, poor and hell deserving though you be, to share his throne, and to share his glory. Then you who are unbelievers shall cry, with bitter wailing, "Behold how he loved them!"

2. Some doubt his love. "Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?" It was but a little before that Jesus had given sight to a man that was born blind; and the Jews that now stood around had seen the miracle. Now they reasoned thus with one another. If He really loved Lazarus, could He not have kept him from dying? He that opened the eyes of the blind, could also preserve the dying from death. They doubted His tears, they doubted His words. This is unbelief. It turns aside the plainest declarations of the Lord Jesus by its own arguments.

How many of you have turned aside the love of Christ in the same way! We read that he wept over Jerusalem. This plainly showed that he did not want them to die in their sins—that he does not want you to perish, but to have everlasting life. And yet you doubt his love, and turn aside his tears by some wretched argument of your own. Jesus says: "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." This is a simple declaration, but you turn it aside thus: If Christ had really wanted to give me rest, would he not have brought me to himself before now? Unbelief turns the very exhibition of Christ's love into gall and wormwood. Some men, the more they see of Christ, the harder they grow. These Jews had seen him give sight to the blind and weep over Lazarus, and yet they only grew harder. Take heed that it be not so with you. Take heed lest the more you hear of Christ, and of his love to his own, the harder you grow.

II. The grave.

1. The command: "Take ye away the stone." Christ's ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts like our thoughts. One would have thought that he would have commanded the stone to fly back by his own word. When he rose from the dead himself, "the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door and sat upon it;" but he did not do so now. He said to the men: "Take ye away the stone." For two reasons. (1.) He wanted to bring out Martha's unbelief, that it might be made manifest. Unbelief in the heart is like evil humour in a wound—it festers; and therefore Jesus wanted to draw it out of Martha's heart. (2.) To teach us to use the means. The men around the grave could not give life to dead Lazarus, but they could roll back the stone. Now Jesus was about to use his divine power in awaking the dead, but He would not take away the stone. Have any of you an unconverted friend for whom you pray? You know it is only Christ that can give him life—it is only Christ that can call him forth; yet you can roll away the stone—you can use the means; you can bring your friend under the faithful preaching of the gospel. Speak to him—write to him. "Take ye away the stone."

2. Martha's unbelief: "Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he hath been dead four days." Mary was silent. She did not know what Jesus was going to do; but she knew that He would do all things well. She knew that he was full of love, and wisdom, and grace. But Martha cries out. She forgot all the words of Christ. She forgot his message: "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby." She forgot his sweet saying: "Thy brother shall rise again;" and "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." She forgot her own declaration, that Jesus was the Son of God. And see how

she would have hindered her own mercy. She loved her brother tenderly, and yet she would have the stone kept on the mouth of the cave. She was standing in her own light.

Learn how easily you may fall into unbelief. A few minutes before, Martha was full of faith; but now she sinks again. Oh, what marvellous blindness and sin there is in the human heart!

Learn how unbelief shuts out your own mercy. "He did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief." Martha had nearly hindered the restoration of Lazarus. Oh, do not forget the words of Jesus, nor his wonders of love and power! "Is anything too hard for the Lord?"

3. Christ's reproof: "Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" Christ had sent this message: "This sickness is not unto death;" now he recalls his word: "Said I not unto thee?" as if he had said: Martha, have you forgotten my words? Why do you not believe my words? Am I a liar, or like waters that fail? Am I a man that I should lie, or the son of man that I should repent? See how unbelief woundeth Jesus. "He that believeth not God, bath made him a liar." You will have a deeper hell than the heathen. They will be cast away because of their sins, but you because of your sin and unbelief. "He that believeth not is cone demned already."

III. Christ's prayer and thanksgiving.

1. His prayer was secret. We are not told any words that hHe prayed; but no doubt during His groans and tears He was praying to His Father in secret. Even in the midst of the crowd, Jesus was alone with His Father, praying for His own, that their faith might not fail. The tears of Christ were not mere tears of feeling—they were the tears also of earnest prayer. His is no empty fellow feeling, but real intercession. Christ teaches you to pray in sudden trials. Even when you cannot get any secret place, lift up your heart to him in the midst of the crowd. Ah, brethren! a sincere soul is never at a loss for a praying place to meet with God. If you are a child of God, you will find some secret place to pray. It will not do to say, you will pray when walking, or at your work, or in the midst of company. It will not do to make that your praying time through the day. No; Satan is at your right hand. Get alone with God. Spend as much time as you can alone with God every day; and then, in sudden temptations and afflictions, you will be able to lift your heart easily even among the crowd to your Father's ear.

2. His thanks: "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me, and I knew that thou hearest me always; but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me." (1.) See what speed Christ comes in his prayer: "Thou hearest me always." Every intercession that Christ makes is answered. The moment he asks he is answered. If we know that Christ prays for us, then we know he desires. (2.) He thanks. So entirely one is Christ with his own, that he gives thanks in our name. This should teach us not only to pray, but also to give thanks. (3.) He does this aloud, that all around might believe on him. Christ was always seeking the conversion of souls—even here, in praying and giving thanks to his Father. He does it aloud, that those around him might believe on him, as the sent of God, and the Saviour of the world. Yea, brethren, he records it here, that ye may believe on him. For this end is Christ set before you in the gospel as the sent of God, the compassionate Saviour, the Mediator and Intercessor, that ye may believe on him.

01.9. Chapter VII. The Resurrection.

CHAPTER VII.

"And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go. Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him. But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done." - John 11:43-46 I. The raising of dead Lazarus.

1. The time: "When he thus had spoken." When Jesus first heard that Lazarus was sick, he abode two days in the place where he was. Slowly and calmly he moved toward Bethany, so that when he arrived beneath its fig-trees, the passing villager told him that Lazarus had lain in the grave four days already. Still Jesus did not hurry, but waited till he had drawn forth the unbelief of Martha and Mary—waited till he had manifested his own tender, compassionate heart—waited till he had given public thanks to the Father, to show that he was sent of God. "And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus come forth." His time is the right time. So in giving life to Israel. Israel, like Lazarus, have been lying in their graves eighteen hundred years. Their bones are dry, and very many. Since he spake against them, he earnestly remembers them still; and there is a day coming when he will pour the Spirit of life upon them, and make them come forth, and be life to the dead world. But this in his own time. Jesus does not hurry. He waits till he has drawn out the unbelief of men, and manifested his own tender heart. Then when his time is come, he will cry, Israel, come forth. So in the deliverance of the Church—so in the deliverance of individual believers; "For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry."

2. The work: "He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes." What a strange scene was here! It was a retired part of the narrow ravine in which Bethany lies, and the crowd were standing beside the newly-opened sepulchre of Lazarus. It was a cave cut in the rock, and the huge stone that had been rolled to the door was now rolled back. The Jews stood around, wondering what he would do. The hardy peasants of Bethany leaned over the newly-moved stone, and gazed into the dark cave. Martha and Mary fixed their eyes on Jesus, and a deep silence hung upon the group. Opposite the cavern's mouth stood the Saviour—his tears not yet dried—his eye looking up towards his Father. "He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth!" The hollow cave rang with the solemn sound. The ear of Lazarus was dead and cold, the limbs stiff and motionless, the eyelids closely sealed, and the cold damp of death lay on his forehead; the grave-clothes were round him, and his face bound with a napkin, when the sudden cry, "Lazarus, come forth," awoke the dead. It pierced down into the deep cave, and through the close damp napkin into the dead ear. The heart began suddenly to beat, and the warm current of life to flow through the dead man's veins. The vital heat and the sense of hearing came back. It was a well-known voice. "The voice of my Beloved," he would say; "he calls my name." So he arose: "And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and

foot, with grave-clothes.” How simple, and yet how glorious! Jehovah speaks, and it is done. “The voice of the Lord is powerful, the voice of the Lord is full of majesty; the voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars, yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.” Now were the words of Christ fulfilled: “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby.” Christ manifested forth his glory as the resurrection and the life.

1. The resurrection. This is the way in which Christ will raise all that have died in the Lord. “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming in which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” John 5:28-29 There is a day near at hand, in which every dead ear shall hear the same voice crying, Come forth! Come forth!

Learn not to sorrow over departed believers as those who have no hope: “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.” The dust of Lazarus was dear to Jesus; He would not leave it in the rocky tomb. So is the dust of every Lazarus dear in his sight. He will not lose so much as one of them. Wherever they lie, it matters not—beneath the green sward, or beneath the deep blue sea, or on some distant battle-field, or consumed in flame and smoke—the Lord Jesus will yet collect their scattered dust, and make them like his own glorious body.

Learn not to fear the grave. There is nothing that we naturally shrink back from more than the grave. Ah! it is a fearful thing to leave the company of living men, and lie down in the narrow house, with a shroud for our only clothing, a coffin for our couch, and the worm for our companion. It is humiliating—it is loathsome. But if you are one of Christ’s, here is the victory: “In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory ?” 1 Corinthians 15:52-55. Fix your eye on Jesus at the grave of Lazarus; so will he stand over the grave of a sleeping world, and cry, “Come forth!”

O Christless man! you too will hear that voice—your soul will hear it in hell—your body will hear it in the grave; and death and hell will give up the dead which are in them. You will not hear his voice now, but you must hear it then. You will come forth, like Lazarus, and stand before God. Perhaps you would like to lie still in the grave. Oh! let the rocks fall on me, and the mountains cover me. Perhaps you will cling to the sides of the grave, and clasp your frail coffin in your arms. Perhaps your soul would wish to lie still in hell. Oh! let me alone—let the burning wave go over me for ever— let the worm gnaw and never die. But you must come forth to the resurrection of damnation—you must rise to shame and everlasting contempt.

2. He manifested himself as the Life. This is the way in which Christ gives life to dead souls. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.” John 5:25. The soul of the unconverted among you is as dead to divine things as the body of Lazarus was to common things. There is a total death in every unconverted bosom. It is not a mere figure of speech. It is not figurative death, but real—as real as that of Lazarus. Your eye does not see divine things—your ear does not hear them—your

heart does not feel them. It is the voice of Christ that wakens the dead soul. Jesus speaks through the Bible—through ministers—through providences. His voice can reach the dead. He quickeneth whom he will. They that hear live.

Learn that it is right in ministers and godly friends to give warnings, and calls, and invitations to those that are spiritually dead. It appears strange to some that we should believe men to be spiritually dead, and yet warn them, and call them, and invite them to repent and believe the Gospel. But this is the very way Jesus did to a dead Lazarus; and the way he does still to dead souls. It is through these very warnings, and calls, and invitations, that Jesus speaks to your dead hearts. All that have been saved in this place heard the voice of Christ when they were dead. Godly persons among you should continue these calls and warnings, even though your friends appear as dead as Lazarus was.

Learn where to look for spiritual life. It was not the voice of Mary, nor the voice of Martha, nor the voice of the Jews, that raised dead Lazarus. They could roll away the stone, but they could do no more. They could not raise the dead. It was the voice of Immanuel—of him who is the life of all that live. So it is still, dear friends. It is his voice alone that can awaken you. It is not my voice, nor that of your loving Marthas and Marys—it must be the voice of Jesus, or you will sleep on and die in your sins; and where Christ has gone you will never come. Many a time the voice of ministers has rung through this house, and through your ears, and you have lived on in sin. But when the voice of Christ speaks through the word, then you will arise, and leave all, and follow him.

II. The effect on the bystanders.

1. Many believed on him. It was a happy day in Bethany. He turneth the shadow of death into the morning. Martha and Mary had their bitter grief turned into a song of praise. Their buried brother was once more restored to their arms safe and sound; and I can imagine the feelings with which they sang that evening at their family worship: "Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord had dealt bountifully with thee."

Another joy was this: all their unbelief was now cleared away; Christ was like a morning without clouds. His tarrying, his promise, his trial of them—all was now explained; and as Mary sat at his feet that evening and heard his words, she felt more than ever that it was impossible for Christ to lie. But a greater joy still remained: "Many of the Jews believed on him." It was a birth-night for eternity. The Shepherd found some lost sheep that night. The voice that called Lazarus forth pierced many a heart. The cottage at Bethany would be like a little heaven that night. Observe what made them believe: "When they saw the things that Jesus did." It was not the sight of one thing, but of all that Jesus did; just as the dying thief believed on Christ, not from seeing one thing but all that Jesus did. When he saw his holy person, his calmness, his love, his pity, he could not but feel that this was the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world. So with these Jews. They saw the amazing love of Jesus to Lazarus, and Martha and Mary—they saw his tears—they heard his groans—they saw him thank and praise his Father; and they could not but believe on him. Two things especially they saw—divine power, and divine love to sinners. It is the same thing which persuades sinners now to believe on him. It is seeing such love in him that he is willing to save; and such power that he is able. And O how happy it would make us if many of you believed on him!—if you were constrained this day to lay hold on him as your surety, elder brother, and friend!

2. Some went and told the Pharisees. Some were saved and some were hardened. (1.) Their companions were saved, yet they were not. They left Jerusalem together, strangers to God and to conversion. Some were taken, and some were left. So it is ever. I have often thought when sinners have been stricken and saved in this place, surely their neighbors will be saved also. Often it is the very reverse. Are there not many of you that have been hardened, while others have been saved by your side? (2.) They loved Martha and Mary, and yet were not saved, but hated Christ. They were friends of Martha and Mary; they seem even to have loved Mary best—and yet they did not love Christ. So it is now. Some among you love our Marthas and Marys, and yet do not love Christ. Ah! those whom you love will soon be eternally separated from you. (3.) Their objections were answered, and yet they were not saved. “Could not this man who opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?” They objected that his love was not true, or he would not have suffered Lazarus to drop into the grave. Here their objection is taken away. Lazarus is raised, so that it is proved to them that Jesus loved him. Their mouth is shut. Still they do not turn. Alas! it is the same still. Many say, If I knew that Christ were willing to receive me, I would come. Remove the objection, still they do not come. If I had clothes, if I were free from family cares, I would begin to care about my soul. Still, remove the objection, and they are careless as ever. (4.) They hated Christ, the more they saw of him. Not only did they not believe on him, but they went and told his deadly enemies—went and plotted his destruction. Ah! this is almost incredible. What a diabolical heart is a natural heart! Not only do you refuse to be saved by Christ, but you hate his name and cause. “Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling-stone and rock of offence; and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.”

02.01. Letters to Inquirers and Young Converts

LETTERS TO Inquirers and Young Converts BY THE REV. ROBERT MURRAY M'CHEYNE
EXTRACTED FROM HIS MEMOIR. WITH PREFATORY NOTE BY REV. J. H. WILSON,
BARCLAY CHURCH, EDINBURGH

EDINBURGH WILLIAM OLIPHANT AND CO.

1875.

Murray and Gibb. Edinburgh Printers to her Majesty's Stationery Office.

Formatted for e-Sword by Ben Wagner

April 1, 2012

02.02. Prefatory Note

PREFATORY NOTE. In these times of blessing, when so many have been led to seek the Lord, and so many have through grace believed, it has been thought that the separate publication of these letters of Mr. M'Cheyne,—especially the six addressed 'to a soul seeking Jesus,'—may be welcome and helpful to a large class, alike of anxious inquirers and of young Christians. Though Dr. A. Bonar's Memoir and Remains has obtained a world-wide circulation, these 'Letters' are not so well known as they ought to be, and there seems ample warrant for issuing them in a form more suitable for general distribution. Nothing that bears the name of this beloved servant of Christ needs any recommendation; but I may be permitted to say, that his mode of presenting the truth to inquirers, and especially his representation of the sinner in his guilt and helplessness, and of Christ in His justifying righteousness, is wonderfully fitted to commend the Savior to the sinner's acceptance. The little book is sent forth in the hope that the Spirit of all grace may increasingly glorify Christ, by making its contents a means of awakening, enlightenment, and establishment to many.

J. H. W.

02.03. To A Stranger.

TO A STRANGER.

Intended to lead on one whose face was Zionward, but who was not fully decided.

DUNDEE, July 1840. My DEAR FRIEND,—I do not even know your name; but your cousin has been telling me about your case, and wishes me to write you a line inviting you to lay hold on Jesus Christ, the only refuge for a perishing soul. You seem to have been thinking seriously of your soul for some time. Do remember the words of Peter (2 Peter 1:10), "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure." Never rest till you can say what John says (1 John 5:19), "We know that we are of God." The world always loves to believe that it is impossible to know that we are converted. If you ask them, they will say, "I am not sure—I cannot tell;" but the whole Bible declares we may receive, and know we have received, the forgiveness of sins. See Psalms 32:1, 1 John 2:12. Seek this blessedness,—the joy of having forgiveness; it is sweeter than honey and the honeycomb. But where shall I seek it? In Jesus Christ "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life" (1 John 5:12). Get deeply acquainted with yourself, your sins and misery. Most people are like the Laodiceans (Revelation 3:17). Even those that are most deeply concerned about their souls do not see the millionth part of the blackness of their hearts and lives. Oh! if we could but put our sins where God puts them (Psalms 90:8), how we would cry out, Unclean, unclean! Woe is me, for I am undone! Have you ever discovered your lost condition? Many know that they are great sinners; but where God is teaching, He will make you feel as an undone sinner. Have you felt this? What things were gain to you, those do you count loss for Christ? Do you know that no human righteousness can cover you? In His holy, pure sight, all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). If you have been convinced of sin, have you been convinced of righteousness? (John 16:8.) Have you heard the voice of Jesus knocking at the door of your heart? Have you opened the door and let Him in? Awfully momentous question! Your eternity depends upon the answer,—yes or no. "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life." Oh, what a simple thing the gospel is! How fearful to think it is hid from so many! (2 Corinthians 4:3-4) Jesus stands at your door, willing to be your shield (Psalms 84:9-11), your righteousness (Jeremiah 33:6), your all in all. Now, then, throw open the door, and let Him in. Accept His white raiment, that you may be clothed. And oh! remember, if Christ justifies you, He will sanctify you. He will not save you, and leave you in your sins. Why did He get the name Jesus? (Matthew 1:21.) Here is a prayer for every one that has been found of Christ: "Order my steps in Thy word, and let not any iniquity have dominion over me." (Psalms 119:133). If you are redeemed, you are not your own—not the world's, not Satan's. Think of this when you are tempted to sin. Now, did I not say well that you should make your calling and election sure? Oh, beware of being a hypocrite—a mere professor, with an unholy head and life. That your sister is on the road to Zion, I am glad, and pray that you may go hand in hand. Be diligent; the time is shod. Try and persuade your friends to go with you. It is an awful thing to separate at the throne of Christ; for that will be for eternity. Pray much for the Holy Spirit to open your eyes, to soften your heart, to make Christ lovely and precious, to come and dwell in

your hearts, and fit you for glory. Come to the living stone, and you will be built up as living stones (1 Peter 2:4-5). Oh, how sweet to be made living stones in that glorious temple! Pray much in secret Pray for ministers, that we may speak the word boldly. Christ is doing great things in our day, which should make us wrestle at a throne of grace. Oh that the Lord, that was pierced with many thorns, might soon be crowned with many crowns!

Praying that you and your sister may both be saved, I am, your friend in the gospel, etc.

02.04. Letters To A Soul Seeking Jesus.-No. I.

LETTERS TO A SOUL SEEKING JESUS.—NO. I.

Seek to know your corruption.

DUNDEE, 1841

DEAR FRIEND,—According to promise, I sit down to talk with you a little concerning the great things of an eternal world. How kind it is in God, that He has given us such an easy way of communicating our thoughts, even at a distance! My only reason for writing to you is, that I may direct your soul to Jesus, the sinner's Friend. This man receiveth sinners. I would wish much to know that you were truly united to Christ, and then, come life, come death, you will be truly and eternally happy. Do you think you have been convinced of sin? This is the Holy Spirit's work, and His first work upon the soul (John 6:8; Acts 2:37; Acts 21:29-30). If you did not know your body was dangerously ill, you would never have sent for your physician; and so you will never go to Christ, the heavenly Physician, unless you feel that your soul is sick even unto death. Oh! pray for deep discoveries of your real state by nature and by practice. The world will say you are an innocent and harmless girl: do not believe them. The world is a liar. Pray to see yourself exactly as God sees you; pray to know the worth of your soul. Have you seen yourself vile, as Job saw himself (Job 11:3-5; Job 42:5-6)? undone, as Isaiah saw himself (Isaiah 6:1-5)? Have you experienced anything like Psalms 51:1-19? I do not wish you to feign humility before God, nor to use expressions of self-abhorrence which you do not feel; but oh! pray that the Holy Spirit may let you see the very reality of your natural condition before God! I seldom get more than a glance at the true state of my soul in its naked self. But when I do, then I see that I am wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked (Revelation 3:17). I believe every member of our body has been a servant of sin (Romans 3:13; Romans 3:18)—throat, tongue, lips, mouth, feet, eyes. Every faculty of our mind is polluted (Genesis 6:5). Besides, you have long neglected the great salvation; you have been gainsaying and disobedient. Oh that you were brought to pass sentence on yourself—guilty of all! Hear what a dear believer writes of himself: "My wickedness, as I am in myself, has long appeared to me perfectly ineffable, and swallowing up all thought and imagination, like an infinite deluge, or mountains over my head. I know not how to express better what my sins appear to me to be, than by heaping infinite upon infinite, and multiplying infinite by infinite. When I look into my heart, and take a view of my wickedness, it looks like an abyss infinitely deep; and yet it seems to me that my conviction of sin is exceeding small and faint." Perhaps you will ask, Why do you wish me to have such a discovery of my lost condition? I answer, that you may be broken off from all schemes of self-righteousness; that you may never look into your poor guilty soul to recommend you to God; and that you may joyfully accept of the Lord Jesus Christ, who obeyed and died for sinners. Oh that your heart may cleave to Christ! May you forsake all, and follow Jesus Christ. Count everything loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. You never will stand righteous before God in yourself. You are welcome this day to stand righteous before God in Jesus. Pray over Php 3:7, Php 3:9. I will try and pray for you. Grace be

with you. Your friend in Jesus, etc.

02.05. Letters To A Soul Seeking Jesus.-No. II.

TO THE SAME.—NO. II.

Seek the righteousness of Christ.

DEAR FRIEND,—I was glad to hear of your safe arrival, and that your health had not suffered by the voyage. I trust the Lord is dealing gently with your frail body, so that your mind may get leave freely to fix itself on Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Above all, I pray that the Holy Spirit may sweetly and silently open your heart, to relish the way of salvation through the blood and obedience of Immanuel. Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by Him all that believe are justified from all things (Acts 13:38-39). You would be deeply concerned to hear that your room-mate has been so suddenly and awfully called away. Should it not be a solemn warning to you? Oh that you may be even now clothed in the righteousness of Jesus! so that if you were called away you may meet God in peace, and hear Jesus say, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." In yourself you never will stand righteous before Jehovah. Psalms 143:2 answers your case. "Enter not into judgment with me" must be your cry. In your nature, in your past life, in your breaking of the holy law, in your contempt and neglect of Jesus, in your indwelling sin, God can see nothing but what He must condemn. Oh that you would be of the same mind with God about your own soul! Do not be afraid to look upon its loathsomeness; for God offers to clothe you in Jesus Christ. "By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Romans 5:19). There is only one in all the world on whose face God can look and say, "He is altogether lovely." Jesus is that one. Now, God is willing that you and I should hide in Jesus. I feel at this moment that He is my righteousness. "This is His name whereby He shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness" (Jeremiah 23:6). I feel that the love of God shines upon my guilty soul through Jesus. This is all my peace. Your tears will not blot out sin: they do nothing but weep in hell. But that does not justify them. Your tight views of the gospel will not justify you; you must be covered with a spotless righteousness. Your change of heart and of life will not justify you: it cannot cover past sins—neither is it perfect. Your amended life is still fearfully sinful in Jehovah's sight, and yet nothing but perfect righteousness can stand before Him. Jesus offers you this perfect righteousness: in Him you may stand and hear God say, "Thou art all fair, my love." There is no spot in me. Do you thus look to Jesus? Do you believe the record that God has given concerning Him? Do you receive Christ with open arms? Do you cry, "My Lord and my God;" my Surety—my all? Dear friend, do not tarry. Eternity may be near. Now is your best time, perhaps your only time, of closing with Christ. How many worlds would a lost soul in hell give for such an opportunity of cleaving to Christ as you have now! "He that hath the Son hath life." This is all my prayer and desire for your precious, precious soul. —Ever yours in the gospel, etc.

02.06. Letters To A Soul Seeking Jesus.-No. III.

TO THE SAME.—NO. III.

Joy in believing.

DEAR FRIEND,—I send you another line to tell you Jesus is the Way. I would like much to hear how your weak body prospers, and whether your soul is resting under the apple-tree (Song of Solomon 2:3); but till some opportunity occurs, I must just content myself with committing your soul and body into the hand of Jesus, your faithful Creator (1 Peter 4:19). We are now looking forward to another communion season, and I am busy instructing young persons for that holy and blessed ordinance. I think you said you were a good deal impressed at our last communion, and wished that you had been one of those seated at the table. Perhaps you may never be permitted to sit at the table on earth; perhaps your first communion may be in glory. There is a text in Romans 15:13 which expresses all my desire for you: "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." You see here who is the author of conversion—the God of hope. He must open your heart to attend to the things that are spoken. The truths that are presented to you will not convert your heart: the God of hope must breathe on your heart, and water it often. Then see how He gives you joy and peace 'in believing.' When Jesus revealed Himself to Thomas (John 20:28), Thomas cried out with joy, "My Lord and my God!" If Jesus reveal Himself to you in all the glory of His person, the completeness of His work, and the freeness of His love, you too will be filled with appropriating, joyful faith, and will cry, "My Lord and my God!" It is a difficult thing to explain what it is to believe: I suppose it is impossible. But when Jesus unveils His matchless beauty, and gives you a sweet glimpse of His matchless face, that was buffeted and spit upon, then the soul joyfully clings to Him. This is believing, and this is joy and peace in believing. The truest, purest joy flows from a discovery of Jesus Christ. He is the hidden treasure that gives such joy to the finder. (Matthew 13:44) Do you think you have found that treasure? Touching question! For if not, you are poor indeed. But how much joy may you have in Christ? "The God of hope fill you with all joy." You need not be afraid to take the full joy that Jesus gives. If you really come unto Christ, you come unto the love of Jehovah, and that is a filling love. The love of the creature does not fill the heart; but God's love coming full upon the soul gives fulness of joy (1 John 1:4). It is holy love, sovereign love. I have been interrupted several times in writing this little note. I will not be long in writing you again. Do decide the question of your eternity. One thing is needful: have you closed with the great Mediator? Have you got saving knowledge of Jesus? Then only will death lose its power, and the grave become the bed of peaceful rest.

"There is a land of pure delight, Where saints immortal reign;

Infinite day excludes the night, And pleasures banish pain."

Lean all your care for time and eternity on Jesus; that is the softest of all pillows—the bosom of our guardian Immanuel.—I am, ever yours, etc.

02.07. Letters To A Soul Seeking Jesus.-No. IV.

TO THE SAME.—NO. IV.

Taste that Christ is precious.

December 1841.

DEAR FRIEND,—It is written, "Unto you who believe He is precious;" and if you are a child of God, you will know and feel what the words mean (1 Peter 2:7). At one time Christ was "like a tender plant" to you, and like "a root out of a dry ground." You saw "no form nor comeliness in Him, no beauty that you should desire Him." At that time you were at ease in Zion—you had no concern for your soul. Do you remember that time? Is it otherwise with you now? Have you been pricked in your heart by the Holy Spirit? Have you been made to see how impossible it is for man to be just with God? And has the Spirit drawn away the veil from the fair face of Immanuel, and given you an unfeigned glance at the brow that was crowned with the thorns, and the cheek from which they plucked off the hair? Has the Spirit opened a window into the heart of Jesus, and let you see the fountainhead of that love that "passeth knowledge"? Then you will be able to say, "To me He is precious." If you see plainly that all your standing before God is in Him, that He is your foundation-stone, your fountain, your wedding-garment, then you will feel Him to be precious. Most people refuse to come to Christ. Read Luke 14:16-24 : "They all with one consent began to make excuse." Why is this? Just because they do not see and feel that He is precious. But oh! if you, my dear friend, feel that He is your only righteousness, your only fountain of living water, your High Priest, your Shepherd, your Advocate, then you will say, "He is precious!" You will never say, "Have me excused." I carry to you the sweet invitation, "Come, for all things are now ready." Jesus is ready to wash and clothe you in His own blood and righteousness. The Holy Spirit is ready to come into your heart and make it new. The Father is ready to put His arms round your neck and kiss you (Luke 15:20). The angels are ready to give thanks for you, and to love you as a sister for eternity. Now, will you come? For all things are ready. Are you now saying in your heart, "I cannot but believe I am the chief of sinners, and Jesus offers to be my refuge, my Mediator, my all in all: I feel He is precious"? Oh! dear friend, I trust you do. This only will make you happy in living, and blessed in dying. This is a poor, dying world. Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. There is no part here that death cannot take from us. But if you have Christ, you have the only imperishable portion! Oh, may the Holy Spirit give you a firm hold of Jesus! Then we shall meet in that sweet place where there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain. The Lord deal kindly and gently with you, both soul and body. Farewell, dear friend.—Ever yours, etc.

02.08. Letters To A Soul Seeking Jesus.-No. V.

TO THE SAME.—NO. V. Be found in Christ.

December 8, 1841.

DEAR FRIEND,—I send you another line to tell you of Him who is altogether lovely. I have a very dear boy in my parish, who is dying just now. He said to me the other day, "I have just been feeding for some days upon the words you gave me: 'His legs are like pillars of marble set upon sockets of fine gold' (Song of Solomon 5:15); for" (said he) "I am sure He is able to carry me and all my sins." You may say the same, if your eyes have been opened to see the beauty, fulness, freeness, and compassion of the Lord Jesus. Nothing but the hand of God can open your eyes to see your lost condition as it truly is. Flesh and blood cannot reveal Him unto you, but my Father. Oh! call upon Him to do this for you. A spiritual discovery of yourself and of Jesus is better than a million of worlds to you, and to me also. Remember, you cannot be fair in yourself before God. Song of Solomon 1:6 must be all your prayer: "Look not upon me." Take yourself at your best moments, you are but a vile worm in Jehovah's sight, and so am I. Remember, you may be "perfect in Christ Jesus." Allow yourself to be found in Christ. Oh! what will come of you if you are found in yourself? Where will you appear? You will shrink back, and call on rocks and mountains to fall upon you and cover you. But if you are hiding in Jesus—if your eye and heart are fixed upon His wounds made by our sins—if you are willing to be righteous in His righteousness, to lie down under the stream of His blood, and to be clothed upon with the snowy fleece of the Lamb of God,—then God will love you with His whole soul exceedingly. The pure, full love of God streams through the blood and obedience of Jesus to every soul that is lying under them, however vile and wretched in themselves. Have you tried—have you tasted the holy love of a holy God? Thy love is better than wine. It is better than all creature love or creature enjoyments. Oh! do not live—oh! do not die, out of this sweet, sweet, sin-pardoning, soul-comforting love of God! Remember, Jesus is quite willing to gather you under his wings (Matthew 23:37). Put that beyond all doubt. Remember, also, the present is your only time to be saved (Ecclesiastes 9:10). There is no believing, no repenting, no conversion in the grave—no minister will speak to you there. This is the time of conversion. We must either gain you now, or lose you for ever. Oh that you would use this little time! Every moment of it is worth a world. Your soul is very dear to me—dearer far to Jesus. Look to Him, and you will be saved.—Ever yours, etc.

02.09. Letters To A Soul Seeking Jesus.-No. VI.

TO THE SAME.—NO. VI.

Go up, leaning on Jesus.

DEAR FRIEND,—I have heard of you from -----, and have been praying for you, that your eye may rest on Jesus, and that your soul may lie in perfect peace under His blood shed for the sins of many. I have been thanking my Father, too, for dealing so bountifully with you. "He is the Father of mercies, and the God of all comforts." I will give you a sweet verse to meditate upon: "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon the beloved?" (Song of Solomon 8:5.) Do you think this is your position? Truly this world is a wilderness, if you have seen it rightly. It is a place of guilt and shame. Every natural heart is a wilderness—a dead place without a drop of living water; and then all natural hearts put together make up a wilderness-world. The whole world lieth in wickedness. There are few that know and love Jesus, and these few are panting to get more of the living water. But if you have truly fled to Jesus, you are coming up from the wilderness. Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. "The night is far spent, the day is at hand." Have you found Jesus truly? Do you feel willing to be all vile, all hell-deserving in yourself, and to let God's dear Son be all your shield and righteousness? Oh! make sure of this. Never mind what man thinks of you. I would not give a straw for the opinions of men as to whether I was safe or no. It is not what man thinks of us that will cover us on the judgment day. Oh, no! You must be in Jesus, sitting at His feet, allowing Him to wash your stains away, allowing Him to enwrap your guilty soul in divine righteousness. If you were lying at the bottom of the sea, no eye could see your deformities: so, when the infinite ocean of Immanuel's righteousness flows over the soul, you are swallowed up, as it were, in Christ Your blackness is never seen, only His fairness; and thus a God of truth can say, "Behold, thou art fair; behold, thou art fair, my love! Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee." (Song of Solomon 4:1-7) Keep this always in memory; and when guilt comes on the conscience, as it will, lie down again beneath the righteousness of Jesus. Never lose sight of this. Jesus must be seen by the Father instead of our guilty soul. It is no change in our black soul that is to be our covering. You must leave self, and stand in your Elder Brother. Hide behind Him. Let the Father's eye fall on Him, not on you. This is what Jesus wants. He died to be a shelter for such as you. This is what the Father wants; for He is not willing that any should perish. If you are seen by the Father a naked, guilty sinner, you must die; there is no help for it But if Jesus appears for you—if you hide in His wounds like the dove in the clefts of the rock, and under His snowy raiment—then the Father Himself loveth you, and now you are coming up from the wilderness. Every hour that strikes, that is an hour less between you and glory. Oh! do not grieve to part with the world if you are in Christ; an hour with Christ will make up for all your griefs and pains. Half an hour in the presence of our God will make us forget a lifetime of agony. "Leaning on her Beloved!" Is this the position of your soul? Do you feel empty, weak, and helpless? and do you see Him mighty to save, able to save to the uttermost? "His legs are like pillars of marble." This is Christ's glory, that He justifies sinners who have no righteousness, and sanctifies souls that have no inborn holiness. Let Jesus bear your whole weight. Remember, He loves to be the only support

of the soul. He is a jealous Savior. He wants to be entirely trusted. There is nothing that you can possibly need but you will find it in Him. "All my springs are in Thee." Do you want righteousness? He has the spirit of a weaned child to give you (Psalms 131:1-3). Do you want love? He is the fountain of love: all the promises of God in Him are yea and in Him amen. I am sure, if you get a glimpse of Him, you would lay your head in His breast, and die there. May the Spirit anoint your eyes to see Him more and more, and soften your heart to lean on Him. Those that have leaned on Him through the wilderness shall sit with Him on the throne (Revelation 3:21). Farewell, dear soul! the Lord feed you sweetly, as He feeds the flowers, by silent drops of dew.—Ever yours, etc.

02.10. To E. R., Asking Counsel.

TO E. R., ASKING COUNSEL. A sight of corruption drives to Christ.

DUNDEE, 1842.

DEAR FRIEND,—I send you a hurried line, and may the Spirit accompany it with His divine power to your heart. It is a good thing to be shown much of the deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of your heart, provided it lead you to the Lord Jesus, that He may pardon and subdue its slowness and carnal ease are much more to be dreaded than discoveries of our leprosy. The groans and triumphal song of a believer are not far separated, as you may see in Paul (Romans 7:24-25): "O wretched man" and "I thank God" all in one breath! David felt the same (see Psalms 73:1-28). At one verse he feels himself a fool and a beast in the sight of a holy God, and in the very next verses he is cleaving to Christ with a song of unspeakable joy (Romans 7:22-24). Ah! there is a sweet mystery here—bitter herbs along with our passover Lamb. It is sweet to see ourselves infinitely vile, that we may look to Jehovah our Righteousness, as all our way to the Father. The sweet Psalmist of Israel felt this on his dying bed: "Although my house be not so with God, yet hath He made with me;" etc. (2 Samuel 23:5). His house had been the scene of many a black sin; and now, when dying, he could not but confess that it was not right with God. Not a day he had lived appeared clean—not a moment. So may you say in the house where you live, and looking at the pollutions of your own heart: "Although my house be not so with God" —although my heart and life be not so, yet hath He made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure.

God makes that covenant with you, when He brings you to lay hold on Jesus as your Surety—your curse-bearing, law-fulfilling Surety. Then you are brought into the bond of the everlasting covenant and all its blessings are yours—pardon, righteousness, consolation, grace upon grace, life, love, the spirit of supplications—all are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

Pray to be made like Caleb, who had another spirit, and followed the Lord fully. Follow Christ all the day. He is the continual burnt offering in whom you may have peace. He is the Rock that follows you, from whom you may have constant and infinite supplies. Give yourself wholly away to Him. You are safe in no other keeping but in the everlasting arms of Jehovah Jesus.

Keep yourself from other men's sins. Do not go to the end of the string, that is, going as far as you can in dallying with temptation without committing open sin. Remember that it is our happiness to be under grace, and every sin will be bitterness in the end, and will take something out of your eternal portion of glory.

Grace be with your dear and much honoured minister, and with all that love Christ in sincerity. Never cease to pray for the parish, and for all parishes, that God would pour down his life-giving Spirit, to the conversion of perishing sinners and the glory of His own great name. I will remember you on the 12th of June.—May the Lord remember us.—Ever truly, etc.

02.11. To J.T.

TO J.T. A young boy anxious about his soul.

COLLACE, January 27, 1842. MY DEAR BOY,—I was very glad to receive your kind note, and am glad to send you a short line in return, although my time is much taken up. You are very dear to me, because your soul is precious; and if you are ever brought to Jesus, washed and justified, you will praise Him more sweetly than an angel of light. I was riding among the snow to-day, where no foot had trodden, and it was pure, pure white; and I thought again and again of that verse: "Wash me; and I shall be whiter than snow." That is a sweet prayer: make it your own. Often go alone and look up to Jesus, who died to wash us from our sins, and say, "Wash me." Amelia Geddie was one day dressed in a new white frock, with red ribbons in her bonnet, and some one said to her, "No doubt you will think yourself very trim and clean?" "Ah! no; she said; "I will never think that until I have the fine white robe of my Redeemer's righteousness put upon me." I am glad, my dear boy, you think that God is afflicting you to bring you to Himself. It is really for this that He smites you. His heart, His hand, and His rod, are all inscribed with love. But then, see that He does bring you to Himself. Do not delay. The lake of fire and brimstone stretches beneath every soul that lives in sin. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." If the Lord Jesus would but draw the curtain, and let you see His own fair face, and His wounded side, and how there is room for the guiltiest sinner in Him, you would be drawn to Jesus with the cords of love. I was preaching in Perth last Sabbath. When I came out, a little girl came up to me, I think about three or four years old. She wanted to hear of the way to be saved. Her mother said she had been crying the whole night before about her soul, and would take no comfort till she should find Jesus. Oh! pray that the same Spirit may waken you. Remember, Johnnie, you once wept for your soul too, and prayed and sought Jesus. Have you found Him? or have you looked back, like Lot's wife, and become a hard, cold pillar of salt? Awake again, and call upon the name of the Lord. Your time may be short, God only knows. The longest lifetime is short enough. It is all that is given you to be converted in. They are the happiest who are brought soonest to the bosom of Jesus.

Write me again. At present I must draw to a close. Give my kindest remembrances to your mamma, and to A. when you write. Tell him to write me. May you all meet at the table of Jesus above; and may I be there too, a sinner saved by grace.—Ever yours, etc.

02.12. To A.T.

TO A.T. On the death of his brother, the little boy to whom the preceding letter was written.

ST. PETER'S, March 1, 1842.

M DEAR A.,—I did not think I was to have answered your kind letter in the time of bitter grief. But so it pleases Jehovah, whose will must be our will, if we would be happy. It is good for you to bear the yoke in your youth. This is the way God trains His saints, and especially His ministers. I saw your dear little brother twice on his dying bed, and indeed I could not believe he was dying, except that his calm eye was directed to the hills of Immortality, and he seemed already to breathe some of the atmosphere of the world of sinless joy. I do trust and believe that he was a saved boy. You know I am rather slow of coming to this conviction, and not fond of speaking when I have not good evidence; but here, I think, God has not left us in doubt. At Blairgowrie he used several times to speak to me about divine things, and the tear would gather in his eye when he said that he feared he had never been brought to Jesus. Once, when he had a sore throat, he told me he was not ready to die. But now he was quite different. The veil seemed to be lifted away from his heart, and he saw divine things simply and fully. Over and over he told me that he was not afraid to die, for Christ had died. "How kind it was in God to send Jesus to die for sinners!" He seemed tranquil and happy, even when the pain came on in his head and made him knit his brows. You have reason to mingle praise with your tears. Do not sorrow as one who has no hope. Only seek a right improvement of this bereavement. He is not lost, but gone before, and we shall soon put off this clay cottage also. And soon we and he, made new, body and soul, shall meet the Lord in the air, and so be for ever with the Lord. I was at your house on Sabbath night, and saw them all—sorrowful, yet rejoicing. Your dear little brother lies like a marble statue in the peaceful sleep of death, till Jesus' voice shall waken him. Happy boy! he shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on him, nor any heat. The days of his mourning are ended, and his eternity of love and holy joy is begun.

Improve this sharp wind, dear A., for you will soon lose the benefit, if not carefully sought after. Search out the Achan in your heart at such an hour. Let affliction strike heavy blows at your corruptions, your idolatries, and self-pleasing and worldly schemes. Learn much of Christ at such an hour. Study Him at the grave of Lazarus (John 11:1-57), and at the gate of Nain (Luke 8:11), and also within the veil (Revelation 1:18). Do not be ashamed to grieve deeply; but let your sadness find relief in the bosom that was pierced with the spear.

"Is any afflicted? Let him pray." Strange, Satan often tempts us to restrain prayer at such a time. Be very gentle towards the souls of your kindred now. Remember D---- and H---- at the throne of grace. If God had taken them, where would they have been? Learn also that ministers must care for lambs. "Preach the gospel to every creature."

Pray for me also, that I may do so—that may be made a better man, and a more faithful pastor of old and young.—Ever yours till we meet in glory, etc.

02.13. To One Awakened.

TO ONE AWAKENED.

Call upon a soul to choose Jesus.

DUNDEE, September 1842.

M DEAR G.,—I was glad indeed to see, by the line you sent me, that though your mind is dark and troubled, you have not gone back to the world. Ah, it is a false, deceiving world! It smiles only to betray. Fain would I lead you to taste the peace that passeth understanding, and that is to be found only in Jesus. You are quite wrong in thinking that I do not understand your misery. I know it well. It is true Jesus does give me peace. He washes me from all sin in His own blood. I often feel Him standing by my side and looking down upon me, saying, "Thou art mine." Yet still I have known more misery than you. I have sinned more deeply than you. I have sinned against more light and more love, and yet I have found mercy; why may not you? Remember what James Covey said: "Tell poor sailors that none of them need to despair, since poor, blaspheming Covey found mercy." I was interrupted just while writing this by a very little girl coming to ask, "What must I do to be saved?" Poor thing, she has been weeping till I thought her heart would break. She lives several miles off; but a companion was awakened, and told her, and ever since she has been seeking Christ with all her head. I was telling her that sweet verse: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the chief" (1 Timothy 1:15). It will answer you also, dear friend. Christ Jesus was God's dear Son. He made all things—sun, moon, and stars, men and angels. He was from all eternity in the bosom of the Father, and yet He came into the world. He did not say, "I will keep my throne and my happiness, and leave sinners to die and perish in their sins." No: "He came into the world." He became a babe, and was laid in a manger, for there was not room in the inn. The inn was like your head: it was filled with other lodgers, and had no room for Jesus. He became "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." He bore our sins upon His own body on the tree. While we were sinners, Christ died for us: Why did He do all this? Ah! it was to save sinners. Not to save good people—not to save angels—but sinners. Perhaps you will say, "But I am too bad a sinner;" but Paul says, "of whom I am the chief." Paul was the chief of sinners, and yet he was saved by Christ. So Christ is willing and able to save you, though you were the chief sinner on the face of the earth. If Christ came into this world, and died to save such as you, will it not be a fearful thing if you die without being saved by Him? Surely you have lived long enough without Christ You have despised Jesus long enough. What has the world done for you, that you love it so much? Did the world die for you? Will the world blot out your sins or change your heart? Will the world carry you to heaven? No, no! You may go back to the world if you please, but it can only destroy your poor soul. "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." (1 Timothy 5:6). Read these words in your Bible, and mark them; and if you go back, that mark will be a witness against you before the great white throne when the books are opened. Have you not lived long enough in pleasure? Come and try the pleasures of Christ—forgiveness and a new heart. I have not been at a dance or any worldly amusement for many years, and yet I believe I have had

more pleasure in a single day than you have had all your life. In what? you will say. In feeling that God loves me—that Christ has washed me, —and in feeling that I shall be in heaven when the wicked are cast into hell. 'A day in Thy courts is better than a thousand' (Psalms 84:10).

I do not know what is to be the result of your anxieties. I do not know whether you will be drawn to Christ, or driven back into the whirlpool of a perishing world; but I know that all will soon be settled for eternity. I was in a very wicked family to-day, where a child had died. I opened my Bible, and explained this verse to them over the coffin of their little one: "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." (Hebrews 9:27). Solemn words! we have only once to die, and the day is fixed. If you die wrong the first time, you cannot come back to die better a second time. If you die without Christ, you cannot come back to be converted and die a believer: you have but once to die. Oh! pray that you may find Christ before death finds you. "After this the judgment." Not, after this purgatory. No further opportunity to be saved: "After this the judgment." As death leaves you, so judgment finds you. If you die unsaved, you will be so in the judgment. May I never see you at the left hand! If I do, you will remember how I warned you, and prayed for you, and besought you to come to the Lord Jesus.

Come to Jesus: He will in nowise cast you out.—Your affectionate friend, etc.

02.14. To A Soul Inquiring After Jesus.

TO A SOUL INQUIRING AFTER JESUS. The wise men—Guilt in us, righteousness in Jesus.

ST. PETER'S, Monday, September 18, 1842.

M DEAR C.,—I do not and cannot forget you; and though it is very late, I have to write you a few lines, to say—Follow on to know Jesus. I do not know if you can read my crooked writing, but I will make it as plain as I can. I was reading this morning (Luke 2:29) what old Simeon said when he got the child Jesus into his arms: "Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word: for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." If you get a firm hold of the Lord Jesus, you will be able to say the same.

If you had died in your ignorance and sin, dear soul, where would you have been this night? Ah! how shall we sufficiently praise God, if He really has brought you to the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ! Psalms 36:12-12 will suit your case. If you all are really brought to Christ, it will be something like the case of the wise men of the East (Matthew 2:1-23). When they were in their own country, God attracted their attention by means of a star. They followed it, and came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we are come to worship Him." Herod and Jerusalem were troubled at the saying. No one was seeking Christ but themselves. The world thought they were mad; but soon they saw the star again, and it led them to the house where the infant Saviour lay—his robe of state a swaddling band, his cradle the manger. Yet they kneeled down and called Him "My Lord and my God." They got their own souls saved, and gave Him gifts, the best they had, and then departed into their own country with great joy in their hearts, and heaven in their eye. So may it be with you. The most around you care not for Jesus. But you are asking, "Where is He?—we are come to be saved by Him." None around you can tell. They think you are going out of your mind. But God is leading you to the very spot where the Redeemer is,—a lowly, despised, spit-upon, crucified Saviour. Can this be the Saviour of the world? Yes, dear soul; kneel down, and call Him your Redeemer. He died for such as you and me. And now you may go away into your own country again, but not as you came. You will carry with you joy unspeakable and full of glory. A young woman called upon me on Wednesday last, whom I had never seen before. She said she was a stranger from another part of Scotland; she came to this town about a year ago, and attended St Peter's, and there for the first time learned that she was a sinner and needed Christ. About four weeks ago she found rest and joy at the Saviour's feet. I said to her, "Then you will bless God that He brought you from your own country to this place." She said, "I often do that." Another woman came the same evening, whom I had never seen. She said she had been married eight years to a wicked husband. One of her neighbours had brought her to our church, and now she feels that Christ has saved her soul.

Thus the work goes on: "The Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved." A young woman was with me to-night in great distress. She said, "I have a wicked heart within me that would sink a world." I said, "I am thankful to hear you complain of your wicked heart, dear friend: it is unsearchably wicked. There is not a sin committed on earth or in hell but has its spring and

fountain in your breast and mine. You are all sin—your nature is sin, your heart is sin—your past life is sin— your prayers are all sin." Oh that you would despair of being righteous in yourself! Then take the Lord Jesus for your righteousness. In Him is no sin, And He stood for us, and offers to be your shield—your way to the Father. You may be righteous in Christ, with a perfect righteousness, broad as the law, and pure as the light of heaven. If you had an angel's righteousness, you might well lay it down and put on Jesus. The robe of a blood-washed sinner is far whiter than that of an angel. Do not fear the frown of the world. When a blind man comes against you in the street, you are not angry at him: you say he is blind, poor man, or he would not have hurt me. So you may say of the poor world when they speak evil of Christians: they are blind. If they knew their sin and misery, and the love of Jesus, they would cleave to Him also. Fear not them which kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. Keep close to the Lord Jesus. He is greater than all that can be against you; He is the Shepherd of His sheep; He will defend you from wolves. Pray for the Holy Spirit, dear friend. Ask Him to come into your heart, and abide there. It is a mean dwelling for such a guest. Still He will make it clean and holy by dwelling in it. Ask Him to teach you to pray (Romans 8:26-27). He will give you 'groanings that cannot be uttered.' Ask Him to change your heart and make it like that of Jesus. Ask Him to write the law upon your heart, and to keep you in every time of need. I fear you are weary of my long sermons. Remember, if you are not saved, I will be a witness against you in the judgment-day.

Come ye weary heavy laden, Lost and ruined by the fall;

If ye tarry till you're better, You will never come at all. Not the righteous—sinners Jesus came to call.

Farewell! Write me soon all your heart.— Ever yours till glory, etc.

02.15. To The Same.

TO THE SAME.

Trials from a blind world—How the death of Christ is an atonement.

LONDON, November 5, 1842.

Mv DEAR C.,—I pray for you, that your faith may not fail. Hold fast by Jesus for a little while, and then we shall be for ever with the Lord, where the unbelieving will never be. I got safely up to town without stopping. The young man in the coach with us was Lord P. He and I were alone all night in the railway carriage, and I would fain have told him the way to be saved; but when morning dawned I lost him. I preached twice on Thursday, and once last night, and now I am preparing for to-morrow. I feel, like John the Baptist, the voice of one crying in the wilderness. The mad world presses on like a bird hasting to the snare. They do not know that the dead are there, and her guests are in the depths of hell.

I thank God without ceasing when I remember you all—how God opened your eyes and hearts, and made you flee from the wrath to come, and believe the record which God hath given concerning His Son: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer." "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life," (Revelation 2:10). Do not be surprised if worldly people mock you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely. Jesus told you it would be so. "If you were of the world, the world would love its own." You have been long enough of the world. Did the world ever hate you then? So now, when you have come out from among them, and are cleaving to Jesus, do you think they will love you? Remember Jesus loves you. God is for you, and who can be against you? Remember, all who have gone to heaven before you suffered the same things; see Revelation 7:14 : "These are they that came out of great tribulation."

You wish to understand more about Christ's death being an atonement. I shall try and explain. The curse which Adam by his sins brought upon us all was this, "Thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:17). This included the death of the body, the death of the soul, and the eternal destruction of both in hell. This is the curse that hangs over every unpardoned sinner. And our sins have only added certainty and weight to the awful curse; for "the wages of sin is death." Now, when the Son of God said He would become our Surety and Saviour, the Father said, "Thou must die for them;" see John 10:17-18 : "I lay down my life." "This commandment have I received from my Father." It is true, Christ did not suffer eternal destruction in hell; but He was a person so glorious and excellent—God's own Son—that His short sufferings were equal in value to our eternal agonies. So that, in the eye of law, and in God's account, Jesus has suffered all that you and I were condemned to suffer. Hence that sweet, sweet passage: "Comfort ye, comfort ye, ... for she hath received (in Christ) of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." (Isaiah 40:1-2). Christ's dying for us is as much in God's account as if we had twice over borne the eternal agonies of hell. Hence that sweet song which God enabled you and G. to sing: "I will praise Thee; though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortedst me." (Isaiah 7:1). Hence also that

triumphant question, "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died" (Romans 8:34).

Keep looking, then, to Jesus, dear soul, and you will have the peace that passeth all understanding. Whenever Satan accuses you, send him to the stripes of the Lord Jesus. Deal gently and tenderly with your unconverted friends. Remember you were once as blind as they. "He was despised, and we esteemed Him not." (Isaiah 53:1-12). Honour your mother in the Lord. Give her all reverence and obedience in things not sinful. Ask --- to read and pray over Matthew 18:3-6. I would love much to visit the cottage on my return, but I fear I shall be kept in town till Friday, so that I must travel night and day home. The Lord bless you, and keep you cleaving to Christ the true vine. You have found the pearl of great price. Go, and sin no more. "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." God is able to keep you from falling. In His dear arms I leave you. —Yours, etc.

02.16. To A Soul That Had Begun To See Christ.

TO A SOUL THAT HAD BEGUN TO SEE CHRIST.

What you want in yourself is to be found in double measure in Christ.

Dundee, November 1842

M DEAR FRIEND,—Why did you not write me a few lines? It would be occupation to you, and your soul might find rest, even when pouring itself out to another. I do trust you are seeking hard after Him whom your soul loveth. He is not far from any one of us. He is a powerful and precious Saviour, and happy are they who put their trust in Him. He is the Rose of Sharon, lovely to look upon, having all divine and human excellences meeting in Himself; and yet He is the Lily of the Valleys— meek and lowly in heart, willing to save the vilest. He answers the need of your soul. You are all guilt; He is a fountain to wash you. You are all naked; He has a wedding-garment to cover you. You are dead; He is the life. You are all wounds and bruises; He is the balm of Gilead. His righteousness is broader than your sin; and then He is so free. Remember the word we read at the draw-well: "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Look at Isaiah 40:1, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people." If you receive Christ as your Surety, you have realized double punishment for all your sins. The sufferings of Christ for us were as honouring to God as if we had suffered eternal punishment thrice over. If you will only open your arms to receive Christ as your Surety, then your iniquity is pardoned. You will taste immediate forgiveness. Your warfare with the law and an accusing conscience will be immediately accomplished. If you will only lay hold of Christ now, you will feel the force of that sweet command, "Comfort ye, comfort ye;" double comfort, double peace, for in Jesus you have suffered double wrath. Pray over that verse; and may He who first made the light to shine out of darkness shine into your heart, to let you see the way of salvation clearly. Soon may you sing: "Thou wast angry with me; but Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortedst me." "Oh, to grace how great a debtor!" You are always in my prayers, that God would reveal Himself unto you. Oh the joy of being able to say, "My Beloved is mine, and I am His!"— Ever yours in the gospel, etc.

02.17. To One Who Had Lately Taken Up The Cross.

TO ONE WHO HAD LATELY TAKEN UP THE CROSS.

Kept by God—Meeting with God.

ST. PETER'S, January 31, 1843. MY DEAR M.,—I was glad indeed to hear that you are prospering, and that you do not repent having made Moses' choice (Hebrews 11:24-25), of which I used to tell you so often. Happy is that people whose God is the Lord! You remember what Ruth said when she clave to Naomi: "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." I have not got your note by me, and it is late, but I will answer it to-morrow. I only write a line to-night to strengthen your faith, "that I may be comforted together with you, by the mutual faith both of you and me." (Romans 1:12). I have been remaining quiet since I wrote you last, that I may gather strength for the north. I expect hard service, but I hope Jesus will be with me. You remember the sweet promise Jacob got at Bethel while he slept at the foot of that wondrous ladder: "Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest; for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." That promise is to you and me as truly as to Jacob. Therefore do not fear though you may be taken among those who are strangers to Jesus and His love. There is a sweet promise, Ezekiel 11:16. I have felt its preciousness in foreign lands. Jesus Himself will be our sanctuary not made with hands. I was preaching on Thursday last on Revelation 19:12 : "On His head were many crowns," trying to teach them the kingly office of the Lord Jesus. It was a very solemn night. On Sabbath, I lectured on Hebrews 9:9-10, and preached in the evening on Isaiah 49:5 : "Though Israel be not gathered," showing that however many will be lost by unbelief, still Christ would not lose one beam of His glory. If all the world were blind, and said the sun was dark, that would not take away one bright ray from it. It was a very awful subject, and my heart yearned over poor lost sinners. Four little girls have come since, asking, "What must I do to be saved?" Three of them were awakened before, and one very lately. A widow came last night, whom I never saw before, to tell me that she had found the Lord Jesus. To-night we have been at a large meeting about the tracts which are distributed monthly to every house in town,—a very sweet society. It is now late, and I am talking a little while with you as we used to do before retiring. Did you read Genesis 32:1-32 to-day? What a solemn chapter! Do you ever come to a spot you can call Mahanaim, where the angels of God meet you? I trust you are one of the heirs of salvation, and that the angels are sent forth to minister to you. Unconverted souls have no such privilege. You see, Jacob was going on God's errand, at God's command (see Genesis 31:3), when the angels of God met him. Oh, it is sweet to go on God's errands! How long we went Satan's, and the world's, and our own, "serving divers lusts and pleasures!" Do you not feel your heart lighter now as you walk on the narrow way? Is not a Christian's darkest hour calmer than the world's brightest? Is not Jacob's prayer in his distress an interesting one? He puts God in remembrance of His promise. This is what we should do: "The Lord which said unto me;" and, "Thou saidst, I will surely do thee good." (Genesis 32:8; Genesis 32:12). God commands us to do this: "Put me in remembrance." (Isaiah 43:6). It is a blessed way of praying, to pray upon a promise, and to plead, "Do as Thou hast said." You remember Faith's Plea, a little book Miss C.

gave you. Who do you think the man was that wrestled with Jacob? Was it not Jesus, the sinner's Friend? At the daybreak Jacob began to see His blessed features, and when his thigh was out of joint he could do nothing but hang upon Him. This is what you and I should do. Say, "I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me." Are there not some spots that you can call Peniel, where you have met Jehovah-Jesus face to face? When you do get into His presence, oh, do not weary of it! do not soon let go your hold! I am sure we lose much by our slight hold on Jesus. I was telling an interesting story to-night. Thirty thousand Spaniards lately came over the Pyrenees into France, to escape the civil wars. Some Geneva youths determined to take the opportunity of providing them with Spanish Testaments. The London Society granted them 10,000 copies. With these they set off, and distributed freely. But the Spanish priests had come over, and would not allow the Spaniards to receive or keep them. Many were burned or torn; they called them "The Plague." One Spanish youth bought a Testament, kept it, read it, believed on Jesus; and when his countrymen returned to Spain, he stayed behind to hear more of these wonders of redeeming love. Was not this one precious soul worth all the expense and trouble a thousand times over? "Be not weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." Be active for God; you have lost much time already. Do nothing rashly, nothing unfeminine: give no just cause for reproach, but do not fear ridicule or proud men's sneers. If they knew what you know, they would rather inquire, "Oh that I knew where I might find Him!" Meanwhile, good-night. May He who never slumbers nor sleeps watch over you all, and keep you till your dying day! May Jesus be near you, and make you His own. I fear I must not visit Kelso this season. I leave for the north on Monday, and do not expect to be home till the 25th. I fear this cuts off all hope of my visiting R. the time you mention. I do hope to be in England early in the summer, but before that I do not see my way. But I shall gladly leave myself in Jehovah's hand. Present duty is ours; neither must we consult our mere wishes. If I hear from you before I leave, I shall try and send you another line. I am glad you teach in the classes, and I think I see you telling all you know. Remember Paul; when his heart was changed, for thirty years he did nothing else than serve Jesus. He laboured away in the service of Him who died for him, and plucked him from the burning. It is interesting to notice, also, how often Paul told them of his own conversion. He told it to the Jews (Acts 22:1-30); then to Agrippa (Acts 26:1-32); then to the Galatians (Galatians 1:13-16); then to the Philippians (Php 3:4). I think this is an example for us to do the same, cautiously and wisely. John Newton once preached in Newgate to the prisoners. He chose 1 Timothy 1:1 for his text, and told them his own history, so that they wept and he wept. Pray for me still, that my way may be made plain. This is one of the blessings of having spiritual children, that you will surely pray for me. Do not cease to pray for ----, that her eyes may be opened to see her true condition, and that she may call upon Jesus before it be too late. I must now leave you and write a little to others. I preach at Wallacetown to-night. May the Master be there! Oh, He is a sweet Master! One smile from Jesus sustains my soul amid all the storms and frowns of this passing world. Pray to know Jesus better. Have no other righteousness, no other strength, but only Jesus. Soon we shall see Him coming in the clouds of heaven. May you be kept faithful to death.—Ever your loving friend, etc.

02.18. To M. B.,

TO M. B., One of his flock who had felt deserted in soul.

PETERHEAD, February 7, 1843.

DEAR FRIEND,—I was very happy to hear from you. I grieve to hear of your sorrow; but Job's sorrow was deeper, and David's also, in Psalms 42:1-11. If you cannot say, 'I found Him whom my soul loveth," is it not sweet that you can say, "I am sick of love"—He is my beloved still, though He has withdrawn Himself and is gone for a time? Seek into the cause of your declension. See that it be not some Achan in your bosom, some idol set up in the corner of your heart. See that it be not some allowed sin, an unlawful attachment that is drawing you away from the bleeding side of Jesus, and bringing a cloud between you and that bright Sun of Righteousness. When you find out the cause, confess it and bewail it in the ear of a listening God. Tell Him all; keep nothing back. If you cannot find out the cause, ask Him to tell it you. Get it washed in the blood of Jesus. Then get it subdued (Micah 7:19). None but the Lord Jesus can either pardon or subdue. Remember not to rest in a state of desertion. "I will rise now and go about the city." And yet do not think that you have some great thing to do before regaining peace with God. The work on which peace is given has all been done by Jesus for us. "The word is nigh thee." Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. The sunshine is always sweeter after we have been in the shade; so will you find Jesus in returning to Him. True, it is better never to wander; but when you have wandered, the sooner you return the happier you will be. "I will go and return to my first husband, for then it was better with me than now." (Hosea 2:7). Do not delay, but humble yourself under His mighty hand, and He will exalt you in due season. I have been speaking to-night in this place to a large and attentive audience on Zechariah 9:9. May you be enabled to apply it. Remember me to Mrs. K., and also to all your fellow-servants whom I know and love in the truth. Tell N. C. to make sure that she is in Christ, and not to take man's word for it. Tell E. L. to abide in Jesus; and tell her brother to take care lest he be a rotten branch of the true vine. Tell W. J. to be faithful unto death. I have no greater joy than to know that my children walk in the truth.—I am, your loving pastor, etc.

02.19. To One Complaining Of The Plagues Of The Heart

TO ONE COMPLAINING OF THE PLAGUES OF THE HEART Passing on to glory.

ST. PETER'S, March 8, 1843.

Mv DEAR FRIEND,—I send a few lines to you in answer to yours. You complain of the plague of your own heart, and so you will till you die. You know little yet of its chambers of imagery. All that is ours is sin. Our wicked heart taints all we say and do; hence the need of continual atonement in the blood of Jesus. It is not one pardoning that will serve the need of our souls. We must have daily, hourly pardons. I believe you are in the furnace; but it is a short one. Soon the Bridegroom will come, and we shall be with Him, and like Him, and God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes. I burst through all the cobwebs of present things, and, His Spirit anointing my eyes, look at Jesus as one beside me. Blessed Elder Brother, with two natures, God and man; ever-living, never-dying, never-changing! I was preaching last Sabbath on Hebrews 9:13-14 : "He through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself." It was very sweet to myself. In the afternoon I preached on Revelation 2:4-5; "I have this against thee, that thou hast left thy first love:" I fear many of my people have done so; therefore it was very suitable. Several, I see, have felt it very deeply. In the evening I preached on Psalms 78:1 : "They turned back, and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel," on the sinfulness of limiting God. It was a very sweet and solemn day. Meantime, stay your soul on God. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee." A few more trials, a few more tears, a few more days of darkness, and we shall be for ever with the Lord! "In this tabernacle we groan, being burdened." All dark things shall yet be cleared up, all sufferings healed, all blanks supplied, and we shall find fulness of joy (not one drop wanting) in the smile and presence of our God. It is one of the laws of Christ's kingdom, "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." We must not reckon upon a smooth road to glory; but it will be a short one. How glad I am that you have "received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost"! Cleave closely to Jesus, that you may not have to say in a little, "Oh that I had affliction back again, to quicken me in prayer, and make me lie at His feet!"

Trials make the promise sweet, Trials give new life to prayer;

Trials bring me to His feet, Lay me low, and keep me there. This land will soon be strangely convulsed, if God prevent not. The plans now preparing for carrying the gospel into every corner of the land are sweet indeed. If I be spared and strengthened, I go to London towards the end of April. My stay must be very short. It is also intended to send me to the General Assembly in May. My poor flock how I yearn over them! So many of them careless, and judgment at the door! Mr. Burns comes to me to-morrow.

I must add no more, as I have work before me. May you experience more and more, that "when He giveth quietness, none can make trouble!"—even as you once experienced the other, "When He hideth His face, then can behold Him?" Soon we shall see Him as He is: then our trials shall be

done. We shall reign with Him, and be entirely like Him. The angels will know us by our very faces to be brothers and sisters of Jesus.

Remember Jesus for us is all our righteousness before a holy God, and Jesus in us is all our strength in an ungodly world. Persevere ever to death; eternal life will make up for all. I was reading to-day, "God hath granted repentance unto life." Remember Barnabas' advice, "Cleave to the Lord"—not to man, but to the Lord. May He perfect all that concerneth you. Do not fear the face of man. Remember how small their anger will appear in eternity. Till then, believe me your friend in gospel bands, etc.

02.20. Children Called To Christ

CHILDREN CALLED TO CHRIST Like mist on the mountain, Like ships on the sea, So swiftly the years
Of our pilgrimage flee; In the grave of our fathers How soon we shall lie!

Dear children, to-day To a Saviour fly.

How sweet are the flowerets In April and May! But often the frost makes Them wither away.

Like flowers you may fade: Are you ready to die?

While 'yet there is room,' To a Saviour fly. When Samuel was young, He first knew the Lord;

He slept in His smile, And rejoiced in His word: So most of God's children Are early brought nigh:

Oh! seek Him in youth— To a Saviour fly. Do you ask me for pleasure?

Then lean on His breast; For there the sin-laden And weary find rest. In the valley of death You will
triumphing cry—

'If this be called dying, 'Tis pleasant to die!'

January 1, 1831.

02.21. The Barren Fig-Tree.

THE BARREN FIG-TREE.

Within a vineyard's sunny bound An ample fig-tree shelter found, Enjoying sun and showers. The boughs were graceful to the view, With spreading leaves of deep-green hue, And gaily blushing flowers. When round the vintage season came, This blooming fig was still the same, As promising and fair; But though the leaves were broad and green, No precious fruit was to be seen, Because no fruit was there.

'For three long years,' the master cried, 'Fruit on this tree to find I've tried, But all in vain my toll.

Ungrateful tree! the axe's blow Shall lay thy leafy honours low:

Why cumpers it the soil?'

'Ah! let it stand just one year more,' The dresser said, 'till all my store Of rural arts I've shown.

About the many roots I'll dig; And if it bear, we've gained the fig—

If not, then cut it down.'

How many years lint thou, my heart, Acted the barren fig-tree's part, Leafy, and fresh, and fair:

Enjoying heavenly dews of grace, And sunny smiles from God's own face! But where the fruit? ah! where?

How often must the Lord have prayed That still my day might be delayed, Till all due means were tried!

Afflictions, mercies, health, and pain, How long shall these be all in vain To teach this heart of pride?

Learn, O my soul, what God demands Is not a faith like barren sands, But fruit of heavenly hue. By this we prove that Christ we know, If in His holy steps we go:

Faith works by love, if true.

August 14, 1834.

02.22. Jehovah Tsidkenu

JEHOVAH TSIDKENU 'THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.'

(The watchword of the Refomers.) I once was a stranger to grace and to God, I knew not my danger, and felt not my load;

Though friends spoke in rapture of Christ on the tree, Jehovah Tsidkenu was nothing to me.

I oft read with pleasure, to sooth or engage, Isaiah's wild measure and John's simple page; But e'en when they pictured the blood-sprinkled tree Jehovah Tsidkenu seem'd nothing to me.

Like tears from the daughters of Zion that roll, I wept when the waters went over His soul;

Yet thought not that my sins had nail'd to the tree Jehovah Tsidkenu - 'twas nothing to me. When free grace awoke me, by light from on high, Then legal fears shook me, I trembled to die; No refuge, no safety in self could I see, - Jehovah Tsidkenu my Saviour must be. My terrors all vanished before the sweet name; My guilty fears banished, with boldness I came To drink at the fountain, life-giving and free, - Jehovah Tsidkenu is all things to me.

Jehovah Tsidkenu! my treasure and boast, Jehovah Tsidkenu! I ne'er can be lost; In thee I shall conquer by flood and by field, My cable, my anchor, my breast-plate and shield!

Even treading the valley, the shadow of death, This "watchword" shall rally my faltering breath; For while from life's fever my God sets me free, Jehovah Tsidkenu, my death song shall be.

November 18, 1884.

02.23. I Am Debtor.

'I AM DEBTOR.' When this passing world is done, When has sunk yon glaring sun, When we stand with Christ in glory, Looking o'er life's finished story, Then, Lord, shall I fully know— Not till then—how much I owe. When I hear the wicked call On the rocks and hills to fall, When I see them start and shrink On the fiery deluge brink, Then, Lord, shall I fully know— Not till then—how much I owe. When I stand before the throne Dressed in beauty not my own, When I see Thee as Thou art, Love Thee with unsinning heart, Then, Lord, shall I fully know— Not till then—how much I owe. When the praise of heaven I hear, Loud as thunders to the ear, Loud as many waters' noise, Sweet as harp's melodious voice, Then, Lord, shall I fully know— Not till then—how much I owe.

Even on earth, as through a glass, Darkly let Thy glory pass, Make forgiveness feel so sweet, Make thy Spirit's help so meet—

Even on earth, Lord, make me know Something of how much I owe.

Chosen not for good in me, Wakened up from wrath to flee, Hidden in the Saviour's side, By the Spirit sanctified,—

Teach me, Lord, on earth to show, By my love, how much I owe.

Oft I walk beneath the cloud, Dark as midnight's gloomy shroud;

But, when fear is at the height, Jesus comes, and all is light.

Blessed Jesus! bid me show Doubting saints how much I owe. When in flowery paths I tread, Oft by sin I'm captive led;

Oft I fall, but still arise; The Spirit comes—the tempter flies.

Blessed Spirit! bid me show Weary sinners all I owe.

Oft the nights of sorrow reign-- Weeping, sickness, sighing, pain; But a night Thine anger burns—

Morning comes, and joy returns.

God of comforts! bid me show To Thy poor how much I owe. May 1837.

02.24. Fountain Of Siloam.

FOUNTAIN OF SILOAM.

Isaiah 8:6.

Beneath Moriah's rocky side A gentle fountain springs;

Silent and soft its waters glide, Like the peace the Spirit brings. The thirsty Arab stoops to drink Of the cool and quiet wave, And the thirsty spirit stops to think Of Him who came to save.

Siloam is the fountain's name, It means 'One sent from God;' And thus the Holy Saviour's fame It gently spreads abroad.

Oh, grant that I, like this sweet well, May Jesus' image bear, And spend my life, my all, to tell How full His mercies are.

FOOT OF CARMEL, June 1839.

02.25. The Sea Of Galilee.

THE SEA OF GALILEE.

How pleasant to me thy deep blue wave, OSea of Galilee! For the glorious One who came to save
Hath often stood by thee.

Fair are the lakes in the land I love, Where pine and heather grow; But thou hast loveliness far
above What Nature can bestow.

It is not that the wild gazelle Comes down to drink thy tide, But He that was pierced to save from
hell Oft wandered by thy side.

It is not that the fig-tree grows, And palms, in thy soft air, But that Sharon's fair and bleeding Rose
Once spread its fragrance there.

Graceful around thee the mountains meet, Thou calm-reposing sea; But alit far more; the beautiful
feet Of Jesus walked o'er thee.

These days are past—Bethsaida, where?

Chorazin, where art thou? His tent the wild Arab pitches there, The wild reeds shade thy brow.

Tell me, ye mouldering fragments, tell, Was the Saviour's city here?

Lifted to heaven, has it sunk to hell, With none to shed a tear?

Ah I would my flock from thee might lean How days of grace will flee!

How all an offered Christ who spurn Shall mourn at last like thee! And was it beside this very sea
The new-risen Saviour said.

Three times to Simon, 'Lovest thou me? My lambs and sheep then feed.'

O Saiour! gone to God's right hand, Yet the same Saviour still, Graved on Thy heart is this lovely
strand, And every fragrant hill.

Oh! give me, Lord, by this sacred wave, Threefold Thy love divine, That I may feed, till I find my
grave, Thy flock— both Thine and mine.

SEA OF GALILEE, July 16, 1839.

02.26. To Yonder Side.

TO YONDER SIDE.

Luke 8:22-25.

Behind the hills of Naphtali The sun went slowly down, Leaving on mountain, tower, and tree, A tinge of golden brown. The cooling breath of evening woke The waves of Galilee, Till on the shore the waters broke In softest melody.

'Now launch the bark,' the Saviour cried— The chosen twelve stood by—

'And let us cross to yonder side, Where the hills are steep and high.'

Gently the bark o'er the water creeps, While the swelling sail they spread, And the wearied Saviour gently sleeps With a pillow 'neath His head. On downy bed the world seeks rest, Sleep flies the guilty eye; But he who leans on the Father's breast May sleep when storms are nigh. But soon the lowering sky grew dark O'er Bashan's rocky brow; The storm rushed down upon the bark, And waves dashed o'er the prow. The pale disciples trembling spake, While yawned the watery grave:

'We perish, Master! Master, wake!

Carest Thou not to save?'

Calmly He rose with sovereign will, And hushed the storm to rest:

'Ye waves,' He whispered, 'peace! be still!'

They calmed like a pardoned breast. So have I seen a fearful storm O'er wakened sinner roll, Till Jesus' voice and Jesus' form Said, 'Peace, thou weary soul.' And now He bends His gentle eye His wondering followers o'er:

'Why raise this unbelieving cry?

I said, "To yonder shore." When first the Saviour wakened me, And showed me why He died, lie pointed o'er life's narrow sea, And said, 'To yonder side.'

'I am the ark where Noah dwelt, And heard the deluge roar: No soul can perish that has felt My rest— To yonder shore.'

Peaceful and calm the tide of life When first I sailed with Thee,— My sins forgiven—no inward strife— My breast a glassy sea. But soon the storm of passion raves, My soul is tempest tossed;

Corruptions rise like angry waves:

'Help, Master, I am lost!'

'Peace! peace I be still, thou raging breast, My fulness is for thee'— The Saviour speaks, and all is rest, Like the waves of Galilee. And now I feel His holy eye Upbraids my heart of pride,—

'Why raise this unbelieving cry?

I said, "To yonder side."

BEGUN AT THE LAKE OF GALILEE.

July 15, 1839.

02.27. The Child Coming To Jesus.

THE CHILD COMING TO JESUS.

Suffer me to come to Jesus, Mother dear, forbid me not; By His blood from hell He frees us, Makes us fair without a spot.

Suffer me, my earthly father, At His pierced feet to fail;

Why forbid me? help me, rather;

Jesus is my all in all.

Suffer me to run unto Him!

Gentle sisters, come with me.

Oh that all I love but knew Him!

Then my home a heaven would be.

Loving playmates, gay and smiling, Bid me not forsake the cross;

Hard to bear is your reviling, Yet for Jesus all is dross.

Yes, though all the world have chid me—

Father, mother, sister, friend—

Jesus never will forbid me!

Jesus loves me to the end!

Gentle Shepherd, on Thy shoulder Carry me, a sinful lamb;

Give me faith, and make me bolder, Till with Thee in heaven I am.

July 1841.

02.28. On J. T.

ON J. T., A BELIEVING BOY, WHO DIED FEB. 1842.

I little thought, when last we met, Thy sun on earth was nearly set;

I said what I can ne'er forget, 'Dear boy, we'll meet again.'

Though thou wert tossed upon thy bed, And sometimes criedst, 'My head, my head!

Yet still the smile came back—I said, 'Fair boy, we'll meet again.' No hope thy weeping mother had, Thy sister's face was pale and sad, But thine was always bright and glad—

Dear boy, we'll meet again.

'Twas kind,' thou saidst, 'in God to die For worms like me. Once I would fly A darkened room—now Christ is nigh.'

Fair boy, we'll meet again.

'I love you well, my mother dear—

I love you all, yet shed no tear;

I'd rather be with Christ than here—

Farewell, we'll meet again.

'I fain would live to preach to men; But if my God should spare till then, I would be loth to die again.'—

Dear boy, we'll meet again. The Sabbath sun rose bright and clear When thine was setting on us here, To shine more bright in yonder sphere—

Farewell, we'll meet again.

I stood beside thy silent bed, Thy marble brow was cold and dead, Thy gentle soul was fled—was fled.—

Dear boy, we'll meet again.

I saw thee in thy narrow rest, The clods upon thy coffin pressed; The clouds dropped tears, yet in my breast God said, 'We'll meet again.'

Yes, parents, smile through all your tears, A crown of life your darling wears; The grave a shady porch appears To where we'll meet again. The precious dust beneath that lies Shall at the call of Jesus rise, To meet the Bridegroom in the skies, That day we'll meet again.

S. Earnest Heed to the Message

Earnest Heed to the Message by Robert Murray M'Cheyne

"Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip" (Hebrews 2:1). COULD WE LOOK into the secret history of believers, what woeful declensions might be pointed out. How many, who began the conflict well, have fallen under the blows of Apollyon. How many are there of whom God complains: "What iniquity have ye found in me that ye are gone far from me" (Jeremiah 2:5). How many of whom Jesus complains, "I have this against thee, that thou hast left thy first love" (Revelation 2:4). The spring of all these sad declensions is to be found in "letting slip the things which we have heard".

1. Meditate on the times when Christians are in danger of letting the gospel slip.

(i) A time of worldly prosperity. An old divine says, "Quails often make a lean soul". "He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their souls." When a man is under conviction of sin, divine things often absorb every other anxiety. That text is ever before him, "What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?". He becomes careless of his person, for he feels that he would be decking a body condemned to the burning. He becomes careless of his business, for the matter of his forgiveness is unsettled. He walks among the things of time, looking through them into the things of eternity. What a vain shadow is this world to an awakened soul. O! how that soul sickens at the vain companies of an unbelieving world; how he loathes their dances and wanton songs. But when that soul has found true rest in Christ, sometimes the world begins to smile again. He begins to launch out into business, or a more lucrative situation is offered to him. His attention is a little diverted from eternal things; he becomes more keen about the things of time. He begins to lose his fresh hold of Christ. He is letting slip the things which he heard. So it was with Lot. When he first came from Haran he left all for God. He followed Abraham, a simple shepherd lad with staff in hand. But when he got flocks, and herds, and tents, and when he saw the plain of Sodom well watered everywhere, he went and pitched his tent toward Sodom, Genesis 13:1-18. So it was with Demas. At one time he seemed to leave all for Christ. He became the companion of self-denying Paul. But soon his eye was caught with the glitter of gold. He lets slip the things which he heard. He bids farewell to the believer's joys and trials: "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world" (2 Timothy 4:10). O my soul, "love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him".

(ii) A time of persecution. "For every ten bodies which persecution has killed, it has slain a thousand souls." We are told of the seed that sprung up so quickly in stony places, that "when the sun was up it withered away", and Jesus explains this of those who, "when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by they are offended" (Matthew 13:21). Some people are brought to Christ with little or no persecution. They attain "to joy and peace in believing", no man forbidding them. They begin to think that the offence of the cross has ceased, and that the solemn warnings of tribulation to the believer were intended for a bye-gone generation. Suddenly their sky is overcast. They begin to be hated, and buffeted, and opposed for

their attachment to Christ. An awful prospect is before them. Either they must breast the tide of scorn and reproach that is now flowing in upon them, perhaps from their dearest friends, or else they must let slip the things which they have heard. Ah! how often, in such an hour, the soul shrinks back from an open confession of Christ before men, refuses to bear the cross, and falls into unholy compromise with an unbelieving world. Storms try the vessel, and persecution tries the believer. When Peter was in peace he could say, "Though all men forsake thee, yet will not I". But when the hour of trial came, he said with oaths and curses, "I know not the man".

2. Meditate on the remedy. "We ought to give the more earnest heed," etc.

(i) Increase thy diligence in the means of grace. If you have truly found the Lord Jesus, be often at the spot where you have met with Him. Every true disciple should often resort to Gethsemane, John 18:2. If you have found Him in the Word, be faithful and diligent in meeting Him there. If you begin to let your Bible slip, you are beginning to let Jesus slip. If you found Him in secret prayer, give the more earnest heed to meet Him often there. It is a sweet trysting-place with Jesus, "within the veil". If you let slip the throne of grace, you let Him slip who sits thereon. Have you found Jesus in the sanctuary, then "love the habitation of his house, and the place where his honour dwelleth" (Psalms 26:8). Has He revealed Himself to you in the breaking of bread, then "continue stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and in fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayer" (Acts 2:42).

(ii) Feed on Christ in the ordinances. Many love the ordinances who love not Christ. Many are occupied about the shell who never taste the kernel of the gospel. These are Sardians who "have a name to live while they are dead". These are talkers about the gospel and its ministers; but "the talk of their lips tendeth to perjury". If you have found Christ in ordinances, give earnest heed to love Him more and more. Penetrate through every veil to the living Saviour, and the living God. Do not rest in a form of prayer if you find not Christ. "Bodily service profiteth little". O my soul, abhor the cloak of formality. It is an abomination to God and man. "It is iniquity, even the solemn meeting." But O how sweet are ordinances when we can say, He brought me into his banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.

(iii) Watch against occasions of letting slip. If you knew the deceitfulness, the desperate and unsearchable wickedness of your own heart, and if you knew the adversary who accuses you day and night, you would be sober and vigilant. Watch your own heart, its infirmities and tendencies; "Keep thy heart above all keeping, for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23). Watch the roaring lion; be not ignorant of his devices, 1 Peter 5:8. Watch the world, for you are in an enemy's country, "The whole world lieth in wickedness" (1 John 5:19). Above all, keep your eye on Jesus. You cannot hold Him if He does not hold you. "Cast all your care upon him, for he careth for you" (1 Peter 5:7).

S. Electing Love

SERMON XII "ELECTING LOVE" by Robert Murray M'Cheyne

John 15:16. "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain." This is a very humbling, and at the same time, a very blessed word to the true disciple. It was very humbling to the disciples to be told that they had not chosen Christ. Your wants were so many, your hearts were so hard, that ye have not chosen me. And yet it was exceedingly comforting to the disciples to be told that he had chosen them: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." This showed them that his love was first with them — that he had a love for them when they were dead. And then he showed them that it was love that would make them holy: "Ye have; not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain."

Let us take up the truths in this verse as they occur:

I. Men naturally do not choose Christ, "Ye have not chosen me." This was true of the apostles; this is true of all that will ever believe to the end of the world. "Ye have not chosen me." The natural ear is so deaf that it cannot hear; the natural eye is so blind that it cannot see Christ. It is true in one sense that every disciple chooses Christ; but it is when God opens the eye to see him — it is when God gives strength to the withered arm to embrace him. But Christ's meaning is, You would never have chosen me, if I had not chosen you. It is quite true that when God opens a sinner's heart, he chooses Christ and none but Christ. It is quite true that a heart that is quickened by the Spirit, ever chooses Christ and none but Christ, and will forego all the world for Christ. But, brethren, the truth here taught us is this that every awakened sinner is willing to embrace Christ, but not till made willing. Those of you who have been awakened, you did not choose Christ. If a physician were to come into your house, and say he had come to cure you of your disease, if you felt that you were not diseased, you would say, I have no need of you, go to my neighbour. This is the way you do with Christ; he offers to cure you, but you say you are not diseased; he offers to cover your naked soul with his obedience, you say I have no need of that covering.

Another reason why you do not choose Christ is, you see no beauty in him. He is a root out of a dry ground, in which there is no beauty nor comeliness. You see no beauty in his person, no beauty in his obedience, no glory in his cross. You see him not, and, therefore, you do not choose him.

Another reason why you do not choose Christ is, you do not want to be made holy by him: "He shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." But you love your sin, you love your pleasure, therefore when the Son of God comes and says, he will save you from your sin, you say, I love my sin, I love my pleasure. So you can never come to terms with Christ: "ye have not chosen me"; although I died, yet you have not chosen me. I have spoken to you many years, and yet you have not chosen me. I have sent you my Bible to instruct you, and yet you have not chosen me. Brethren, this accusation will meet you in the judgment — I would have covered you

with my obedience, but ye would not have me.

II. Christ chooses his own disciples: "I have chosen you." Christ: looked upon them with a look of divine benignity, and said, "I have chosen you." Every one whom he brings to glory, he chooses.

1. The time when he chooses them. I observe that it was before they believed: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you," as much as to say, I began with you, you did not begin with me. You will notice this in Acts 18:9, Acts 18:10, "Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee; for I have much people in this city." Paul was at this time at Corinth, the most lascivious and wicked city in the ancient world; they were given over to banqueting and grievous idolatry, and yet Christ said to Paul, "I have much people in this city." They had not chosen Christ, but he had chosen them; they had not repented, yet Christ fixed his eye on them. This plainly shows you that Christ chooses his own before they seek him.

2. But further, Christ chooses his own from the beginning; 2 Thessalonians 2:13 : "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth," Ephesians 1:4, "According as he had chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." So, brethren, it was before the foundation of the world that Christ chose his own; when there was neither sun nor moon; when there was neither sea nor land — it was from the beginning. Ah, he might well say, you have not chosen me. It was before man loved man, or angel loved angel, that Christ chose his own. Now, I know the meaning of Paul when he says, That you may be able to know the length and breadth, the height and the depth of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge. Now, I am not surprised at the death of Christ! It was a love so great that it broke over the banks that held it in; a love that broke over a Calvary and a Gethsemane. O brethren! do you know this love? But I come now to the reason of his love — "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." Now, it is a very natural question, Why did he choose me? I answer, that the reason why he choose you was, the good pleasure of his will. You will see this illustrated in Mark 3:13 : "And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him." There was a great crowd round about him; he called some, he did not call all. The reason here given why he did it is, "He called whom he would." There is no reason in the creature; the reason is in him who chooses. You will see this in Malachi 1:2 : "I have loved you, saith the Lord; yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau." Were they not of the same mother? yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau. The only reason given, you see, is, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." You will see this also in Romans 9:15, Romans 9:16. The only reason given in the Bible why Christ loved us — and if you study till you die you will not find another — is, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." This is evident from all those that Christ chooses. We read of two great apostacies — one on earth, the other in heaven. First of all, one in heaven; Lucifer, the son of the morning, through pride, sinned, and God cast him, and those that sinned with him, into hell. The second was on earth; Adam sinned, and was driven out of paradise. They were both deserving of punishment. God had a purpose of love; which is it for? Perhaps angels pleaded for their fellow-angels; yet Christ passed them by, and died for man. Why did he die for man? The answer is, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." The same thing is evident in the individuals Christ chooses. You would think Christ would choose the rich, and yet what says

James? "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, which he hath promised to them that love him?"

Again, you would think Christ would choose the noble; they have not the prejudices that the poor have; but what says the Scripture, "Not many rich, not many noble are called."

Again, you would think he would choose those that are learned. The Bible is written in difficult language; its doctrines are hard to be understood; yet what says Christ? "I thank thee, O Father, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."

Again, you would think he would have chosen the virtuous. Though there are none righteous, yet there are some more virtuous than others; yet what says Christ? The publicans and the harlots enter the kingdom of heaven while the Pharisee is shut out. "O the depth both of the riches and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Why did he take the most vile? Here is the only reason I have been able to find ever since I read my Bible — "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."

Christ chooses some that seek him, and not others. There was a young ruler came to Christ, and said, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" He was in earnest, yet something came in the way, and he went back. A woman that was a sinner came behind Christ weeping, she also was in earnest, Christ said unto her, "Thy sins which are many are forgiven thee." What made the difference? — "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." "He called unto him whom he would." O my brethren, be humbled under the sovereignty of God! If he will have compassion, then he will have compassion.

III. But I hasten to the third and last point: "I have ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain." Christ not only chooses who are to be saved, but he chooses the way; and he not only chooses the beginning and the end, he chooses the middle also. "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love," Ephesians 1:4. And in the eighth chapter of Romans it is said, "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he glorified." Salvation is like a golden chain let down from heaven to earth; two links are in the hand of God — election and final salvation; but some of the links are on earth — conversion, adoption, etc. Brethren, Christ never chooses a man to believe, and then leap into glory. Ah, my brethren, how this takes away the feet from all objections raised against this holy doctrine of election. Some here perhaps say, If I am elected, I will be saved, live as I like. No; if you live an unholy life, you will not be saved. Some may say, If I am not elected, I will not be saved, do as I like. Whether you are elected or not, I know not, but this I know — if you believe on Christ you will be saved.

Let me ask you, Have you believed on Christ? Let me ask you another question, Do you bear his whole image? Then you are elected, and will be saved. But if there are any here who have not believed on Christ, and who do not live a holy life, then, whatever you think now, you will find it true that you were among those who were passed by.

Ah! my brethren, those who deny election, deny that God can have mercy. O it is a sweet truth that God can have mercy! There is nothing in the hardness of your hearts that will keep God from having mercy on you. Go away home with this truth, that God can have mercy. "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you," etc. Amen.

S. Holding Christ Fast

Holding Christ Fast by Robert Murray M'Cheyne

It was a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him, and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me. - Song of Solomon 3:4. HAVE YOU found Him whom your soul loves? Have you this day seen His beauty, heard His voice, believed the record concerning Him, sat under His shadow, found fellowship with Him? Then hold Him, and do not let Him go.

I. Motives.

1. Because peace is to be found in Him.- Justified by faith, we have peace with God - not peace with ourselves, not peace with the world, with sin, with Satan, but peace with God. True divine peace is to be found only in believing, only in keeping fast hold of Christ. If you let Him go, you let go your righteousness; for this is His name. You are then without righteousness, without a covering from the wrath of God, without a way to the Father. The law will again condemn you; God's frown will again overshadow you; you will again have terrors of conscience. Hold Him then, and do not let Him go. Whatever you let go, let not Christ go; for He is our peace, not in knowledge, not in feeling, but trust in Him alone.

2. Holiness flows from Him.-No true holiness in this world, but it springs from Him. A living Christ is the spring of holiness to all His members. As long as we hold Him, and do not let Him go, our holiness is secure. He is engaged to keep us from falling. He loves us too well to let us fall under the reigning power of sin. His word is engaged: "I will put my Spirit within you." His honor would be tarnished if any that cleave to Him were suffered to live in sin. If you let Him go, you will fall into sin. You have no strength, no store of grace, no power to resist a thousand enemies, no promises. If Christ be for you, who can be against you? But if you let go His arms, where are you?

3. Hope of glory is in Him.- We rejoice in hope of the glory of God. If you have found Jesus this day, you have found a way into glory. A few steps more, you can say, and I shall be forever with the Lord. I shall be free from pain and sorrow, free from sin and weakness, free from enemies. As long as you hold Christ, you can see your way to the judgment seat. "Thou wilt guide me with thy counsel, and receive me to thy glory." This gives you such joy, such transporting desires after the heavenly world! But let Christ go, and this will be gone. Let Christ go, and how can you die? The grave is covered with clouds of threatening. Let Him go, and how can you go to the judgment-where can you appear?

II. Means.

1. Christ promises to keep you holding Him.- If you are really holding Christ this day, you are in a most blessed condition, for Christ engages to keep you cleaving to Him. "My soul followeth hard after thee, and thy right hand upholdeth me." He that is the Creator of the world is the upholder of it, so He that new creates the soul keeps it in being. This is never to be forgotten. Not only does

the Church lean on her beloved, but He puts His left hand under her head, and His right hand cloth embrace her. "I taught Ephraim, how to go, taking them by their arms." It is good for a child to hold fast by its mother's neck; but ah! that would be a feeble support, if the maternal arm did not enfold the child, and clasp it to her bosom. Faith is good; but ah! it is nothing without the grace that gave it. "I will put my fear in your heart."

2. Faith in Christ. - The only way to hold fast is to believe more and more. Get a larger acquaintance with Christ, with His person, work, and character. Every page of the gospel unfolds a new feature in His character, every line of the epistles discloses new depths of His work. Get more faith, and you will get a firmer hold. A plant that has a single root may be easily torn up by the hand, or crushed by the foot of the wild beast, or blown down by the wind; but a plant that has a thousand roots struck down into the ground can stand. Faith is like the root. Many believe a little concerning Christ, one fact. Every new truth concerning Jesus is a new root struck downward. Believe more intensely. A root may be in a right direction, but, not striking deep, it is easily torn up. Pray for deep-rooted faith. Pray to be established, strengthened, settled. Take a long intense look at Jesus - often. If you wanted to know a man again, and he was going away, you would take an intense look at his face. Look then at Jesus, deeply, intensely, till every feature is graven on your heart. Thomas Scott overcame the fear of death by looking intensely at his dead child, who had died in the Lord.

3. Prayer. - Jacob at Bethel. "Take hold of my strength," (Isaiah 27:5). You must begin and pray after another fashion than you have done. Let it be real intercourse with God, like Hezekiah, Jacob and Moses.

4. By not offending Him.

First, by sloth. When the soul turns sleepy or careless, Christ goes away. Nothing is more offensive to Christ than sloth. Love is an ever-active thing, and when it is in the heart it will keep us waking. Many a night His love to us kept Him waking. Now, can you not watch with Him one hour?

Second, By idols. You cannot hold two objects. If you are holding Christ today, and lay hold of another object to tomorrow, He cannot stay. He is a jealous God. You cannot keep worldly companions and Christ too. "A companion of fools shall be destroyed." When the ark came into the house of Dagon, it made the idol fall flat.

Third, By being unwilling to be sanctified. When Christ chooses us and draws us to Himself, it is that He may sanctify us. Christ is often grieved by our desiring to reserve one sin.

Fourth, By an unholy house. "I brought him into my mother's house." Remember to take Christ home with you, and let Him rule in your house. If you walk with Christ abroad, but never take Him home, you will soon part company forever.

S. I Will Pour Water

I WILL POUR WATER Robert Murray M'Cheyne

“For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy Seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses.” Isaiah 44:3-4.

These words describe a time of refreshing. There are no words in the whole Bible that have been oftener in my heart, and oftener on my tongue than these, since I began my ministry among you. And yet, although God has never, from the very first day left us without some tokens of his presence, yet he has never fulfilled this promise; and I have taken it up to-day, in order that we may consider it more fully, and plead it more anxiously with God. For, as Rutherford said: “My record is on high, that your heaven would be like two heavens to me; and the salvation of you all like two salvations to me.”

I. Who is the author in a work of grace? It is God: “I will pour.”

1. It is God who begins a work of anxiety in dead souls. So it is in Zechariah 12:1-14 : “I will pour out the Spirit of grace and supplications, and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced and mourn.” And so the promise is in John 16:1-33 : “When he is come, he will convince the world of sin; because they believe not on me.” And so is the passage of Ezekiel 37:1-28 : “Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.” if any of you have been awakened, and made to beat upon the breast, it is God, and God alone that hath done it. If ever we are to see a time of wide-spread concern among your families, children asking their parents, parents asking their children, people asking their ministers, “ What must I do to be saved?” if ever we are to see such a time as Mr. Edwards speaks of, when there was scarcely a single person in the whole town left unconcerned about the great things of the eternal world, God must pour out the Spirit: “I will pour.”

2. It is God who carries on the work, leading awakened persons to Christ. “I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,” Joel 2:28 “and whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered.” Joel 2:32. And again, in John: “He shall convince the world of righteousness.” If ever we are to see souls flying like a cloud, and like doves, to Jesus Christ, if ever we are to see multitudes of you fleeing to that city of refuge, if ever we are to see parents rejoicing over their children as new-born, husbands rejoicing over their wives, and wives over their husbands, God must pour out the Spirit. He is the author and finisher of a work of grace: “I will pour.”

3. It is God who enlarges his people. You remember, in Zechariah 4:1-14, how the olive trees supplied the golden candlesticks with oil — they emptied the golden oil out of themselves. If there is little oil, the lamps burn dim; if much oil, the lamps begin to blaze. Ah! if ever we are to see you who are children of God greatly enlarged, your hearts filled with joy, your lips filled with praises; if ever we are to see you growing like willows beside the water-courses, filled with all the fullness of God — God must pour down his Spirit. He must fulfil his word; for he is the Alpha and Omega —

the author and finisher of a work of grace: — “I will pour.”

First Lesson. Learn to look beyond ministers for a work of grace. God has given much honor to his ministers; but not the pouring out of the Spirit. He keeps that in his own hand, “I will pour.” “It is not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.” Alas! we would have little hope, if it depended upon ministers; for where are our men of might now? God is as able to do it for to-day as he was at the day of Pentecost; but men are taken up with ministers, and not with God. As long as you look to ministers, God cannot pour; for you would say it came from man. Ah! cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils. One would think we would be humbled in the dust by this time. In how many parishes of Scotland has God raised up faithful men, who cease not day and night to warn every one with tears! and yet still the heavens are like brass, and the earth like iron. Why? Just because your eye is on man, and not on God. Oh! look off man to him, and he will pour; and his shall be all the glory.

Second Lesson. Learn good hope of revival in our day.

Third Lesson. Learn that we should pray for it. We are often for preaching to awaken others; but we should be more upon praying for it. Prayer is more powerful than preaching. It is prayer that gives preaching all its power. I observe that some Christians are very ready to censure ministers, and to complain of their preaching — of their coldness — their unfaithfulness. God forbid that I should ever defend unfaithful preaching, or coldness, or deadness, in the ambassador of Christ! May my right hand sooner forget its cunning! But I do say, where lies the blame of unfaithfulness? — where, but in the want of faithful praying? Why, the very hands of Moses would have fallen down, had they not been held up by his faithful people. Come then, ye wrestlers with God — ye that climb Jacob’s ladder — ye that wrestle Jacob’s wrestling — strive you with God, that he may fulfil his word: “I will pour.”

II. God begins with thirsty souls: “I will pour water upon him that is thirsty.”

1. Awakened persons. There are often souls that have been a long time under the awakening hand of God. God has led them into trouble, but not into peace. He has taken them down into the wilderness, and there they wander about in search of refreshing waters; but they find none. They wander from mountain to hill seeking rest, and finding none; they go from well to well, seeking a drop of water to cool their tongue; they go from minister to minister, from sacrament to sacrament, opening their mouth, and panting earnestly; yet they find no peace. These are thirsty souls. Now, it is a sweet thought that God begins with such: “I will pour water upon him that is thirsty.” The whole Bible shows that God has a peculiar tenderness for such as are thirsty. Christ, who is the express image of God, had a peculiar tenderness for them: “The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary.” “Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest” “If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.” Many of his cures were intended to win the hearts of these burdened souls. The woman that had spent all upon other physicians, and was nothing better but rather worse, no sooner touched the hem of his garment, than she was made whole. Another cried after him, “Lord, help me,” yet he answered not a word; but at last said: “O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt.” Another was bowed down eighteen years; but Jesus laid his hands on her, and immediately she was made straight.

Weary sinner, (1.) This is Jesus; this is what he wants to do for you: "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty." Only believe that he is willing and able, and it shall be done. (2.) Learn that it must come from his hand. In vain you go to other physicians; you will be nothing better, but rather worse. Wait on him; kneel and worship him, saying: "Lord, help me." (3.) Oh! long for a time of refreshing, that weary souls may be brought into peace. If we go on in this every-day way, these burdened souls may perish — may sink uncomforted into the grave. Arise, and plead with God, that he may arise and fulfil his word: "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty."

2. Thirsty believers. All believers should be thirsty; alas! few are. Signs: (1.) Much thirst after the Word. — When two travellers are going through the wilderness, you may know which of them is thirsty, by his always looking out for wells. How gladly Israel came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and seventy palm trees! So it is with thirsty believers; they love the Word, read and preached, they thirst for it more and more. Is it so with you, dear believing brethren? In Scotland long ago, it used to be so. Often, after the blessing was pronounced, the people would not go away till they heard more. Ah! children of God, it is a fearful sign to see little thirst in you I do not wonder much when the world stay away from our meetings for the Word and prayer; but, ah! when you do. I am dumb, my soul will weep in secret places for your pride. I say, God grant that we may not have a famine of the Word ere long. (2.) Much prayer. — When a little child is thirsty for its mother's breast, it will not keep silence; no more will a child of God who is thirsty. Thirst will lead you to the secret well, where you may draw unseen the living water. It will lead you to united prayer. If the town were in want of water, and thirst staring every man in the face, would you not meet one with another, and consult, and help to dig new wells? Now, the town is in want of grace, souls are perishing for lack of it, and you your selves are languishing. Oh! meet to pray. "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." (3.) Desire to grow in grace. — Some persons are contented when they come to Christ. They sink back, as it were, into an easy chair, they ask no more, they wish no more. This must not be. If you are thirsty believers, you will seek salvation as much after conversion as before it. Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." To thirsty souls. Dear children, I look for the first drops of grace among you, in answer to your prayers, to fill your panting mouths. Oh, yes, he will pour. "A vineyard of red wine, I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." Isaiah 27:2, Isaiah 27:3. "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." Isaiah 12:3.

III. God pours floods on the dry ground. The dry ground represents those who are dead I trespasses and sins. Just as you have seen the ground, I a dry summer, all parched and dry, cracking and open, yet it speaks not, it asks not the clouds to fall; so is it with most in our parishes. They are all dead and dry, parched and withered, without a prayer for grace, without even a desire for it. Yet what says God? "I will pour floods upon them."

Marks: —

1. They do not pray. I believe there are many in our parishes who do not make a habit of secret prayer, who, neither in their closet nor in the embowering shade, ever pour out their heart to God. I believe there are many who are dropping into hell who never so much as said: "God be merciful to me, a sinner." Ah! these are the dry ground. Oh! it is sad to think that the souls that are nearest to

hell are the souls that pray least to be delivered from it.

2. They do not wish a work of grace in their souls. I believe many of you came to the house of God to-day who would rather lose house, and home, and friends, than have a work of grace done in your heart. Nothing would terrify you so much as the idea that God might make you a praying Christian. Ah! you are the dry ground; you love death.

3. Those who do not attend to the preached Word. I have heard anxious persons declare that they never heard a sermon in all their life till they were awakened, that they regularly thought about something else all the time. I believe this is the way with many of you. You are the dry ground. What will God pour out on you? Floods, floods of wrath? No; floods of grace, floods of the Spirit, floods of blessing. Oh! the mercy of God, it passes all understanding. You deserve the flood that came on the world of the ungodly: but he offers floods of blessing. You deserve the rain of Sodom; but, behold he offers floods of his Spirit.

First Lesson. Learn how much you are interested that there should be a work of grace in our day. You are the very persons who do not care about lively preaching; who ridicule prayer-meetings, and put a mock on secret prayer; and yet you are the very persons that are most concerned. Ah! poor dry ground souls, you should be the first to cry out for lively ministers; you should go round the Christians, and, on your bended knees, entreat them to come out to our prayer-meeting. You, more than all the rest, should wait for the fulfillment of this word; for if it come not, oh! what will come of you? Poor dead, dead souls, you cannot pray for yourselves! One by one, you will drop into a sad eternity.

Second Lesson. Learn, Christians, to pray for floods. It is God's word, he puts it into your mouth. Oh! do not ask for drops when God offers floods." Open thy mouth and I will fill it."

IV. Effects.

1. Saved souls will be like grass. They shall spring up as grass. So, in Psalms 72:1-20 : "They of the city shall be like grass of the earth." Many will be awakened, many saved. At present, Christ's people are like a single lily amongst many thorns; but in a time of grace they shall be like grass. Count the blades of grass that spring in the clear shining after a rain; so many shall Christ's people be. Count the drops of dew that come from the womb of the morning, shining like diamonds in the morning sun; so shall Christ's people be in a day of his power. Count the stars that sparkle in night's black mantle; so shall Abraham's seed be. Count the dust of the earth; so shall Israel be in the day of an outpoured Spirit. Oh! pray for an outpoured Spirit, ye men of prayer, that there may be many raised up in our day to call him blessed.

2. Believers shall grow like willows. There is nothing more distressing in our day than the want of growth among the children of God. They do not seem to press forward, they do not seem to be running a race. When I compare this year with last year, alas! where is the difference? the same weaknesses, the same coldness; nay, I fear, greater languor in divine things. How different when the Spirit is poured out! They shall be like willows. You have seen the willow, how it grows, ceases not day or night, ever growing, ever shooting out new branches. Cut it down, it springs again. Ah! so would you be, dear Christians, if there were a flood-time of the Spirit, a day of Pentecost. (1.) Then there would be less care about your business and your workshop, more love of prayer and sweet praises. (2.) There would be more change in your heart, victory over the world, the devil,

and the flesh. You would come out, and be separate. (3.) In affliction, you would grow in sweet submission, humility and meekness. There was a time in Scotland when Sabbath-days were growing days. Hungry souls came to the Word, and went away filled with good things. They came like Martha, and went away like Mary. They came like Samson, when his locks were shorn, and went away like Samson when his locks were grown.

3. Self-dedication. "One shall say, I am the Lord's." Oh! there is no greater joy than for a believing soul to give himself all to God. This has always been the way in times of refreshing. It was so at Pentecost. First they gave their ownselves unto the Lord. It was so with Boston, and Doddridge, and Edwards, and all the holy men of old. "I have this day been before God," says Edwards, "and have given myself — all that I am and have — to God; so that I am in no respect my own. I can challenge no right in myself, in this understanding, this will, these affections. Neither have I right to this body, or any of its members; no right to this tongue, these hands, these feet, these eyes, these ears. I have given myself clean away." Oh! would that you knew the joy of giving yourself away. You cannot keep yourself. Oh! this day try and give all to Him. Lie in his hand.

Little children, O that you would become like him who said: "I am God's boy altogether, mother!" Write on your hand; "I am the Lord's."

Amen

S. Lightning from the East

Lightning from the East by Robert Murray M'Cheyne

"For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:27).

WHAT A SOLEMN and glorious event is that spoken of in these words, the coming of the Son of man! His first coming was infinitely wonderful, when He left the bosom of His Father, emptied Himself of His glory, and Himself bare our sins on His own body on the tree. His second coming will be very different, but still infinitely wonderful. "Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation" (Hebrews 9:28). May we be among the number of those who "love his appearing", who are "looking for that blessed hope", and who are "waiting for his Son from heaven, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come". Surely they have but cold love to Jesus that do not burn with desire to see the fair brow that was crowned with thorns.

1. Christ's coming will be terrible as lightning to His enemies. Nothing is more terrific than the lightning. It is so powerful, so sudden, so deadly in its stroke. The strongest man is like a straw before it. Much more terrible will Christ's appearing be to all unbelievers. To His own dear people it will be like the approach of summer. When they see the signs of His coming, they will say to one another, "the summer is nigh" (Matthew 24:32). "He shall come down like rain on the mown grass, as showers that water the earth" (Psalms 72:6). To poor waiting believers "He shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds" (2 Samuel 23:4). To those that fear God's name in this dark world, "The Sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in his wings" (Malachi 4:2). The cry shall be one of ineffable joy to them, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh".

How different that day shall be to unconverted souls! "Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord. To what end is it for you? The day of the Lord is darkness, and not light" (Amos 5:18). That day shall burn as an oven to you. "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel" (2 Thessalonians 1:7-8). Then will be fulfilled that awful word, "All kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him" (Revelation 1:7), O! thou that obeyest not the gospel, where wilt thou hide from the lightning of His eye? Thou wilt say, Ah! there He is—the crucified One—whom I lightly esteemed. O! mountains and rocks fall on me and hide me from Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.

2. Christ's coming shall be sudden as lightning. What can be more awfully sudden than the lightning? A curtain of dark lowering clouds is hung over the sky. A death-like silence reigns over all nature. Not a leaf is stirred by the wind. When suddenly, "the voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire". "The lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west." And the loud pealing thunder shakes the wilderness. So shall the coming of the Son of man be. Whenever that glorious event shall take place, one thing is certain, that it shall be awfully sudden. A thief does not send word what hour he is coming to break up the house. "The day of the Lord so

cometh as a thief in the night." It shall come "like travail on a woman with child". "As a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth." Many will be saying, I think the Saviour will not come at such and such a time. What says the word? "The Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not." Am I ready to meet him? Would it be a grief and terror to me, if what some Christians think were true, that Christ may come even now? Do I love His appearing? Do I obey that command, Song of Solomon 3:11? Am I a wise or foolish virgin? Have I not only a lamp, and wick, and flame, but oil in the lamp? All these are infinitely momentous questions. Happy the soul that can answer, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus".

3. Christ's coming shall be conspicuous as lightning. Lightning cannot be hid. By all it is seen at the same moment. The labourer in the field, the artizan in the workshop, the servant of the mill—all see the flash; but in a far more perfect manner shall be the coming of the Son of man. "Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him." Jesus said to the high priest and all his accusers, "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matthew 26:64). And again it is written, "they shall look on him whom they pierced". O amazing truth! Those who will not look to Christ now must look then. Those who will not "behold the Lamb of God", to be saved by Him, must behold the Lamb coming in wrath to destroy them. O happy believer, you shall cry in that day, "This is our God, we have waited for him". "This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend." "My Lord and my God."

S. The Ark

The Ark by Robert Murray M'Cheyne

Hebrews 11:7. By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

It is a wonderful fact of human nature that we learn far more easily from example than we do in any other way. Now, you have in this passage an example of a sinner saved by faith. It shews you how a sinner is saved. And as Noah fled into the ark which he had prepared, so should you. You too, have an ark provided; and just as Noah thereby condemned the world—that is, shewed that the world was righteously condemned—so will you; if you enter in, you will shew by your faith that its condemnation is just.

Let us go over these things and see:

I. Noah's warning: 'By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house.' We have an account given us of the warning of Noah in the 6th chapter of Genesis, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd verses (Genesis 6:1-3), 'And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh; yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.' That was the first warning. Verse 7, 'And the Lord said, I will destroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth; both man and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air: for it repenteth me that I have made them.' This is the second warning. That was the warning which God gave to Noah; he told him that the Holy Spirit would not always strive with man, and then he told him that he would destroy man whom he had created. Now, if Noah had been like some of you, he might have said, God is a merciful God—he will not destroy the souls that he has made. Or, like some of you, he might have said, O! it is a long time yet; it will be time enough to turn to God a year before the flood comes. But, no; 'Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house.'

Now, brethren, if you would be like Noah, you should be moved with fear. God has warned you, not once, nor twice, but a hundred times. God warns you in the Bible that 'his wrath is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.' It says, 'If you are not converted, you will not see the kingdom of God'; it says, that 'if you commit such things you shall die'; it says that 'if you do not believe you shall be damned'; it says that 'if you are not converted and become as little children, you shall never see the kingdom of God.' Ah, then, man, have you ever trembled at the warning of God? No; then you are not like Noah; you are not like him, for he believed God. I tell you, you could not live on as you do, if you believe God's Word; it is because you are infidel at heart that is the reason why you do not tremble at his Word: 'By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his

house.'

Again, you are warned by ministers. We are to receive the word at God's mouth, and warn the people; and if we do not warn you, God says he will require it at the watchman's hands. This is one of the chief parts of a minister's duty—to warn the unconverted. This is what I have done, both in public and private. I have warned you, and how have you received it? O, you say, do you think I would be afraid of the word of a man? Well, if so, I tell you that it is not our word, it is the Word of God; and, oh! if you do not take the Word of God, spoken through the minister, you are not like Noah.

Again, you are warned by providence. Some of you have seen souls cut down, and yet you are left. Some of you have seen those whom you led into sin taken away, and yet you are left. Ah, brethren, can you say that you have not been warned? and how have you taken it? Some of you have gone deeper into sin. Ah! you are not like Noah. But some of you will make this objection. I do not like to be moved with fear; I like it to be all love. It is quite true that none were ever brought to Christ by fear. We must be brought to Christ by a sight of his love. But then, it is quite as true that you will never be brought out of your security but by fear: you must be drawn out by fear, and drawn in by love. Ah, brethren, do not you despise fear. How was the jailor brought to Christ? 'He called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' What was it that made him ask the question? It was fear. What was it that made the three thousand on the streets of Jerusalem cry, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' It was fear. What was it that made Saul cry, when he lay on the ground, 'Lord what wilt thou have me to do?' It was fear. And so must it be with you, if ever you are brought to Christ. Awake, 'What meanest thou, O sleeper; arise, call upon thy God.' Ah! do not despise fear. I tell you, as long as you remain in that carnal lifeless state, like wine settled on its lees, you will never come to Christ. The Holy Spirit is like a dove, but the first thing he does is to convince of sin.

II. I come now, in the second place, to consider the ark. 'By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house.' We are told about the preparation of the ark in Genesis 6:14 : 'Make thee an ark of gopher-wood: rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shall pitch it within and without with pitch'; then, verse 16 (Genesis 6:16) : 'A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above: and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof, with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it'; Genesis 6:21 : 'And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee; and it shall be for food to thee, and for them. Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.' Observe, brethren, how completely the ark represents Christ. It was of God's planning; and so it is with Christ and the gospel salvation. All the men that lived could not have devised an ark to hold so many: so, in like manner, neither man nor angel could find out a way whereby the sinner could be saved. 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son.' It is said, the angels desire to look into the plan of redemption. It is said, 'it is unsearchable.' It is a plan that saves the sinner, and that gives glory to God. It is a—plan laid so as to bring the sinner to God—a plan that gives glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good will to man. Observe still further, the strength of the ark. God knew what the billows were it would have to contend with. So it is with Christ; God made him strong enough to bear all that came against him, so that he is able to save to the utmost all that come unto God by him. And it was a roomy ark. So it is with

Christ; the commission given to ministers is, 'Yet there is room.' And you will notice there was a door made in the side of it. So it was with Christ; there was a spear thrust into his side; so it is said, 'I am the door.' 'We both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.' 'He that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.' There are no steps up to it, so we have nothing to do but to believe. Again, there was a window on the top of it, that looked up to heaven. So, in Christ, we can look up to a reconciled God. Again, there was provision in the ark. So is there in Christ; 'My God shall supply all your need.' You need gold? Christ has it to bestow. You are polluted, and need a fountain? There is a fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. You are hungry, and need bread? Christ says, 'I am the bread of life.' There is everything you need in the ark. Brethren, how will you escape, if you neglect so great salvation? If you despise an ark so strong, so filled with provision, how will you escape?

III. This leads me to the third point, and that is to inquire, how Noah saved his house. 'By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house.' Noah saved his house by fleeing from all other refuges. Genesis 7:1: 'And the Lord said unto Noah, Come, thou and all thy house into the ark.' Verse 7 (Genesis 7:7): 'And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood. Of clean beasts, and of beasts that are not clean, and of fowls, and of every thing that creepeth upon the earth, there went in two and two unto Noah in the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah.' Observe, dear brethren, that the way in which Noah saved his house was by entering in. First of all, he entered in. Carnal men would have said, Better go to the top of the mountains; but Noah believed God, and fled from all other refuges; and not only did he go to the threshold, but he entered in, and his wife and his sons, and their wives with him, into the ark, and the Lord shut him in. So must it be with you if you would enter in. First of all, you must forsake all other arks. Carnal men will say, There are arks as good as it. Some rest in the ark of God's general mercy, but that is a false ark. Some rest in the ark of their decent moral character. Some rest in their knowledge of the ark, but these are all false arks; all that proceeds from man is false. Brethren, we must flee from all refuges of lies, and remember you must not stop on the threshold; there are many that look in, but do not enter in. There are many that know what is in the ark, but they do not enter in. But come thou into the ark, thou and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee, and the Lord will shut you in. You must not only hear about the ark, but you must enter in. You are not safe because you have wept and prayed. You are only safe when you enter in. 'If any man be in Christ he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.'

All the beasts entered in. There came a lion and a lioness—they, too, entered in. And then there came in the tall cattle; there came a camel-lopard, with its long majestic neck bent down—it, too, entered in. And then came the birds; the eagle that loves to soar aloft in the sky, and feed upon its prey—it, too, entered in. And then the creeping things; there came a serpent, and perhaps, Noah might say when he saw them creeping along the ground, 'These will bite us' but they, too, entered in. So, brethren, it is true that all kinds of sinners may enter in. And it is sweet to see what a change came over them when they entered in. The lion lay down beside the lamb, and the leopard beside the kid. So it is with those that came to Christ. The lion-like nature is changed into the gentle nature of the lamb—the proud man is made humble. 'If any man be in Christ Jesus he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.' Some of you think

you are Christ's, and yet your old nature is not taken away.

IV. What came of the world. It is said he condemned the world. When Noah entered into the ark he condemned the world; not that he judged them, for it is said he was a preacher of righteousness but he entered in, and thereby condemned the world. So is it yet; when a child in an ungodly family is saved, he enters into the ark, and thereby condemns those that do not. Brethren, the most of the world did not know when Noah entered into the ark. Matthew 24:37 : 'As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away,' etc. Brethren, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage. The bride was standing up putting her hand into the bridegroom's hand, and promising herself many happy days—that day the flood came. Some said, Come, let us see a man making a ship on the dry land. They mocked Noah until the day that the flood came. So it is still. Though we tell you of a better ark, yet you go on with your ways, 'Eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage.' Brethren, I believe that the most of you, who ever will be, are gathered already, you are becoming gospel proof, and so you will live on, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the flood of wrath come and sweep you away. Ah, brethren, you mock at the man building the ark; you do this by not entering in. Ah, my brethren, many of you say, when you see persons striving to enter in, they are mad, and this is what they said to Noah. O brethren! it is a happy madness to enter into the ark. But, brethren, I believe that there are many that did not mock Noah, and, perhaps, they helped to build the ark; they, perhaps, went and cut down wood to build it, but they did not enter in. Ah! so it is with you; there are many who say that we are good people, but we carry things too far. Ah, there are many ministers who help to build the ark, that do not enter in themselves; there are many Sabbath school teachers help to build the ark, but do not enter in themselves. It is very probable that some came down to the ark that morning when Noah entered in; but it was too late; God had shut him in. I believe that most of you will come when it is too late. I know that many of you have your convictions, but do not enter in; you will come to the door when it is shut, like the foolish virgins, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us,' but he shall say, 'I know you not.' You will seek to enter in when you hear the rumbling of the chariot of Emmanuel, but it will then be too late. Brethren, it is the devil that is shutting your eyes from seeing these things.

Last of all, it was an awful deluge that came. It came on them before they were aware—when they were 'eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage.' The taverns were all full—the bride was happy—all were full of mirth. And so it will be when the Son of man comes. It will be a sudden flood. And it was a deep flood. It lifted the ark to the top of Ararat. It is calculated that the water rose four hundred feet the first day. Ah, brethren, it was a deep and awful flood, none were able to stand against it—it covered the proudest. Ah, brethren, it is the same word that reserves the world for a flood of fire. And it is said, 'In that day who shall be able to stand?' O be warned, by a sinful worm like yourselves. to flee! 'Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong in the days that I shall deal with thee.' The flood came upon Christ, and oh, how fearful was his agony! But if you are his, it will not come upon you—if you are in this ark, you will be saved; but, if not. you will be lost. God pity you, dear friends, I cannot. God grant that he may do it. before the flood come and sweep you all away. Amen.

Sabbath Afternoon, 5th December 1842.

S. The Call of Abraham

The Call of Abraham by Robert Murray M'Cheyne

Genesis 12:1-3. Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, into a land that I will show thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

Compare this with Acts 7:2-3; Hebrews 11:8. In these words, dear brethren, we have an account of the conversion of Abraham. This is the record given us of the second birth of Abraham. My dear friends, it is the second birth that will be remembered in heaven, and not the first. You know it is common for men to keep their birth-days. Now, the second birth-day is what we will remember in heaven—it is what we will tell the angels in glory: 'Come, hear, all ye that fear God—I'll tell what he did for my soul'

Let us notice from these words:

1. Abraham's conversion.
2. Abraham's trial.
3. Abraham's promise.

I. Abraham's conversion. 'Now the Lord had said unto Abraham'; or as Stephen says, 'The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham.' Let us observe first, the great sovereignty of God in the conversion of this man. We are told by Stephen that he was in Mesopotamia at the time. It is a beautiful country—an immense plain lying between the Tigris and the Euphrates. We learn from the previous chapter that it was a place of great wickedness. It was the place where Nimrod, the great robber, dwelt—or, as he is called, 'The great hunter.' And it was the country where they built the tower of Babel. It was also the land, as we are told by Jeremiah, of graven images. It is believed by divines that it was the place where they first bowed down to graven images. Jeremiah 50:38, 'For it is the land of graven images, and they are mad upon their idols.' Another remarkable fact connected with this land was, that the very family out of which Abraham was chosen worshipped graven images. Joshua 24:2 : 'And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time (that is, on the other side of the Euphrates), even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nabor; and they served other gods.' Such was the country, and such the family out of which God raised Abraham. You would have thought that God would not have come into such a place; and, O brethren! you would have thought, least of all, that he would have come to the house of Terah, who served other gods! Again, you wonder why he came to Abraham. You would have thought he would have come to Terah. Why, then, did he take Abraham—a man seventy years old—spent in sin?—'Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight.' When he looked down upon that great plain, why did

he come to the house of Terah, and say to Abraham, 'Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee?' Ah, brethren, God is a God of grace. None of you can say, 'He came to me because I sought him.' How often has God come into this place and gone into the most wicked family, and drawn out those that were deepest down in the pit, just to show how deep his hand could reach? But notice who it was that converted him: 'The Lord had said unto Abraham.' Stephen tells it more fully: 'The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham.' I have no doubt that it was the same glorious person that appeared to Jacob at the top of the ladder, and blessed him. I have no doubt that it was the same that met with Jacob when it is said, 'There wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day: and he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh; but he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.' I have no doubt but that it was the same that appeared to Saul when on his way to Damascus. So, in like manner, it was the same God of glory that appeared unto Abraham, and said, 'Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee.' Brethren, all conversion comes from God. You might rather expect the icebergs of the Atlantic to melt without the sun than expect a sinner's heart to change without God. Brethren, it was not Abraham that sought him, but the God of glory that came to him, and said, 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If Abraham hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me.' It is not you that seek his face, but he that seeks you. Brethren, it is not a minister's coming to you that will save you. Who sat under a godlier minister than Judas? Yet he got no grace by it.

But, further, it is said 'the God of glory appeared unto him.' This is what Christ says—'Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad.' I do not pretend to say how much was revealed to him. It is curious to remark how much Christ reveals himself to some. 'The first time,' said one, 'that I remember of ever tasting of the sweetness and blessedness of the gospel was in reading these words—"Now, unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen." Never words of scripture appeared to me like these words; they came into my soul with such power and tenderness, and I longed to possess such a being as my God.' Such was the experience of one of the most eminent saints that ever lived. It perhaps was such that Abraham got, and that made him leave his father's house. And, brethren, it is the same truth that will convert a soul now. You may be moved with fear, as Noah was, but you must be drawn by love. I believe that never a soul was converted without a sight of the God of glory.

I have just one observation more on this part of the subject, and that is the almighty power by which it was done. You will see this very evidently shown in Isaiah 41:2, 'Who raised up the righteous man from the east, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings?' etc. Notice also what is said in Isaiah 51:1-2 - 'Hearken unto me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord; look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged. Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you; for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him.' Now, in these two passages you will notice that God says it was he—himself that called Abraham. And observe the words used are very remarkable—I found him like a rock, yet I melted the rock. God found him fallen down to graven images, and he called him to his foot. My dear friends, this is the way God does with every soul whom he converts. God finds you like a rock; yet of these stones he raises up children to

Abraham. This is my only hope of those of you who are unconverted. I have no hope of the words of man; but I would trust in God—my hope is in his Word. He that raised up the righteous man is able to call you, and make you willing in the day of his power.

II. Abraham's trial. 'Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee.' The trial of Abraham was two-fold: First, he was tried in what he was to leave: Second, in that he did not know where he was to go.

1. In what he was to leave. 'Get thee out of thy country.' One's country is dear to him. The Greenlander loves his icy region, and the Arab loves his sterile sand, and we love our own brown hills. But God said to Abraham, 'Get thee out of thy country.' And every man loves his kindred. We do not like to bid those we love farewell. Will strangers care for them?—will strangers be kind to them?—are thoughts that occur to our mind. Yet this was God's command to Abraham—'Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred.' But the worst was yet to come—'Out of thy father's house.' We love our father's house. Our father's house is dear to us. I do not envy the man that does not love his father's house. Yet God said, 'Get thee out of thy father's house.'

2. But there was a second trial. He did not know where he was to go. 'Unto a land that I will show thee.' What kind of a land is it, Lord?—'I will show thee.' Will the people be kind?—'I will show thee.' Was it north, east, south or west?—He did not know. 'He went out not knowing whither he went.' 'Get thee unto a land that I will show thee.' Who can tell the deep anxiety that appeared in Abraham's countenance and tossed in his bosom, as he walked before his father's house that night he got the command to go? Ah! brethren, this is what every converted soul has to undergo: 'Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house.' I will tell you what you will have to leave, if you will follow Christ. First, you must leave the esteem of your friends. I do not say you should leave your father's house bodily. God forbid! But you must leave their esteem. Perhaps they loved you as a friend, as a wife, as a husband; but the more they loved you they will now hate you the more. The mother hates the viper that stung her child; so will they hate you. Do not be surprised at this. 'If any man will not leave father and mother and all, for my sake and the gospel, he cannot be my disciple.' Brethren, do not think I am telling you stories. If the God of glory appears to you, you will find it true. Another thing is, you will have to leave the company of the ungodly. I do not say, if you are in an ungodly family you are to leave it. No, but you are not to mix with ungodly families. Another thing you will have to leave is your idols. Abraham did this. You must break your idols in pieces. 'Come out from among them.' 'Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house.' And, O brethren! you must leave them for an unseen Saviour and an unseen heaven. Remember you must walk with an unseen Saviour. Some of you will say, What will be given me? He will give you joy and peace. Remember also. 'It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him.'

III. Abraham's promise. Genesis 12:2-3 : 'And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing; And I will bless them that bless thee and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.' We have here six blessings following one another.

1. 'I will make thee a great nation.' God was taking him out of a great nation; but he said, 'I will make of thee a great nation.' So he says to all that he calls, 'I will make you one of a righteous nation'—'I will make of thee a great nation.'

2. 'I will bless thee.' God did not tell him where he was going, what enemies he would meet with, what trials he would encounter, yet he said, 'I will bless thee.' This is what God says to you—If you are willing to leave all for Christ, 'I will bless thee.' Perhaps your friends will curse thee, but 'I will bless thee.'

3. 'I will make thy name great.' When he went from his father's house, he went where his name was not known; and, perhaps, they mocked him when he went away; but God called him 'my friend.' So perhaps it will be with you; yet God will make thy name great.

4. 'And thou shalt be a blessing.' Abraham had been a curse by his example—he had worshipped graven images; but God said he would be a blessing. So he says to you, brethren, No doubt you have been a curse—no doubt you have led many to hell by your wicked example; yet I will make thee a blessing—a blessing to your children, a blessing to your wife, a blessing to your neighbours, a blessing to the world; the world will miss you when you die.

5. 'I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee.' Abraham was to meet friends and enemies. There were some in another land that would be kind to the stranger, and there were some that would cast him out. 'Well,' says God, 'I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee.' God is with thee, Abraham; God is thy wall of fire. Ah, brethren! it is sweet to have God's blessing.

6. 'In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.' This last promise was fulfilled when out of Abraham's loins Christ was born. It cannot be performed to us in the same way; but yet it can in one way. If you are Christ's then, wherever you are, you will be a blessing.

O brethren! if you would follow Christ, count the cost. The Lord enable you to count the cost. Amen.

Sabbath Forenoon, 9th December 1842.

S. The Conviction of Sin

The Conviction of Sin by Robert Murray M'Cheyne

"And when He [the Comforter] is come, He will convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." (John 16:8) When friends are about to part from one another, they are far kinder than ever they have been before. It was so with Jesus. He was going to part from His disciples, and never till now did His heart flow out toward them in so many streams of heavenly tenderness. Sorrow had filled their heart, and therefore divinest compassion filled His heart. "I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away."

Surely it was expedient for Himself that He should go away. He had lived a life of weariness and painfulness, not having where to lay His head, and surely it was pleasant in His eyes that He was about to enter into His rest. He had lived in obscurity and poverty—He gave His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; and now, surely, He might well look forward with joy to His return to that glory which He had with the Father before ever the world was, when all the angels of God worshipped Him; and yet He does not say: It is expedient for me that I go away. Surely that would have been comfort enough to His disciples. But no; He says: "It is expedient for you." He forgets Himself altogether, and He thinks only of His little flock which He was leaving behind Him: "It is expedient for you that I go away." O most generous of Saviours! He looked not on His own things, but on the things of others also. He knew that it is far more blessed to give than it is to receive. The gift of the Spirit is the great argument by which He here persuades them that His going away would be expedient for them. Now, it is curious to remark that He had promised them the Spirit before, in the beginning of His discourse. In John 14:16-18, He says: "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." And again: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John 14:26) In that passage He promises the Spirit for their own peculiar comfort and joy. He promises Him as a treasure which they, and they only, could receive: "For the world cannot receive Him, because it neither sees nor knows Him:" and yet, saith He, "He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." But in the passage before us the promise is quite different. He promises the Spirit here, not for themselves, but for the world—not as a peculiar treasure, to be locked up in their own bosoms, which they might brood over with a selfish joy, but as a blessed power to work, through their preaching, on the wicked world around them—not as a well springing up within their own bosoms unto everlasting life, but as rivers of living water flowing through them to water this dry and perishing world. He does not say: "When He is come He will fill your hearts with peace and joy to overflowing: but: "When He is come, He will convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." But a little before He had told them that the world would hate and persecute them: "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore

the world hateth you." (John 15:19) This was but poor comfort, when that very world was to be the field of their labours; but now He shows them what a blessed gift the Spirit would be; for He would work, through their preaching, upon the very hearts that hated and persecuted them: "He shall convince the world of sin." This has always been the case. In Acts 2:1-47 we are told that when the Spirit came on the apostles the crowd mocked them saying: "These men are full of new wine;" and yet, when Peter preached, the Spirit wrought through his preaching on the hearts of these very scoffers. They were pricked in their hearts, and cried: "Men and brethren, what must we do?" and the same day three thousand souls were converted. Again, the jailer at Philippi was evidently a hard, cruel man towards the apostles; for he thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks; and yet the Spirit opens his hard heart, and he is brought to Christ by the very apostles whom he hated. Just so it is, brethren, to this day. The world do not love the true ministers of Christ a whit better than they did. The world is the same world that it was in Christ's day. That word has never yet been scored out of the Bible; "Whosoever will live godly in the world, must suffer persecution." We expect, as Paul did, to be hated by the most who listen to us. We are quite sure, as Paul was, that the more abundantly we love you, most of you will love us the less; and yet, brethren, none of these things move us. Though cast down, we are not in despair; for we know that the Spirit is sent to convince the world; and we do not fear but some of you who are counting us an enemy, because we tell you the truth, may even this day, in the midst of all your hatred and cold indifference, be convinced of sin by the Spirit, and made to cry out: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

I. The first work of the Spirit is to convince of sin.

1. Who it is that convinces of sin: "He shall convince the world of sin, because they believe not in Me." It is curious to remark, that wherever the Holy Ghost is spoken of in the Bible, He is spoken of in terms of gentleness and love. We often read of the wrath of God the Father, as in Romans 1: "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." And we often read of the wrath of God the Son: "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way;" or, "Revealed from heaven taking vengeance." But we nowhere read of the wrath of God the Holy Ghost." He is compared to a dove, the gentlest of all creatures. He is warm and gentle as the breath: "Jesus breathed on them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." He is gentle as the falling dew: "I will be as the dew unto Israel." He is soft and gentle as oil; for He is called "The oil of gladness." The fine oil wherewith the high priest was anointed was a type of the Spirit. He is gentle and refreshing as the springing well: "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life." He is called "The Spirit of grace and of supplications." He is nowhere called the Spirit of wrath. He is called the "Holy Ghost, which is the Comforter." Nowhere is He called the Avenger. We are told that He groans within the heart of a believer, "helping his infirmities;" so that He greatly helps the believer in prayer. We are told also of the love of the Spirit—nowhere of the wrath of the Spirit. We are told of His being grieved: "Grieve not the Holy Spirit;" of His being resisted: "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost;" of His being quenched: "Quench not the Spirit." But these are all marks of gentleness and love. Nowhere will you find one mark of anger or of vengeance attributed to Him; and yet, brethren, when this blessed Spirit begins His work of love, mark how He begins—He convinces of sin. Even He, all-wise, almighty, all-gentle and loving though He be, cannot persuade a poor sinful heart to embrace the Saviour, without first opening up His wounds, and convincing Him that He is lost.

Now brethren, I ask of you, Should not the faithful minister of Christ just do the very same? Ah! brethren, if the Spirit, whose very breath is all gentleness and love—whom Jesus hath sent into the world to bring men to eternal life—if He begins His work in every soul that is to be saved by convincing of sin, why should you blame the minister of Christ if he begins in the very same way? Why should you say that we are harsh, and cruel, and severe, when we begin to deal with your souls by convincing you of sin? "Am I become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" When the surgeon comes to cure a corrupted wound—when he tears off the vile bandages which unskillful hands had wrapped around it—when he lays open the deepest recesses of your wound, and shows you all its venom and its virulence—do you call him cruel? May not his hands be all the time the hands of gentleness and love? Or, when a house is all on fire—when the flames are bursting out from every window—when some courageous man ventures to alarm the sleeping inmates—bursts through the barred door tears aside the close-drawn curtains, and with eager hand shakes the sleeper—bids him awake and flee—a moment longer, and you may be lost—do you call him cruel? or do you say this messenger of mercy spoke too loud—too plain? Ah, no. "Skin for skin, all that a man hath will he give for his life." Why, then, brethren, will you blame the minister of Christ when he begins by convincing you of sin? Think you that the wound of sin is less venomous or deadly than a wound in the flesh? Think you the flames of hell are less hard to bear than the flames of earth? The very Spirit of love begins by convincing you of sin; and are we less the messengers of love because we begin by doing the same thing? Oh, then, do not say that we are become your enemy because we tell you the truth?

II. What is this conviction of sin? I would begin to show this by showing you what it is not.

1. It is not the mere smiting of the natural conscience. Although man be utterly fallen, yet God has left natural conscience behind in every heart, to speak for Him. Some men, by continual sinning, sear even the conscience as with a hot iron, so that it becomes dead and past feeling; but most men have so much natural conscience remaining, that they cannot commit open sin without their conscience smiting them. When a man commits murder or theft, no eye may have seen him, and yet conscience makes a coward of him. He trembles and is afraid—he feels that he has sinned, and he fears that God will take vengeance. Now, brethren, that is not the conviction of sin here spoken of—that is a natural work which takes place in every heart; but conviction of sin is a supernatural work of the Spirit of God. if you have had nothing more than the ordinary smiting of conscience, then you have never been convinced of sin.

2. It is not any impression upon the imagination. Sometimes, when men have committed great sin, they have awful impressions of God's vengeance made upon their imaginations. In the nighttime they almost fancy they see the flames of hell burning beneath them; or they seem to hear doleful cries in their ears telling of coming woe; or they fancy they see the face of Jesus all clouded with anger; or they have terrible dreams, when they sleep, of coming vengeance. Now, this is not the conviction of sin which the Spirit gives. This is altogether a natural work upon the natural faculties, and not at all a supernatural work of the Spirit. If you have had nothing more than these imaginary terrors, you have had no work of the Spirit.

3. It is not a mere head knowledge of what the Bible says against sin. Many unconverted men read their Bibles, and have a clear knowledge that their case is laid down there. They are sensible men. They know very well that they are in sin, and they know just as well that the wages of sin is death.

One man lives a swearer, and he reads the words, and understands them perfectly: "Swear not at all"—"The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain." Another man lives in the lusts of the flesh, and he reads the Bible, and understands these words perfectly: "No unclean person hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." Another man lives in habitual forgetfulness of God—never thinks of God from sunrise to sunset, and yet he reads: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God." Now, in this way most unconverted men have a head knowledge of their sin, and of the wages of sin; yet, brethren, this is far from conviction of sin. This is a mere natural work in the head. Conviction of sin is a work upon the heart. If you have had nothing more than this head knowledge that you are Sinners, then you have never been convinced of sin.

4. Conviction of sin is not to feel the loathsomeness of sin. This is what a child of God feels. A child of God has seen the beauty and excellency of God, and therefore sin is loathsome in his eyes. But no unsaved person has seen the beauty and excellency of God; therefore, even the Spirit cannot make him feel the loathsomeness of sin. Just as when you leave a room that is brilliantly lighted, and go out into the darkness of the open air, the night looks very dark; so when a child of God has been within the veil—in the presence of his reconciled God—in full view of the Father of lights, dwelling in light inaccessible and full of glory—then, when he turns his eye inwards upon his own sinful bosom, sin appears very dark, very vile, and very loathsome. But an unconverted soul never has been in the presence of the reconciled God; and therefore, sin cannot appear dark and loathsome in his eyes. Just as when you have tasted something very sweet and pleasant, when you come to taste other things, they appear very insipid and disagreeable; so when a child of God has tasted and seen that God is gracious, the taste of sin in his own heart becomes very nauseous and loathsome to him. But an unconverted soul never tasted the sweetness of God's love; he cannot, therefore, feel the vileness and loathsomeness of sin. This, then, is not the conviction of sin here spoken of.

What, then, is this conviction of sin? Ans. It is a just sense of the dreadfulness of sin. It is not a mere knowledge that we have many sins, and that God's anger is revealed against them all; but it is a heartfeeling that we are under sin. Again: it is not a feeling of the loathsomeness of sin—that is felt only by the children of God; but it is a feeling of the dreadfulness of sin—of the dishonour it does to God, and of the wrath to which it exposes the soul. Oh, brethren! conviction of sin is no slight natural work upon the heart. There is a great difference between knowing that vinegar is sour, and actually tasting and feeling that it is sour. There is a great difference between knowing that fire will burn us, and actually feeling the pain of being burned. Just in the same way, there is all the difference in the world between knowing the dreadfulness of your sins and feeling the dreadfulness of your sins. It is all in vain that you read your Bibles and hear us preach, unless the Spirit use the words to give sense and feeling to your dead hearts. The plainest words will not awaken you as long as you are in a natural condition. If we could prove to you, with the plainness of arithmetic, that the wrath of God is abiding on you and your children, still you would sit unmoved—you would go away and forget it before you reached your own door. Ah, brethren! He that made your heart can alone impress your heart. It is the Spirit that convinceth of sin.

1. Learn the true power of the read and preached Word. It is but an instrument in the hand of God. It has no power of itself, except to produce natural impressions. It is a hammer—but God must break your hearts with it. It is a fire—but God must kindle up your bosoms with it. Without Him we

may give you a knowledge of the dreadfulness of your condition, but He only can give you a just sense and feeling of the dreadfulness of your condition. The most powerful sermon in the world can make nothing more than a natural impression; but when God works through it, the feeblest word makes a supernatural impression. Many a poor sermon has been the means by which God hath converted a soul. Children of God, O that you would pray night and day for the lifting up of the arm of God!

2. Learn that conversion is not in your own power. It is the Spirit alone who convinces of sin, and He is a free agent. He is a sovereign Spirit, and has nowhere promised to work at the bidding of unconverted men. He hath many on whom He will have mercy; and whom He will He hardeneth. Perhaps you think you may take your fill of sin just now, and then come and repent, and be saved; but remember the Spirit is not at your bidding. He is not your servant. Many hope to be converted on their death-bed; and yet are not converted. If the Spirit be working with you now, do not grieve Him—do not resist Him—do not quench Him; for He may never come back to you again.

III. I come to the argument which the Spirit uses. There are two arguments by which the Spirit usually gives men a sense of the dreadfulness of sin.

1. The Law: "The law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ"—"Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." The sinner reads the law of the great God who made heaven and earth. The Spirit of God arouses his conscience to see that the law condemns every part of his life. The law bids him love God. His heart tells him he never loved God—never had a thought of regard toward God. The Spirit convinces him that God is a jealous God—that His honour is concerned to uphold the law, and destroy the sinner. The Spirit convinces him that God is a just God—that He can by no means clear the guilty. The Spirit convinces him that He is a true God—that He must fulfill all His threatenings: "Have I said it, and shall I not do it?" The sinner's mouth is stopped, and he stands guilty before God.

2. The second argument is the Gospel: "Because they believe not on Jesus." This is the strongest of all arguments, and therefore is chosen by Christ here. The sinner reads in the Word that "he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life;" and the Spirit convinces him that he never believed on the Son of God—indeed, he does not know what it means. For the first time the conviction comes upon his heart: "He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." The more glorious and divine that Saviour is, the more is the Christless soul convinced that he is lost; for he feels that he is out of that Saviour. He sees plainly that Christ is an almighty ark riding over the deluge of God's wrath—he sees how safe and happy the little company are that are gathered within; but this just makes him gnash his teeth in agony, for he is not within the ark, and the waves and billows are coming over him. He hears that Christ hath been stretching out the hands all the day to the chief of sinners, not willing that any should perish; but then he never cast himself into these arms, and now he feels that Christ may be laughing at his calamity, and mocking when his fear cometh. O yes, my friends! how often on the death-bed, when the natural fears of conscience are aided by the Spirit of God—how often, when we speak of Christ—His love—His atoning blood—the refuge to be found in Him—how safe and happy all are in Him—how often does the dying sinner turn it all away with the awful question: But am I in Christ? The more we tell of the Saviour, the more their agony increased; for they feel that that is the

Saviour they have refused. Ah! what a meaning does that give to these words: "The Spirit convinceth of sin, because they believe not on Me."

1. Now, my friends, there are many of you who know that you never believed on Jesus, and yet you are quite unmoved. You sit without any emotion—you eat your meals with appetite, and doubtless sleep sound at night. Do you wish to know the reason? You have never been convinced of sin. The Spirit hath never begun His work in your heart. Oh! if the Spirit of Jesus would come on your hearts like a mighty rushing wind, what a dreadful thought it would be to you this night, that you are lying out of Christ! You would lose your appetite for this world's food—you would not be able to rest in your bed—you would not dare to live on in your sins. All your past sins would rise behind you like apparitions of evil. Wherever you went you would meet the word: "Without Christ, without hope, and without God in the world:" and if your worldly friends should try to hush your fears, and tell you of your decencies, and that you were not so bad as your neighbours, and that many might fear if you feared, ah! how you would thrust them away, and stop your ears, and cry: There is a city of refuge, to which I have never fled; therefore there must be a blood-avenger. There is an ark; therefore there must be a coming deluge. There is a Christ; therefore there must be a hell for the Christless.

2. Some of you may be under conviction of sin—you feel the dreadfulness of being out of Christ, and you are very miserable. Now, (1) Be thankful for this work of the Spirit: "Flesh and blood hat not revealed it unto thee, but My Father." God hath brought you into the wilderness just that He might allure you, and speak to your heart about Christ. This is the way He begins the work in every soul He saves. Nobody ever came to Christ but they were first convinced of sin. AU that are now in heaven began this way. Be thankful you are not dead like those around you. (2) Do not lose these convictions. Remember they are easily lost. Involve yourself over head and ears in business, and work ever on the Sabbath-day, and you will soon drive all away. Indulge a little in sensual pleasute—take a tittle diversion with companions, and you will soon be as happy and careless as they. If you love your soul, flee these things—do not stay—flee away from them. Read the books that keep up your anxiety—wait on the ministers that keep up that anxiety. Above all, cry to the Spirit, who alone was the author of it, that He would keep it up. Cry night and day that He may never let you rest out of Christ. Oh! would you sleep over hell? (3) Do not rest in these convictions. You are not saved yet. Many have come thus far and perished after all—many have been convinced, not converted—many lose their convictions, and wallow in sin again. "Remember Lot's wife." You are never safe till you are within the fold. Christ is the door. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many shall seek to enter in and shall not be able."

S. The Difficulty and Desirableness of Conversion

THE DIFFICULTY AND DESIRABLENESS OF CONVERSION Robert Murray M'Cheyne

"I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord." Psalms 40:1-3

There can be little doubt that the true and primary application of this psalm is to our Lord Jesus Christ; for though the verses we have read might very well be applicable to David, or any other converted man, looking back on what God had done for his soul, yet the latter part of the psalm cannot, with propriety, be the language of any but the Saviour; and, accordingly, Hebrews 10:6-8 are directly applied to Christ by the apostle in Hebrews 10:1-39 : "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not; but a body hast thou prepared me: in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God." Psalms 40:1-17, therefore, is to be regarded as a prayerful meditation of Messiah when under the hiding of his Father's countenance; for, how truly might he who knew no sin, but was made sin for us, he on whom it pleased the Father to lay the iniquities of us all, how truly might he say, in the language of Psalms 40:12, "Innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head; therefore my heart faileth me."

According to this view, Psalms 40:1-3 are to be regarded as a recalling a former deliverance from some similar visitation of darkness, in order to comfort himself under present discouragement. And who can doubt that he who was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, experienced many more seasons of darkness and of heaven-sent relief than that which is recorded in the garden of Gethsemane? His so frequently retiring to pray alone, seems to prove this. But as it is quite manifest that his description of his iniquities laying hold upon him, is expressed in words most suitable to any burdened but awakened sinner, so the verses of my text are every way suitable to any converted soul looking back on the deliverance which God hath wrought out for him. "Waiting, I waited for Jehovah" (as verse 1 may be most literally rendered), expresses all the intense anxiety of a mind aroused to know the danger he is in, and the quarter whence his aid must come. "And he inclined unto me," expresses the bodily motion of one who is desirous to hear, bending forward attentively.

"And he heard my cry." "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, Out of the miry clay, And set my feet upon a rock; He established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, Even praise unto our God: Many shall see it, and fear, And shall trust in the Lord."

He expresses the state of an unconverted man under the striking imagery of one who is in an horrible pit, and sinking in miry clay; while the change at conversion is compared to setting his feet upon a rock, and establishing his goings, and putting a new song in his mouth. Regarding, then,

my text as a true and faithful picture of that most blessed change in state and character which, in Bible language, is called conversion, I proceed to draw from these words two simple but most important conclusions: —

I. The difficulty of conversion. So difficult and superhuman is the work of turning a soul from sin and Satan unto God, that God only can do it; and, accordingly, in our text, every part of the process is attributed solely to him. "He brought me up out of an horrible pit, he took me from the miry clay, he set my feet upon a rock, he established my goings, and he put a new song in my mouth." God, and God alone, then, is the author of conversion. He who created man at first, alone can create him anew in Christ Jesus unto good works. And the reason of this we shall see clearly by going over the parts of the work here described. The first deliverance is imaged forth to us in the words: "He brought me up out of an horrible pit;" and the counterpart or corresponding blessing to that is, "He set my feet upon a rock." There can hardly be imagined a more hopeless situation than that of being placed, like Joseph, in a pit, and especially an horrible pit, or a pit of destruction, as the Psalmist calls it. Hemmed in on every side by damp and gloomy walls, with scarce an outlet into the open air, in vain you struggle to clamber up to the light and fresh atmosphere of the open day; you are a prisoner in the bowels of the earth, the tenant of a pit of horrors. Such is your state, if you be unconverted; you are lying in a pit of destruction; you are dead while you live — buried alive, as it were; dead in trespasses and sins, while yet you walk in them. You cannot possibly ascend to the light of day, and the fresh atmosphere above you; for the pit in which you are, is indeed your prison-house; and except you be drawn up from it by the cords of grace, it will usher you into that yawning pit which the Bible says is bottomless. Such is your state, if you be unconverted. You are under the curse; for "cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them;" and you have never continued in any of these things, doing them from the heart, as unto the Lord, which only can be called doing them. You have never savingly believed on the Son of God; and therefore you are "condemned already" — you have never been lifted out of the pit of condemnation. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; but he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him;" that is, it is never lifted off him. The pit of wrath and destruction, in which you are by nature, is never exchanged by you until you leave it for the pit of wrath eternal. Since this horrible pit, then, represents the state of wrath and condemnation in which we are by nature, how impossible is it that we can extricate ourselves from it! To escape from the prison-house of earthly kings is a hard and daring enterprise; but who shall break loose from the prison-house of the eternal God? Who shall clamber up from the pit of condemnation in which he confines the soul? or who can work out a pardon for past offences? Who can blot out the sin of his past life? Look back upon your lives, brethren, spent in forgetfulness of God, in desires and deeds contrary to God; and then remember he is infinitely just, he cannot lie, he cannot repent, and say if you think it an easy thing, or a possible thing, to save yourselves from the fearful pit in which you are now reserved for his wrath? But if you cannot save yourself from the pit, and set your feet upon a rock, much less can you extricate yourself from the miry clay and establish your own goings. The pit of destruction represents the wrath you are in by nature; the miry clay represents the corruption you are in by nature. To be standing in a dry pit, as Joseph was, is bad enough; but, ah! how hopeless and wretched, when you are standing in miry clay! To be under condemnation for past sins, one would think to be misery sufficient; but your case is far more desperate, for you are also sinking daily under the power of present corruptions. Every struggle which you make to get up from your

wretched condition, only makes you sink deeper in the miry clay; and every hour you remain where you are, you are sinking the deeper; your ever getting out becomes more hopeless. How truly does the growth of sinful habits in you resemble the sinking of your feet in miry clay! Which of your habits does not grow inveterate by exercise? How does the habit of swearing grow upon a man until he is absolutely its slave? and so with those more refined sins whose seat is in the heart. Every day gives them new power over the soul — every new indulgence binds your feet more indissolubly than ever in the evil way; and though you may, nay, in the course of nature you must, change your lusts, your passions and desires, yet every change is but like extricating one foot from the miry clay, only to set it down again, in another spot to sink again. Ah! the undoneness of an unconverted heart; what imagination is bold enough to paint all its horrors? Look in upon your own hearts, ye who are unchanged in heart and life; and, oh! if the Spirit of grace may but use the passage we are speaking of to convince you this day of your sin, you shall see how truly there is within you a dark chamber of imagery, a depth of spiritual wretchedness, and inability, either to forgive your own self, or to make your heart new — either to set your feet upon a rock, or to establish your goings; which can be described only by such ideas as those of an horrible pit, and sinking in miry clay. A third step in conversion you cannot take for yourself; and that is, the putting a new song in your mouth. A song is the sign of gladness and light-heartedness, and hence James saith: “Is any merry? let him sing psalms.” And the spoilers of Jerusalem, when they would put mockery on the sorrows of the exiled Israelites, required of them mirth, saying: “Sing us one of the Songs of Zion.” But to sing a new song, even praise to our God, is a privilege of the believer alone. To be merry and glad in heart, whilst a holy God is before the thoughts, that is a privilege only of him whose feet are settled on the Rock, Christ. It is true the unconverted world have a mirth of their own; and they, too, can sing the song of gladness. But here lies the difference: They can be glad and merry only when God is not in all their thoughts, only when a veil of oblivion is cast over the realities of death and judgment. Keep away all serious thought of these things, and then they can revel, like Belshazzar and his thousand lords, when they drank wine, and praised the gods of gold and of silver. But unveil to their eyes the grand realities of a holy and omnipresent God, of death at the door, and after death the judgment, and then is their countenance changed (as was Belshazzar’s at the appearance of the mysterious hand); their thoughts trouble them, so that the joints of their loins are loosed, and their knees smite one against another. But to the believer a holy God is the very subject of his song, praise to our God; and the view of death and judgment do not break in upon this divine melody. On his dying bed he may begin the song which shall be finished only when he wakes up in glory. Now, what unconverted man has the power to put this supernatural song in his mouth, this strange joy in his heart? Gladness cannot be forced, and least of all this, the Christian’s gladness. If thou be unforgiven, unjustified, still at enmity with God, how canst thou raise one note of praise to him? In the 14th chapter of Revelation, where the redeemed sing, as it were, a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts and the elders, it is added: “And no man could learn that song, but the hundred and forty and four thousand which were redeemed from the earth.” None but new creatures can learn this new song. Angels cannot join in it; for it is the hymn of the redeemed, of those who were sinners, and have been made new. And, oh! if angels cannot, how much can unconverted, unredeemed sinners join in that eternal harmony. In every way, then, how unspeakably hard a work is conversion! How impossible with man, but with God all things are possible. He hath provided the Rock, Christ; and his ear is not heavy that it should not hear, if we but cry; his arm is not shortened that it cannot save, if only we

will inquire of him for this. But, II. From this picture of a true conversion I deduce, not only the difficulty, but also the desirableness of conversion.

If you can imagine the delight of being lifted out of the horrible pit, where wrath only awaited us, and having our feet set upon the Rock, where our foundation is firm and solid as the everlasting hills, and we are raised high above the reach of enemies, for our defence is the munition of rocks, then, my friends, you have some notion of what it is to be taken out of wrath into peace, to be translated from being under the curse to the privilege of standing on the righteousness of Christ, standing on which you are justified, so that neither man, nor angel, nor devil, can bring accusation against you.

And, again, if you can imagine the delight of being carried out of the miry clay, where your feet were continually sinking deeper and deeper every hour, and of having your goings established, a straight path set before you, and solid ground beneath you, then you have some notion of what it is to be taken out of your worldly lusts, and desires, and cares, and thoughts, and anxieties, and habits of sin, in which every new day found you sinking deeper and deeper, and always with less hope of recovery; and to be enabled to love God and the things of God, "to set your affection on things above," "to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." And still further, if you can imagine the delight of exchanging the groan of the prisoner bound in affliction and iron, for the song of the captive who has been set free, the emancipated slave, then you have some notion of what it is to exchange the sullenness and cheerlessness of an unrenewed spirit for the joy and light-heartedness, and the new song of praise sung only by the redeemed. But when you have imagined all these things, you will have a notion merely, and nothing more, of the desirableness of conversion. The riches of Christ are unsearchable. I might ransack all nature for images. I might bring all conditions of misery and sudden peace and happiness into contrast; yet would I fail to give you a just idea of the blessings received in conversion; for, indeed, "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart to conceive, the things which God hath prepared (in this world, aye, in the hour of believing) for all them that love him." But leaving images borrowed from nature, which may only confuse, let me simply lay before you the realities which these images signify. The first thing to be had in conversion is peace with God: "Justified by faith we have peace with God." This is the immediate effect of standing on the Rock, Christ. Sin-laden man dost thou see no desirableness in peace with an offended, forgotten, despised God? Art thou so enamored of the horrible pit of enmity and condemnation, that thou hast no desire to be out of it? Then, indeed, it is in vain to tell you of a Saviour; you see no beauty in Christ. The second thing to be had in conversion is a holy life: "To as many as receive Christ, he giveth power to become sons of God." Depraved man, whose heart is wrinkled with habitual sins, dost thou see no desirableness in a holy life? I do not ask thee if it would be pleasant to thee this moment to restrain and cross all thine appetites, and desires, and indomitable lusts; I know it would appear to thee intolerable; but I do ask thee if thou seest no desirableness in having these very appetites and desires changed or taken away in their power, so that strictness and holiness of life would no longer appear irksome, but pleasantness and peace. Art thou so delighted, not with the objects which gratify thy passions, but with these very passions themselves, that thou hast no wish to be made new? Then, indeed, it is needless to tell thee of the Sanctifier. The third good thing to be had in conversion is a joyful and thankful heart:

“We joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” This is the song of the redeemed. The mirth of heaven is thankfulness and praise. The mirth of heaven upon earth — that is, of the converted mind — is the same, even praise to our God. If, then, cheerfulness and thankfulness of mind, which will endure even amid all the gloominess of the death-bed, and the dark valley, and the awful insignia of judgment; if these be desirable gifts of mind, these form parts of the desirableness of conversion. But to many of you I know it is in vain that I talk of the desirableness of conversion; for you do not yet feel the misery of being unconverted — the wretchedness of being a child of wrath, and a slave of corruptions. When we tell you that the unjustified are in an horrible pit, that the unsanctified are sinking in miry clay, you tell us that you never felt any horror about your situation. Nay, you have many pleasures, and you are comfortable and at ease. Ah! most wretched of all unconverted men, you are in the horrible pit; yet you are insensible to its horrors. You are in the miry clay, sinking every step you take; yet you feel no alarm. You know that you never savingly believed in Christ; yet you have no horror when the Bible tells you that you are “condemned already.” You know that your heart has never been made new-born again; and yet you do not tremble when the Bible tells you that “without holiness no man shall see the Lord.” You remind me of nothing so much as of a man travelling in a snow storm, wandering far from home or shelter, and every step he takes his feet sink the deeper in the drifted snow; but a strange insensibility creeps over his mind. Death itself has lost its horrors. As his danger increases, his fears diminish. A deep slumber is quickly descending on every faculty, till he sinks down quietly to sleep, but never to rise again. In like manner, your insensibility, instead of being a sign that there is no danger, increases the danger and horror of your situation a thousand fold. As the Bible is true, the state of every unconverted man is so awful, that could you see it as God sees it, the words, “an horrible pit and miry clay,” would seem too feeble to express it. “The sorrows of death and the pains of hell” might, perhaps, come nearer your view of it. Ah! then, strive hard to know the misery of being unconverted. Be determined to know the worst of yourself for thus only will you see the desirableness of conversion, the excellency of Christ. And now, then, laying together the two conclusions which I have drawn from our text — the difficulty of conversion, so great that God himself must be the author; and the desirableness of conversion, so great that peace, and holiness, and joy, all depend upon it — suffer the word of exhortation, to seek it in the only way in which the Psalmist found it: “Waiting, I waited for Jehovah,” that is, I waited anxiously, “and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.” He is more ready to hear, than thou to ask. The Rock is already laid. Christ hath died, and thou art this day besought to stand upon his righteousness; and being in Christ, you shall every day become more a new creature; and being a new creature, you shall sing a new song of praise to Him who hath loved us.

One word to those of you who can look back upon an experience like that described in my text; who can say that God hath brought you out of an horrible pit and the miry clay, and set your feet upon a rock, and established your goings, and put a new song in your mouth. Take you heed that the following words be also realized: “Many shall see it and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.” How many on every hand of you are yet unconverted, both in the pit and in the clay! Let them see, then, how great things God hath done for your soul, that they may fear lest they die unconverted; lest this glorious change never come to them; lest they die old creatures, tenants of the horrible pit, to remove only to the pit eternal; lest they be altogether swallowed up in the miry clay; and thus, moved by fear, they may be persuaded to trust in God, as you have done — to rest on the Rock, Christ, for righteousness.

“Let your light so shine before men, that they, seeing your good works, may glorify your father which is in heaven.”

Amen.

S. The Free Obedience of Christ

SERMON VII "THE FREE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST" by Robert Murray M'Cheyne

John 10:17-18. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life. that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." The death of Christ is, my friends, the most wonderful event past, present, or future in the whole universe. It is so in the eye of God ? "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life." There is nothing in the whole world so lovely as his Son. It is not only for his Godhead, but on account of his manhood, through which he laid down his life ? "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I laid down my life." These words of Christ, "I lay down my life," are dearer to God than a thousand worlds. It is the same in the eyes of the redeemed. All the redeemed love Christ, because he laid down his life. John says, "I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a lamb as it had been slain... And when he had taken the book, the four beasts, and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sang a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou was slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." And again they sing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." Still, brethren, you see that it is the death of Christ that is the joy of the new Jerusalem. And, still further, the death of Christ is the greatest wonder in hell. This was one thing which Satan did not know the meaning of ? the death of Christ. Ah! Satan thought when he got Judas to betray him, and the Jews to crucify him, that he had prevailed against him ? that he had gained the victory; but ah! Satan hath found it out now, that Christ has triumphed over him in his cross. Ah! then, brethren, Calvary is a wonder in hell. Tell me then, brethren, who is it in all the universe that thinks little of Christ's laying down his life. Shall we find them in heaven? No. Shall we find them in hell? No; "they believe and tremble." Where, then, shall we find the man that thinks little of Christ? O Christless sinner! it is you. "We preach Christ, to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness." "For the preaching of the cross is, to them that perish, foolishness." O Christless man! you little think of the death of Christ; even the devils do not think it foolishness. Sinner, do not you think there must be something wrong about the state of your mind, that sees no beauty in the death of Christ? From these words I would notice:

1. The awful command here spoken of: "This commandment have I received of my Father."
2. The free obedience of Christ: "I lay down my life."
3. The father's love to Christ: "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life."

I. The awful command here spoken of, John 10:18, at the end, "This commandment have I received of my Father." This passage shows us plainly that the death of Christ was arranged beforehand by the Father and the Son. The Father laid it upon him that he should come into the

world and lay down his life. Some may say. When did God lay this command upon him? I answer, it was before the world was. "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory," 1 Corinthians 2:7. And then his purpose in grace, before the world began, was to send his Son; so that there can be no doubt that this command was given to Christ at the beginning, when there was no sea or land, when there was neither sun nor moon. It was before the world was that the Father said, Go into the world and lay down your life. "This commandment have I received of my Father." Brethren, this command was not given by sinners; there was no cry, Come over and help us. The world was steeped in sin. There was a cry for vengeance rising up from earth to heaven; but there was no cry for mercy. "This commandment have I received of my Father." The world did not desire that Christ should die. It was altogether become unprofitable, there was none that did good, no not one. All were lying under wrath. You will notice that this is the very command we find spoken of in Psalms 40:1-17, Psalms 40:7, "Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me. I delight to do thy will, O my God." Compare this with Hebrews 10:7, Hebrews 10:10. You will notice that the "will" here spoken of in the 40th Psalm, and the command spoken of in Hebrews is the very same that is spoken of in the 10th of John. My dear brethren, this lays open to you the great and amazing truth that the Father loves sinners. You know we often speak of the love of Christ; but here is a new object of love. It was the Father that sent the Son ? it was the Father that provided the sacrifice.

Learn this solemn truth that the Father loves you, the Father wants you to be saved, the Father wants you to believe on the Son; the very Father who commanded Christ to lay down his life for sinners. You will notice from this that the Father is clear from the blood of all men. He does not want you to perish. "Turn ye, turn ye. why will ye die?" He is not willing that any should perish. "He willeth all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth." He does not want you to perish. He commands Christ to go into the world, and lay down his life for sinners. Oh! it is true: the Father does not want you to perish. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son." "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." God the Father is as earnest in your salvation as Christ is. It was God's part to send the Son, and the Son's part to come and die. And as God the Son has done his part, so God the Father has done his. So that, sinners, if you perish, it is because you will not come to him, that you may have life.

II. The free obedience of Christ. "I lay down my life. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself." Brethren, there is nothing more certain than that no man can lay down his life for another. But you will observe, there were two things that made it right in Christ to lay down his life. 1. He is the Lord of all. 2. The Father gave him a commandment to lay it down. "I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." And you will notice from this that in laying down his life, he was not forced to do it. This is brought out in the example of Isaac. You remember that God commanded Abraham to take Isaac his son, and to go into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt-offering; but you will notice that he was a young man, and his father an old man, so that, had he wanted, he could have resisted his being bound. Now, brethren, this was intended to be a type of Christ. It is true that men bound him, but it is also true that he laid down his life himself. Observe, first, that no man forced it from him. If you read the life of Christ, you will observe that he often escaped out of their hands. You remember, at

Nazareth, they tried to cast him over the hill on which the city was built, but he passed through the midst of them and escaped. And so, brethren, he could have done this to the very end. He could have escaped that very night. When he saw them at a distance, coming down the hill with their torches, he could have fled; but he would not. "The cup that my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" And you will notice that when they came to the garden he said, "Whom seek ye?" and they said, "Jesus"; he said, "I am he," and they fell backward. He could have escaped then, but he would not. "He, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God." And even when he was nailed to the tree, when they said to him, "Let him come down from the cross and we will believe him," he could have come down, but Jesus wanted to die; this is the reason. And, brethren, this statement is true in regard to the Father, "no man taketh it from me." Not even the Father took it from him. The Father said, "Go into the world, and lay down your life for sinners." And we are told in Isaiah, "He shall divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he hath poured out his soul unto death." And it is said in Luke, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit"; he did it freely to God. So he said, "Lo I come freely to do thy will." It is true, it pleased the Lord to bruise him, but he put himself into the hands of divine justice.

Dear brethren, from this let us learn two things:

1. The justice of this act. There are many persons say that, it is not just for an innocent person to die for the wicked, but this is an extraordinary case. The Father was willing to take Christ as the substitute, so that it is in perfect accordance with law and justice.

2. The love of Christ to sinners. Here is his love: "I lay down my life, no man taketh it from me," and yet he laid it down. Christ put himself into the hands of justice. He said, "Lo I come to do thy will." O brethren! this is the free love of Christ. That command was written upon his heart, "Die for sinners." "I lay down my life." Ah: sinner, "scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die; but God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners. Christ died for us." Sinner, this is the love of Christ that he came for such as you and me.

III. The Father's love to Christ: "Therefore doth my Father love me because I lay down my life." I do not know any word in the Bible that is more sweet to meditate on than the love of the Father to the Son. There are many things that induce the Father to love the Son. He loved him for his Godhead. But here is another reason why the Father loves the Son ? he loves him for his holy manhood. "He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." God never saw anything so like himself When God made Adam, he said, "It is very good"; but oh! when he saw Jesus, he saw a loveliness in him such as he never saw in any created thing. But here is another reason why the Father loves him ? "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life." We are told that he grew in favour both with God and man. He was every day fulfilling apart of his holy obedience, until he came to the last, and then the Father saw obedience as he had never seen before. Oh, brethren! it was love that was never seen before, that he should die for the lowest for the vilest. And that appears to be another reason why Jesus died: it is, that the Father got a vent for his love to flow out to sinners ? "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life." From all this, dear brethren, learn:

1. Though a child of God carries the cross, he may be under the love of God. Never did God love Christ so much as when he was heaping wrath upon him ? "Therefore doth my Father love me,

because I lay down my life." And, oh, brethren! so it often is with a saint. Often God puts a cross upon a child of God, and then takes it off, and lets us sing ? "I will yet praise him who is the health of my countenance and my God."

2. Learn how sinners are to come into the love of God. Dear friends, I have often pleaded with you to come into the love and peace of God; but you may say, I do not know how to come; then, listen ? the Father loves you because Jesus has finished the work. Come! O believe on him, and you will be brought into the love of God! Amen.

S. The Hireling and the True Shepherd

SERMON VI THE HIRELING AND THE TRUE SHEPHERD" by Robert Murray M'Cheyne

John 10:11-15 "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my [sheep], and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep." In our first lecture we saw that the people did not understand Christ. There were two things that they did not understand. The first thing that they did not seem to understand was the door of the sheepfold; the second, who the shepherd was. And we saw last Sabbath that he explained to them what the sheepfold was. And now he begins to show who the shepherd is: "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." It is exceedingly interesting to know the many names by which Christ calls himself in the Bible. These are above a hundred, I think a hundred and seven. He calls himself a rose, "I am the rose of Sharon," and a lily, "I am the lily of the valley." The reason why he has so many names is that one name would not describe him; he has so many offices that one name would not explain them; nay, all of them put together do not, for Paul said, "Unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given, that I might preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." Of all the names given, that of a shepherd is the sweetest. We understand things best by figures; so, at the beginning of this chapter, he contrasted himself with a stranger, and in these words he contrasts himself with a hireling, whose own the sheep are not.

We shall consider these two things, the hireling and the true shepherd.

I. The hireling, John 10:12-13. There can be little doubt, I believe, that the hireling represents unfaithful ministers. Let us then go over the features, here laid down, of an unfaithful minister:

1. He is a hireling; that is to say, the end he seeks is the hire. You know, dear friends, that a minister should be maintained. It is written in the law, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn." "They that preach the gospel should live of the gospel," 1 Corinthians 9:14. But then, dear brethren, observe that this should not be the end of the ministry. The hireling here mentioned, is one who seeks the hire and not the flock. This was often complained of by the prophets. Isaiah complained of it in his day. "His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs; they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter." Isaiah 56:10, Isaiah 56:11. Now, this is just the hireling. Jeremiah complained of them in his day: "For, from the least of them even unto the greatest of them, every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet, even unto the priest, every one dealeth falsely," Jeremiah 6:13. This is the hireling again. Ezekiel complained of them in his day. "Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?" Ezekiel 34:2. Paul complained of them in his day: "For I have no man

like-minded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's, Php 2:20, Php 2:21. Ah! brethren, this is the black mark of the hireling: John 10:12, "He that is a hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep and fleeth," etc. But, brethren, it is not merely the seeking money that marks the hireling, but seeking our own ease ? our own honour ? our own fame. Pray for ministers ? pray that they may not be given to covetousness.

2. "Whose own the sheep are not." You know, dear brethren, that faithful ministers stand in a peculiar relation to the sheep. They are called fathers ? watchmen that stand on the watch tower, etc. It is a relation that outlasts death. You know, dear friends, that Paul often calls himself a father; see 1 Corinthians 4:15; Galatians 4:19; 1 Timothy 1:2; Philemon, 10th verse. Ah, friends, this shews you the union between the minister and the flock. He is a father ? he begets them through the gospel. It is not so with a hireling ? his own the sheep are not. God does not own him as a father. God does not own him in the conversion of souls. He cannot say as Paul said, "My dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown." He will not meet a crown of saved souls in the judgment. Ah! this is the mark of a hireling ? a withered branch. Pray that ours may not be so.

3. "The hireling fleeth because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep." You know that the ministers who are sent of God, take care of the sheep. Observe the apostle Paul ? what labours did he not undergo; what sufferings did he not endure! 2 Corinthians 11:23. Hear how he prayed for them ? "God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers," Romans 1:9. "For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh," Colossians 2:1. How he cared for the sheep! And hear how he speaks to the elders at Ephesus ? "Remember that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears," Acts 20:31. And observe, brethren, what tears he used to shed for them ? "For out of much affliction and anguish of heart, I wrote unto you with many tears," 2 Corinthians 2:4. "I fear lest when I come, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned," 2 Corinthians 12:21. And then what thanksgiving he used to offer up to God ? "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all, making request with joy," Php 1:3. "For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before God" 1 Thessalonians 3:9. "I cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers," Ephesians 1:16. This is the mark of a true shepherd. But a hireling cares not for the sheep, he does not and cannot weep for the sheep, he has no anguish of heart for them. Pray that we may so love Christ that we may care for the sheep.

4. He flees away when the wolf comes; John 10:12, "But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep and fleeth." The wolf is taken in Scripture to represent two things, either false ministers or heresy. See Acts 20:29. "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing flock." The grievous wolves are evidently those false teachers who bring in another gospel which is not another. See also Matthew 10:16, "Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves," etc. There you see the wolves are evidently those men who bring them before the councils. The time when the wolf comes is the time to mark who the true shepherd is. He stands between them when heresy comes in, or when a persecuting world stretches out its hand towards them; that is the time for the true shepherd to stand between the fold and it; but ah! the hireling

flees. The time when he can get no more his own ease ? his own comfort ? is the time he flees. Pray that Scotland may have true shepherds; not those who care not for the sheep; not those whom God has never owned in the conversion of souls; not those who will flee in a time of heresy or persecution. Pray that the true shepherds may be known in a time of heresy or persecution, and that the day may never dawn on Scotland when it will be given over to hireling ministers.

II. I come now, secondly, to consider the true shepherd. Oh! it is sweet to turn from looking at the hireling to the true shepherd: "I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep," etc. Christ here gives us three marks of the true shepherd.

1. The true shepherd gives his life for the sheep. Jacob was a good shepherd to Laban. You remember his care of the sheep; he says, "That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee; I bare the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day or stolen by night," etc., Genesis 31:39, Genesis 31:40. But he did not give his life for the sheep. David was a good shepherd. You remember when a lion and a bear came and took away the sheep, that he went after it and rescued it, and slew both the lion and the bear; 1 Samuel 17:35. But David did not give his life for the sheep; but Christ gave his life. The sentence was written against the sheep, "Thou shalt die;" ? Christ came between and died for them. Observe, brethren, that it was not merely temporal death that he died; but it was equal to eternal death. It was death under unquity ? "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities," Isaiah 53:5. It was a death under sin ? "The wages of sin is death." Romans 6:23. And observe, it was freely; he did it out of free love; therefore it is always said, "He gave himself for us". Love one another, even as Christ loved the church, "and gave himself for it." There is one Mediator "who gave himself a ransom for all." Brethren, observe that Christ so loved the sheep that he gave his life "What are these wounds in thy hands? These are the wounds I have received in the house of my friends." Brethren, if ever you and I get to heaven, this is what we will see, "A Lamb as it had been slain." Are you attracted by the sight? What are you made of, that you do not see this love? O brethren, to whom will you go if not to him? Observe what he offers ? himself. "I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep;" that is, I am willing to give myself to you.

2. "I know my sheep, as the Father knoweth me." You know, brethren, how completely the Father knows his Son. He knew him from all eternity: "Then I was by him as one brought up with him, I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him." Brethren, so Christ knows his sheep. "He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world." You know, brethren, that the Father knows him with a love of delight. So Christ knows his sheep with the same love; "Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee." "As the lily among thorns, so is my beloved among the daughters!" "My love, my undefiled is but one, she is the only one of her mother." Christ delights in every one of his sheep. And you know the Father knew Christ during all the time of his sufferings on earth. So Christ knows his sheep in all their temptations. And you know the Father will know Christ to all eternity. So Christ says, "I know my sheep." Christ knows his sheep to all eternity. "They shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my Father's hand." Ah, brethren, is there any shepherd like this shepherd?

3. "I am known of mine." The sheep know Christ, and Christ knows the Father. Christ has a perfect acquaintance of the Father: "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee," so the sheep know Christ: he manifests himself unto them. Ah, brethren, has Christ made

himself known unto you? Has he given you an understanding to know him that is true, and are you in him that is true? This is the mark of all his sheep. "I am known of mine." And this is one of the excellencies of Christ to his own. He lets fragrance forth when he passeth by, and we follow him. Brethren, has he let out his fragrance to you, and do you follow him? Are you known of him even as he is known of the Father? Amen.

S. The Improvement of Affliction

SERMON X "THE IMPROVEMENT OF AFFLICTION" by Robert Murray M'Cheyne

Job 34:31-32. "Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement. I will not offend any more: that which I see not, teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more." This world is a world of trouble: "Man that is born of woman, is of few days, and full of trouble." "We dwell in cottages of clay, our foundation is in the dust, we are crushed before the moth," Job 4:19. This world has sometimes been called "a vale of tears." Trials come into all your dwellings; the children of God are not excepted; there is a need be that you be in many temptations. "Count it not strange when you fall into divers temptations, as though some strange thing happened unto you." If this be so, of how great importance is it, that you and I be prepared to meet it. The darkest thunder cloud only covers the heavens for a time. "Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement. I will not offend any more: that which I see not, teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more." From these words, I would desire to show you the right improvement we should make of affliction and the meetness of inquiring into God's reasons of affliction.

I. The threefold improvement of affliction.

1. Job 34:31, "Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement. I will not offend any more." The first improvement of affliction is submission. It is the temper of one who justifies God: "I have borne chastisement." This was the feeling of Daniel in the midst of the affliction which God brought on Israel. This is shown in Daniel 9:7-8, "O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces," etc.; Daniel 9:14, "Therefore hath the Lord watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the Lord our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth; for we obeyed not his voice."

You will notice, in Nehemiah 9:33 : "Howbeit thou art just in all that is brought upon us; for thou hast done right but we have done wickedly." The same thing you will notice in Leviticus 26:40 : "If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they have trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me." And then the middle of Leviticus 26:41 : "If then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity," etc.; to the end of the chapter. God here says, if they accept of the punishment of their iniquities, he will remember them. Now, this is the first improvement you should make of the affliction. How different is this from many of you; you do not accept of the punishment of your iniquities; your heart rises against God. 1. In your thoughts. 2. In hard words. The man begins to blaspheme God; he says God is a tyrant ? Could God not have spared my child? This is what is spoken of at the pouring out of the fifth and sixth vials. These are their words in hell; when God pours out his wrath, they will blaspheme him. There is still a third way, and that is in your actions. Your words are not only against God, but your actions are against him. If I could lay bare your hearts, you would see such complaining, such anger against God, that you would see the truth of what I am saying. Remember, it is right to learn contentment. What right have you to complain? What right have you to challenge God's dealings with you? If little children were to

take upon them to decide upon the proceedings of both houses of Parliament, what would you think of it? And what right have you to challenge God's government? We should say, with Job, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

2. The second improvement of affliction is humble inquiry into God's meaning: "What I know not teach thou me." This is the proper improvement of affliction. This is the way in which Job himself received his trial. Job 10:2 : "I will say unto God, Do not condemn me: show me wherefore thou contendest with me." The same you will notice in Job 23:3 : "O that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat! I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments. I would know the words which he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me. Will he plead against me with his great power? No; but he will put strength in me. There the righteous might dispute with him; so should I be delivered for ever from my judge." You will notice that Job was to be made acquainted why God dealt thus with him. The same was the case with Joshua 7:6 : "And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord until the even-tide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads. And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord God, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content and dwelt on the other side Jordan! O Lord, what shall I say when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies? For the Canaanites, and all the inhabitants of the land, shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?" When affliction came, Joshua waited for an explanation. This also seems to have been the case with the apostle Paul when he said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Brethren, the opposite of this is very common among you. When God sends affliction into an ungodly family; when God takes away a child, or lays a father on a bed of affliction; do they inquire at God why he did it? Ah, you despise the chastening of the Lord. Brethren, it is a fearful thing not to ask God's meaning in affliction. It is his loudest knock, and often his last. The same thing happens with God's children. You have been loving some idol ? some secret sin ? some secret lust, and God afflicts you. Do you ask an explanation? The same thing takes place in a church. The members are unholy, etc. Then, perhaps, he afflicts it as he did Laodicea. Do we seek an explanation? Ah, no! This is what this town should do in its poverty.

3. There is a third improvement of affliction, that is, the forsaking of sin, "I will not offend anymore." "If I have done iniquity, I will do no more." God's great design in affliction is to make you forsake your sin: "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy," Proverbs 28:13. This was God's way with Manasseh: so it should be in all affliction. God afflicts you that you may cast away your sin; you will not hear his voice of mercy; you will not hear his voice of love; but he brings you under the rod, in order to bring you into the covenant. How often does it to the contrary? I have seen a drunkard afflicted, and he went deeper into sin ? farther away from God. "Ephraim is a cake not turned." There are some among you that remind me of an aged tree that has been struck with lightning, and now stands stript of its leaves, a monument in the earth. So are many of your families. I tell you, brethren, if mercies and judgments do not convert you, God has no other arrows in his quiver.

II. The meetness of inquiring into God's reasons of affliction.

1. It is meet, because it is God that is dealing with you. This affliction in your family, this affliction with yourself, is from God. "Who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered?"
2. It is meet, because this is God's meaning in your affliction. God's meaning is, to save the unconverted, and to sanctify his own. I believe that every time the sun shines into your dwelling, it is meant to make you turn unto God; and it is the same with affliction. It is meant to make you turn to him; or if you be a child of God, every affliction is meant to make you cast your idols to the moles and to the bats, and to turn to God.
3. It is meet, because God can destroy. You know, brethren, that the same hand that afflicts can destroy. The same hand that kindled the burning fever in your breast, can kindle up the flames of hell for you. Amen.

S. The Inward Experience of Believers

The Inward Experience of Believers by Robert Murray M'Cheyne

Although there are different opinions as to who is referred to in Romans 7:1-25, there is no doubt that to the Westminster divines the regenerate man is there portrayed. Referring to the passage they taught that for believers the moral law is of great use, in that,

"...as a rule of life, informing them of the will of God and their duty, it directs and binds them to walk accordingly; discovering also the sinful pollutions of their nature, hearts, and lives; so as, examining themselves thereby, they may come to further conviction of, humiliation for, and hatred against sin; together with a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ, and the perfection of his obedience." [Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter 19, section 4].

Such internal warfare was the experience of the apostle Paul, and likewise of every Christian. It is evident that M'Cheyne preached this sermon to his congregation to help them in the needful duty of self-examination prior to partaking of the Lord's Supper.

"For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin." — Romans 7:22-25.

Published in the Presbyterian Standard, Issue No. 1, January-March 1996. A BELIEVER is to be known not only by his peace and joy, but by his warfare and distress. His peace is peculiar: it flows from Christ; it is heavenly, it is holy peace. His warfare is as peculiar: it is deep-seated, agonizing, and ceases not till death. If the Lord will, many of us have the prospect of sitting down next Sabbath at the Lord's table. The great question to be answered before sitting down there is, Have I fled to Christ or no?

Tis a point I long to know, Oft it causes anxious thought, Do I love the Lord or no?

Am I his, or am I not? To help you settle this question, I have chosen the subject of the Christian's warfare, that you may know thereby whether you are a soldier of Christ — whether you are really fighting the good fight of faith.

I. "I delight in the law of God after the inward man," Romans 7:22.

(1). Before a man comes to Christ, he hates the law of God — his whole soul rises up against it. "The carnal mind is enmity," etc., Romans 8:7.

First, Unconverted men hate the law of God on account of its purity. "Thy word is very pure, therefore thy servant loveth it." For the same reason worldly men hate it. The law is the breathing of God's pure and holy mind. It is infinitely opposed to all impurity and sin. Every line of the law is against sin. But natural men love sin, and therefore they hate the law, because it opposes them in

all they love. As bats hate the light, and fly against it, so unconverted men hate the pure light of God's law, and fly against it.

Second, They hate it for its breadth. "Thy commandment is exceeding broad." It extends to all their outward actions, seen and unseen; it extends to every idle word that men shall speak; it extends to the looks of their eye; it dives into the deepest caves of their heart; it condemns the most secret springs of sin and lust that nestle there. Unconverted men quarrel with the law of God because of its strictness. If it extended only to my outward actions, then I could bear with it; but it condemns my most secret thoughts and desires, which I cannot prevent. Therefore ungodly men rise against the law.

Third, They hate it for its unchangeableness. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but one jot or one tittle of the law shall in no wise pass away. If the law would change, or let down its requirements, or die, then ungodly men would be well pleased. But it is unchangeable as God: it is written on the heart of God, with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning. It cannot change unless God change; it cannot die unless God die. Even in an eternal hell its demands and its curses will be the same. It is an unchangeable law, for He is an unchangeable God. Therefore ungodly men have an unchangeable hatred to that holy law.

(2). When a man comes to Christ, this is all changed. He can say, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man." He can say with David, "Oh how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day." He can say with Jesus, in Psalms 40:1-17, "I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart."

There are two reasons for this:—

First, The law is no longer an enemy. — If any of you who are trembling under a sense of your infinite sins, and the curses of the law which you have broken, flee to Christ, you will find rest. You will find that He has fully answered the demands of the law as a surety for sinners; that He has fully borne all its curses. You will be able to say, "Christ hath redeemed me from the curse of the law, being made a curse for me, as it is written, Cursed," etc. You have no more to fear, then, from that awfully holy law: you are not under the law, but under grace. You have no more to fear from the law than you will have after the judgment-day. Imagine a saved soul after the judgment-day. When that awful scene is past; when the dead, small and great, have stood before that great white throne; when the sentence of eternal woe has fallen upon all the unconverted, and they have sunk into the lake whose fires can never be quenched; would not that redeemed soul say, I have nothing to fear from that holy law; I have seen its vials poured out, but not a drop has fallen on me? So may you say now, O believer in Jesus! When you look upon the soul of Christ, scarred with God's thunderbolts; when you look upon his body, pierced for sin, you can say, He was made a curse for me; why should I fear that holy law?

Second, The Spirit of God writes the law on the heart. — This is the promise: "After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people." Jeremiah 31:33. Coming to Christ takes away your fear of the law; but it is the Holy Spirit coming into your heart that makes you love the law. The Holy Spirit is no more frightened away from that heart; He comes and softens it; He takes out the stony heart and puts in a heart of flesh; and there He writes the holy, holy, holy law of God. Then the law of

God is sweet to that soul; he has an inward delight in it.

"The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." Now he unfeignedly desires every thought, word, and action to be according to that law. "Oh that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes: great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them." Psalms 119:1-176 becomes the breathing of that new heart. Now also he would fain see all the world submitting to that pure and holy law. "Rivers of waters run down mine eyes because they keep not thy law." Oh that all the world but knew that holiness and happiness are one! Oh that all the world were one holy family, joyfully coming under the pure rules of the gospel! Try yourselves by this. Can you say, "I delight," etc.? Do you remember when you hated the law of God? Do you love it now? Do you long for the time when you shall live fully under it — holy as God is holy, pure as Christ is pure?

Oh come, sinners, and give up your hearts to Christ, that He may write on it his holy law! You have long enough had the devil's law graven on your hearts: come you to Jesus, and He will both shelter you from the curses of the law, and He will give you the Spirit to write all that law in your heart; He will make you love it with your inmost soul. Plead the promise with Him. Surely you have tried the pleasures of sin long enough. Come, now, and try the pleasures of holiness out of a new heart.

If you die with your heart as it is, it will be stamped a wicked heart to all eternity. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still." Revelation 22:11. Oh come and get the new heart before you die; for except you be born again, you cannot see the kingdom of God!

II. A true believer feels an opposing law in his members. — "I see another law," etc., Romans 7:23. When a sinner comes first to Christ, he often thinks he will now bid an eternal farewell to sin: now I shall never sin any more. He feels already at the gate of heaven. A little breath of temptation soon discovers his heart, and he cries out, "I see another law."

(1). Observe what he calls it — "another law;" quite a different law from the law of God: a law clean contrary to it. He calls it a "law of sin," Romans 7:25; a law that commands him to commit sin, that urges him on by rewards and threatenings — "a law of sin and death," Romans 8:2; a law which not only leads to sin, but leads to death, eternal death: "the wages of sin is death." "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit," etc., Galatians 5:17. It is the same which, in Ephesians 4:22, is called "the old man," which is wrought according to the deceitful lusts; the same law which in Colossians 3:1-25 is called "your members" — "Mortify, therefore, your members, which are," etc.; the same which is called "a body of death," Romans 7:24. The truth then is, that in the heart of the believer there remains the whole members and body of an old man, or old nature: there remains the fountain of every sin that has ever polluted the world.

(2). Observe again what this law is doing — "warring." This law in the members is not resting quiet, but warring — always fighting. There never can be peace with God, but constant war with sin. This law in the members has got an army of lusts under him, and he wages constant war against the law of God. Sometimes, indeed, an army are lying in ambush, and they lie quiet till a favourable moment comes. So in the heart the lusts often lie quiet till the hour of temptation, and then they war against the soul. The heart is like a volcano: sometimes it slumbers and sends up nothing but a little smoke; but the fire is slumbering all the while below, and will soon break out again. There

are two great combatants in the believer's soul. There is Satan on the one side, with the flesh and all its lusts at his command; then on the other side there is the Holy Spirit, with the new creature all at his command. And so "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these two are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." Is Satan ever successful? In the deep wisdom of God the law in the members does sometimes bring the soul into captivity. Noah was a perfect man, and Noah walked with God, and yet he was led captive. "Noah drank of the wine, and was drunken." Abraham was the "friend of God," and yet he told a lie, saying of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister." Job was a perfect man, one that feared God and hated evil, and yet he was provoked to curse the day wherein he was born. And so with Moses, and David, and Solomon, and Hezekiah, and Peter, and the apostles.

(1). Have you experienced this warfare? It is a clear mark of God's children. Most of you, I fear, have never felt it. Do not mistake me. All of you have felt a warfare at times between your natural conscience and the law of God. But that is not the contest in the believer's bosom. It is a warfare between the Spirit of God in the heart, and the old man with his deeds.

(2). If any of you are groaning under this warfare, learn to be humbled by it, but not discouraged.

First, Be humbled under it. — It is intended to make you lie in the dust, and feel that you are but a worm. Oh! what a vile wretch you must be, that even after you are forgiven, and have received the Holy Spirit, your heart should still be a fountain of every wickedness! How vile, that in your most solemn approaches to God, in the house of God, in awfully affecting situations, such as kneeling beside the death-bed, you should still have in your bosom all the members of your old nature! Let this make you lie low.

Second, Let this teach you your need of Jesus. — You need the blood of Jesus as much as at the first. You never can stand before God in yourself. You must go again and again to be washed; even on your dying bed you must hide under Jehovah our Righteousness. You must also lean upon Jesus. He alone can overcome in you. Keep nearer and nearer every day.

Third, Be not discouraged. — Jesus is willing to be a Saviour to such as you. He is able to save you to the uttermost. Do you think your case is too bad for Christ to save? Every one whom Christ saves had just such a heart as you. Fight the good fight of faith; lay hold on eternal life. Take up the resolution of Edwards: "Never to give over, nor in the least to slacken my fight with my corruptions, however unsuccessful I may be." "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar," etc.

III. The feelings of a believer during this warfare.

(1). He feels wretched. — "O wretched man that I am!" v.24. There is nobody in this world so happy as a believer. He has come to Jesus, and found rest. He has the pardon of all his sins in Christ. He has near approach to God as a child. He has the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. He has the hope of glory. In the most awful times he can be calm, for he feels that God is with him. Still there are times when he cries, O wretched man! When he feels the plague of his own heart; when he feels the thorn in the flesh; when his wicked heart is discovered in all its fearful malignity; ah, then he lies down, crying, O wretched man that I am! One reason of this wretchedness is, that sin, discovered in the heart, takes away the sense of forgiveness. Guilt comes upon the conscience, and a dark cloud covers the soul. How can I ever go back to Christ? he cries. Alas! I have sinned away my Saviour. Another reason is, the loathsomeness of sin. It is felt like a viper in the heart. A

natural man is often miserable from his sin, but he never feels its loathsomeness; but to the new creature it is vile indeed. Ah! brethren, do you know anything of a believer's wretchedness? If you do not, you will never know his joy. If you know not a believer's tears and groans, you will never know his song of victory.

(2). He seeks deliverance. — "Who shall deliver me?" In ancient times, some of the tyrants used to chain their prisoners to a dead body; so that, wherever the prisoner wandered, he had to drag a putrid carcass after him. It is believed that Paul here alludes to this inhuman practice. His old man he felt a noisome putrid carcass, which he was continually dragging about with him. His piercing desire is to be freed from it. Who shall deliver us? You remember once, when God allowed a thorn in the flesh to torment his servant, — a messenger of Satan to buffet him, — Paul was driven to his knees. "I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me." Oh, this is the true mark of God's children! The world has an old nature; they are all old men together. But it does not drive them to their knees. How is it with you, dear souls? Does corruption felt within drive you to the throne of grace? Does it make you call on the name of the Lord? Does it make you like the importunate widow: "Avenge me of mine adversary?" Does it make you like the man coming at midnight for three loaves? Does it make you like the Canaanitish woman, crying after Jesus? Ah, remember, if lust can work in your heart, and you lie down contented with it, you are none of Christ's!

(3). He gives thanks for victory. — Truly we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us; for we can give thanks before the fight is done. Yes, even in the thickest of the battle we can look up to Jesus, and cry, Thanks to God. The moment a soul groaning under corruption rests the eye on Jesus, that moment his groans are changed into songs of praise. In Jesus you discover grace sufficient for you, — grace to hold you up to the end, — and a sure promise that sin shall soon be rooted out altogether. "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine." Ah, this turns our groans into songs of praise! How often a psalm begins with groans and ends with praises! This is the daily experience of all the Lord's people. Is it yours? Try yourselves by this. Oh, if you know not the believer's song of praise, you will never cast your crowns with them at the feet of Jesus! Dear believers, be content to glory in your infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon you. Glory, glory, glory to the Lamb!

S. The Lord and His Rewards

The Lord and His Rewards by Robert Murray M'Cheyne

"And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Revelation 22:12).

THERE IS SOMETHING peculiarly sacred about a parting word. When a father assembles his children round his dying bed, and gives them his last affectionate counsels; you may be quite sure that as long as they have hearts to feel they will remember and often ponder over his parting words. Here are the parting words of the Lord Jesus. Here are the latest accents that fell from the blessed lips of Immanuel. They fell on the ear of the beloved John as he lay entranced on the shore of sea-girt Patmos, "Behold, I come quickly".

1. Observe the person who comes. "Behold, I come." We may say, like the disciples on the lake of Galilee, "It is the Lord". It is the First, and the Last, and the living One, who was dead, and, behold, He is alive for evermore. Jehovah—Jesus is the person who comes. He whose name is "Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace". He who is the image of the invisible God, by whom all things were created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible.

It is Jesus that comes. He that walked on the sea of Galilee, sat wearied on the well of Sychar, and wept beside the rocky sepulchre of Bethany. He that was surety for sinners, who sweated blood in Gethsemane, who was silent before Pilate, and who, through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God on Calvary. "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

It is He who is the righteousness and strength of all His people. He who is our life, He on whom we lean coming up from the wilderness, He who is afflicted in all our afflictions; our tender Shepherd, our elder Brother; He whom, having nor seen, we love. It is He that comes. Surely every believer will love His appearing. You may tremble who know nor God, and obey not the gospel. This is He whom you have lightly esteemed. He stood at your door till His head was tilled with dew, and His locks with the drops of the night. You despised Him and neglected His great salvation. How will you bear to see Him coming in the clouds of heaven!

2. Observe the time when He comes. "I come quickly." Christians differ widely, as to the time when Christ shall come. This diversity is not to be wondered at. "Of that day, and that hour, knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (Mark 13:32). "Of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you; for yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night" (1 Thessalonians 5:1-2). Take it at the longest calculation, it will soon be here. He said, I come quickly, 1800 years ago. Much more now may we say, He comes quickly. A few days, and every eye shall see Him. The sun is waxing old—weary of shining on a Christ-despising world. The whole creation groans under the ever-increasing load of guilt and woe. The lines of prophecy are converging to a point. The cup of

Popery is nearly full. The time, times, and half a time, are hastening to a close. The souls below the altar are crying with a loud voice, "How long, O Lord". The Euphrates is drying up, that the way of the kings of the East may be prepared. There is a noise and a shaking among the dry bones of Israel. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" the once crucified, now exalted, but long-despised Jesus shall come. "Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation." Oh! believer, let this solemn truth make thee patient under the frown and contumely of an unbelieving world. Hold thy possessions with a slack hand. "Take heed, lest at any time your heart be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares." Behold, I come quickly!

3. Observe what He brings with Him. "My reward is with me." Christ Himself shall be the greatest reward of His people. "Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward." Any place would be heaven if we were with Christ. No place would be heaven without Him. "Whom have I in heaven but thee?" Oh to talk with Him as Moses and Elijah did on the mount of transfiguration, to hear Him speak gracious words, to lean our head where John leaned his, to hold Him, and not to let Him go, to behold that countenance which is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars, to have Him turning upon us His eyes of divine tenderness and holy love—that will be a reward.

He has many crowns of righteousness to give to them that love His appearing. He has "the harps of God". He has "authority over ten cities" to give to His own. He has a kingdom prepared for them before the foundation of the world. He has a place beside Him on His throne. But He Himself will be our greatest reward, "I will give him the morning star".

4. Observe what He will do. He will give every man according as his work shall be. Christ is to be Judge of all. "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" John 5:22). This is part of Christ's reward, that every knee shall bow to Him. It is fitting that He that stood silent before the Jews, and at the bar of Pilate, and was buffeted, spit upon, and condemned, should sit on the throne and judge His enemies. It will be greatly to the joy of Christ's people in that awful day, when they receive their reward from the hand that was pierced for them. It will make all unbelievers stand speechless when He to whom they have always said, Depart from us, shall say to them, Depart from me, ye cursed. Oh! that we may obtain mercy of the Lord in that day.

"See the Judge our nature wearing,
Clothed in majesty divine;
You who long for His appearing,
Then shall say, This God is mine;
Gracious Saviour, own me in that day for thine."

Taken from Helps to Devotion

S. The Lord's Dealings with His People

The Lord's Dealings with His People by Robert Murray M'Cheyne

Isaiah 46:3-4. Hearken unto me. O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb. And even in your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry and will deliver you.

There are times in the life of a believer when he is like a traveller who has arrived at some high eminence; he can look back on the way he has gone and the way he has yet to go. So this is a passage where God tells us what he has done and what he will yet do. The history of a believer is wonderful, whether we look backward or forward. If we look back, there is election in a past eternity; and if we look forward, there is deliverance and final victory. As Christ's name is 'Wonderful,' so all the members of his body are wonderful, for they are 'men wondered at.' The history of a believer divides itself into two parts—before and after conversion.

I. Let us consider The past history of a believer. Verse 3: 'Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb.' God follows his chosen vessels before their conversion. Now, let us notice some of his providences; and the first before they are awakened is, in preserving them. There are some, I believe that are like John, 'filled with the Holy Ghost even from their mother's womb'; or like Jeremiah, 'before thou camest out of the womb I sanctified thee.' But this is not the way commonly, for 'we are shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin.' We are degenerate plants of a strange vine. Now those that are vessels of mercy are kept safe. God keeps them from falling into hell. They are often brought to the brink of it, it may be by a fever, or such like; but 'he sends his word and heals them.' Others are cut down; but God spares his chosen vessels. A second providence before conversion is. God does not take away his Holy Spirit from Them. It is a wonder God does not take it away. Often they resist and grieve the Spirit, and sin against convictions. Ah, brethren! we will never know till eternity, what a mercy it was that God never took away his Spirit from us. A third mercy before conversion is, he brings them to the place where they are awakened. Who brought Zaccheus to the sycamore tree? It was the same hand that beckoned him to come down. Who brought the woman of Samaria to the well? The same that told her all things that ever she did. Who brought you and me to the place where we were awakened? It was he that hath 'borne us from the belly, and carried us from the womb.'—he who is the Alpha and the Omega. A second part of the believer's history is the time after awakening and before conversion. Unconverted souls are Satan's property; and when Christ comes in, no wonder that Satan roars and is enraged; and so does the world—they do not like to see their companions leaving them. The tenderest parent is often enraged at his child leaving him. But let us notice what God does for them after they are awakened.

1. First of all, he does not let them go back. He makes them say, 'I have opened my mouth to the Lord, and I cannot go back.'—I will never, never go back. Ah! many are driven back like a ship

before a stormy sea. Once they bade fair for Christ and for heaven; but they could not bear the tempest of hell and the rage of an ungodly world. But God's children are carried forward: they are carried by God from the belly—they are borne by him from the womb. Ah! you are not driven back by persecutions, nor by a tempting world. You can tell the world you have opened your mouth to the Lord, and you cannot—you will not go back. God help us to go forward!

2. God keeps them from refuges of lies. Some set out with great anxiety, but fall asleep, and never awake till they hear the voice, 'Come to judgment! Come to judgment! Come away!' Others take rest in outward forms, prayer, and ordinances. Some go farther still—they take rest in their feelings. These are refuges of lies; but chosen vessels are carried past these refuges of lies; and they are carried past the temptations of the world. It is a sweet thing to be carried by Jesus.

3. Another mercy is, they are carried to Jesus—to the Rock, the smitten Rock, to the wounded, bleeding bosom of Jesus. God never rests till he carries them to his Son—'I drew them with cords of love.' It is God that does it. Oh! if any of you have been brought to the Rock that is higher than you, it is God that has done it. He does all, from election to coronation. O it is quite natural to be awakened, but not so to be brought to Jesus—to leave all your own righteousness, and to take the righteousness of another. O it is divine! None but God can make you do it. Ah! Can you say, then, 'In the Lord have I righteousness and strength'?

II. Let us consider the future part of a believer's history. Verse 4: 'And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.' Here you may observe three particulars.

1. Who is it that offers to carry them even to old age? It is 'I am he,'—'He.' It is the very same being that has brought us hitherto that will carry us on till he sets us down in glory. Ah! it is a sweet truth—'And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you.' The future history of those of you who are come to Christ is unknown to yourselves. God in mercy hath hid it from us; but he hath carried us through the worst already; and do you think that he that has carried us thus far will let us slip now?—Ah, no! 'And even to old age I am he; and even to hoars hairs will I carry you! I have made, and I will bear,' etc. Let us notice some of the believer's trials, while journeying through the wilderness. 1. Temptation. It is when you are brought to Christ that you feel temptation. But, ah! you can then say, 'Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy! When I fall. I shall arise: and when I sit in darkness the Lord shall be a light unto me,' Micah 7:8. Never, till a man is brought to Christ, does Satan rage and put forth such wily temptations: 'Simon, Simon, behold. Satan hath desired to have you, that he might sift you as wheat,' Luke 22:31. As long as you are away from Christ the devil will let you pray, read the Bible, and come to the house of God, and let you think you believe; but, when Jesus comes and draws you to himself, then temptations begin. Many a believer is like to fail in the day of adversity; but, beloved, fear not. There is one who hath made and will bear—who will carry, and deliver you. 2. There are afflictions. Ah! there are many, many afflictions, beloved, between you and the better land. There are the afflictions of a poor, frail, dying body. There are also soul afflictions—darkness, desertions, doubting, fears. And there are family afflictions. But ah! there is a hand engaged to carry us through. It matters not the rugged mountains, if the sheep be on the Shepherd's shoulder. 3. The time may be long. Some may have a short fight and a sure victory—but a step to the crown. Others of you may have long, long to tarry here. This sweet promise is to you—'And even to old age I am he,' etc.

2. Let us consider how he will carry us. 'Through faith.' They are 'kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.' It is by faith you first found peace to your soul; so by faith you will be carried to the end. You came empty at first, and you found Christ; so you must come to the last. You came hell-deserving, undone, and closed with him as the Lord your righteousness; so you must come to the last. You came weak, and you found strength—you came poor, and you were made rich: so you must come to the last.

3. Consider why he will carry us. 1. Because he hath said it. And hath he said it, and will he not do it? It is impossible for God to lie. God will carry you. He hath pledged his word he will do it. 2. He will carry us because his honour is engaged. If we were suffered to drop from the Shepherd's shoulder, then all in heaven—all in hell would hear of it; but, ah! no. Though we sin every day, yet he pardons us every day—he blots out all our iniquities. 3. Another reason why he will carry us is, because he loves us. Ah, beloved, he love us better every day. It was said of Jesus, 'He increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.' So it is with all that are united to him. If, when we were enemies, God loved and Jesus died for us, how much more now, being reconciled by the death of his Son! Ah, yes! he will love us—I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.'

I would now apply this subject.

1. To you that are bold, and have no fears—no doubts. Ah! rejoice with trembling. Believer, you are carried by the same hand. The nailed hand of Jesus is underneath you. Walk softly.

2. To you that are fearful, fear not: your Redeemer is strong. He that brought you to Christ will bring you safe to glory. He, from his throne, will put the crown upon your head—the crown of victory. He will do it—I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.' 'Greater is he that is for you, than he that is in the world.' 'Fear not, little flock: it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.' May God bless his word. Amen.

Taken from A Basket of Fragments

S. The Marks and Blessings of Christ's Sheep

SERMON VIII "THE MARKS AND BLESSINGS OF CHRIST'S SHEEP" by Robert Murray M'Cheyne

John 10:26-30 "But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any [man] pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave [them] me, is greater than all; and no [man] is able to pluck [them] out of my Father's hand. I and [my] Father are one."

There is nothing more surprising to an attentive reader of the gospel than to notice the little success Christ had in the conversion of sinners. Although he speaks with love such as never man spake with, yet for all that, Christ had to complain, just as we have, "Ye believe not." O brethren! is it to be wondered at, then, that there are so few believers among us, when there were so few converted under Christ? We are always to expect this, then. Observe still further that the more that Christ opened out his mind to them, they seemed to hate him the more. They said, "He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him? They were pulling one another away from hearing him. Brethren, it is the same now; the more that ministers have Christ in their sermons — the more faithfully they preach — the more you will say they are mad, and have a devil. Is the servant greater than his master, or the disciple than his Lord? Still farther, observe, when Christ pressed the truth hard upon them, they could not bear it; John 10:31, They were not content with disbelieving what he said, but they stoned him; and he asked this question, "Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of these works do you stone me?" Brethren, the same is true still; the nearer we come to your conscience — the nearer we bring the Word home to you, if you are not converted by it, no doubt you hate us. If it is not the savour of life unto life, it will be the savour of death unto death. "Am I become your enemy, because, I tell you the truth?" And yet, brethren, it is sweet to notice that Christ had his sheep for all that. "My sheep hear my voice and they follow me." Although it is a world of adversaries, yet there is a sheepfold.

Let us notice two things today:

1. The marks of Christ's sheep.
2. The blessings of Christ's sheep.

I. The marks of Christ's sheep. 1. "My sheep hear my voice"; and, 2. "They follow me."

1. They know my voice. You know, brethren, this is the characteristic of the sheep of the east, they know the shepherd's voice. There was once a traveller in the east who denied that they knew the voice of the shepherd, and contended that it was the voice they knew; and to prove it, they changed clothes. The person called the sheep, and they moved not; but when the shepherd called them, they instantly followed him. Now, this is just the way with Christ and his sheep. Christ may be disguised, but faith hears his voice. The first time they hear his voice is the time of conversion.

You remember Zaccheus, he was up in the sycamore tree, and he might think, "Christ's word will not reach me"; but Christ said to him, "Come down, Zaccheus, for today I must abide at thy house." The voice of the shepherd reached him. This was the first day that Zaccheus heard the shepherd's voice. You remember Lydia, she sat among the Grecian matrons by the river side, and heard Paul preach. Someone opened her heart, and said, "Come away"; it was the voice of the shepherd. "The Lord opened the heart of Lydia to attend unto the things that were spoken." It was the outward voice of Paul, but it was the inward voice of Christ.

Again, all that are Christ's hear his voice in the time of duty. They hear a voice behind them saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the left." They hear the voice of Christ directing them how to go. "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, he leadeth me beside the still waters." When the world are in perplexity and know not what to do, the sheep of Christ hear his voice and follow him. And they hear his voice in the time of secret prayer. Mary sat at Jesus' feet and heard his word. And when they open the Bible in secret they hear the voice of the beloved saying, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest"; "My grace is sufficient for you"; — "Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God, I will strengthen thee, yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

There is another hour in which they hear his voice — it is that of affliction. They hear the voice of the shepherd — they hear the voice of the rod, and say, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good."

Again, in the hour of death, when the Christless hear nothing but coming wrath, the sheep hear his voice. They hear it when they pass through the valley. "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee," etc. "Fear not, I will strengthen thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." "O death, I will be thy plagues, O grave, I will be thy destruction; repentance shall be hid from mine eyes."

Ah, brethren, do you hear the voice of Christ? Those of you who are Christless hear the voice of business or of pleasure. You hear the call of the strange woman, "Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant"; but ye do not hear the voice of Christ, when he says, "Come to me, and I will give you rest." You shut your ears, you believe not, because you are not of his sheep. Those of you that are Christ's are as in a solitude, and there is one voice that you hear so shrill and loud; it is the voice of Christ — he says, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." You that hear the voice of Christ, love him, and not another.

2. "They follow me." You know this is the case in eastern countries; the sheep follow the shepherd. There are two ways the sheep follow the shepherd — when they are looking at his person, and when they hear his voice. So it is with those that are Christ's. The wounds in his side, in his hands, and in his feet, are attracting things in a believer's eye. Why do they follow him? They follow him that they may get pardon; they follow him that they may get living water. Just as the sheep follow the shepherd to the well, or down into the valley, or beneath some shady rock, so those that are Christ's follow him. They follow him every day; they follow him in all parts of the world. In whatever they do, they follow Christ. They follow him in bearing his cross; they follow him in reproach. "Reproach hath broken my heart." Christ could say, "I am the song of the drunkard." So the sheep can say the same. They follow him in his love. "Christ loved us and gave himself for us." So Christ's sheep have the same love in their hearts. If you are Christ's, you will have the same love

he had. Christ died for his enemies; so you will be willing to do the same if you are Christ's. They follow him in prayerfulness. Christ was a man of prayer. He often went out and continued all night in prayer; he could say, "I give myself to prayer." So it is with all the sheep of Christ — they follow him. As he had communion with the Father, so have they. They follow him in holiness. Christ was separate from sinners, he was of a different nature from them. So will we, if we are his; we will not be of the world, even as he was not of the world. Whom do you follow? Do you follow the world? then ye are not of his sheep. Do you follow Christ? are you following him? then you are one of his sheep, and if you follow him now, you will follow him to all eternity.

II. The blessings of Christ's sheep.

1. "I know them." 2. "I give them eternal life." 3. "They shall never perish."

1. "I know them." The shepherd in the east knows his sheep — he knows them by appearance: "I know my sheep." Christ knew his sheep from all eternity. We spoke of this last Sabbath. Just as he said, "Before Abraham was, I am," so does he know us. Ah, the eternal love of Christ passeth knowledge! To think that there never was a time that he did not know them. But "I know them" in time. The world does not know them; the world thinks that they are wolves in sheep's clothing. They give no credit to your new birth; they say, wait a while, and we will see what it will come to. The church does not know them. You remember Paul, when he came to Jerusalem, the disciples did not believe that he was a disciple. And Ananias said, "Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem." So it may be with you. Perhaps they will not let you into their society; but, "I know you." And then he knows your wants: "I know them."

2. "I give unto them eternal life." You know that the shepherd leads the sheep to a living well or to some gushing stream that flows between two rocks. So is it with Christ. Observe, it is said, "I give unto them eternal life." If you are one of Christ's flock you will never want. "I give unto them eternal life." What does this imply. It implies daily pardon. You know when the Queen sends a pardon to any condemned criminal, she is said to give the man his life. If you are Christ's you need daily pardon. If there is any sin separating between you and a loving God, you need it pardoned. It implies spiritual life. The life that Christ gives flows through the heart. If the Holy Spirit were to leave the heart, you would lose spiritual life. Thus David says, "Take not thy Holy Spirit away from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit." Brethren, are you daily drinking of this living water? Does it spring up within you? Ah! remember it is Christ's gift; "I give unto them eternal life."

3. "They shall never perish." You know, brethren, that the shepherd often loses his sheep. Thus Jacob did, he sometimes lost the sheep. And you remember David sometimes lost the sheep. A lion and a bear came once and carried away one of the sheep. But there is one shepherd that never loses any. "These are they which thou has given me, and I have kept them, and none of them is lost," "They shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." Those that are Christ's sheep have got many adversaries; there is the devil, like a roaring lion, going about seeking whom he may devour; there is the world, gaping like strong bulls of Bashan; and then there is the old heart striving to get back to its pleasures; but you shall never perish. It is true that you have got many tossings. Oftentimes God's people cry to the Rock, but it hears not. Often they cry, "My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God." But that word will stand, "I know them — they shall never perish." Never did one sheep of Christ's perish yet. Ah,

it is true that there are many falls — that there are many backslidings; but they shall never perish. There have many perished out of this place — many that seemed to be his; but Christ's sheep shall never perish. Why can they not perish? There are three reasons: 1. They are in "my hand." 2. They are in "my Father's hand." 3. "I and my Father are one."

1. They are in "my hand" You know what is in his hand is safe. Whose hand is stronger than his? "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him." "They shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand."

2. They are in "my Father's hand." "My Father gave them to me"; he said, "I commit these sheep into thy hand." Christ accepted them, and the Father draws them to him. So that there are two hands upholding the sheep, one below the other, so that if you were to fall out of one hand, you would just fall into the other.

3. "I and my Father are one" — one in essence, one in power, one in purpose, one in love. If one hand was pulling the one way, and the other the other, then we do not know what might be the case; but they are both pulling the same way. Are you Christ's? then you will never perish. But I believe there are some here that will perish. You know I have sometimes said, if there was but one sitting in the middle of the church that should perish, then you might all gather around him, and weep over his awful state; but I believe that there are many sitting in all parts of the church that will yet perish. But if you are in Christ's hand; you are in his Father's hand, and he and his Father are one. Amen.

Sabbath Forenoon, 25th September 1842.

S. The Pilgrim's Staff

The Pilgrim's Staff by Robert Murray M'Cheyne Hebrews 13:5. I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. My beloved friends, let us notice, in the first place, the history of this remarkable promise: 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' These words have been a staff in the hand of believers throughout all ages; and they will be so to you, if you lean upon them.

I. First of all, let us trace the history of this promise. You will notice that it is not put into this epistle for the first time—it is a borrowed promise. First of all, I think, it is borrowed from what God said to Jacob, Genesis 28:15 : 'Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whether thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.' There is another place from which I think it is borrowed, 1 Chronicles 28:20 : 'And David said to Solomon his son, Be strong and of good courage, and do it; Fear not, nor be dismayed: for the Lord God, even my God, will be with thee: He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee,' etc. Now, you see, here is the promise again—'He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.' There is still another place where the same staff is put into a believer's hand, Joshua 1:5 : 'There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: As I was with Moses, so will I be with thee: I will not fail thee. nor forsake thee.' Now, turn back again to Hebrews, and observe how Paul brings it in—'Be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' Now, a believer may ask this question—'When did he say that to me?' Ah! but he said it to Jacob, and Solomon, and Joshua, and therefore it is said to you. Observe, brethren, what a blessed principle this brings out: What God speaks to one believer, he says to me. You will observe that this promise in the Old Testament is special—that is, it is addressed to one individual, but in the New Testament it is general. Some, when they read the Old Testament, say, 'This is addressed to Abraham,' or 'This is addressed to Jacob; but it is not said to me.' But what was said to Abraham, or Jacob, or Joshua, is spoken to you. The special promise to Joshua is to all believing Joshuas to the end of the world—'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' I do not know if you understand what I mean; but from this little verse we know that—the special promises in the Old Testament are to all believers. God said to Abraham—'I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing.' So he says to all that are children of Abraham. And there is a sweet promise in the forty-third of Isaiah—'Fear not, for I have redeemed thee: I have called thee by my name; thou art mine,' etc. That promise was special to Israel, and yet it belongs to me. And there is another sweet promise in the fifty-fourth chapter—'For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee,' etc. Now, if you were reading this promise, you might say, 'Ah! that does not belong to me.' But by turning to the thirteenth of Hebrews, we know that it belongs to all believers. There are two reasons I would give why this is true, because to some it may appear wonderful. The first is, God is the same yesterday, today and for ever—I am the Lord; I change not.' Ah! the unchangeableness of God explains it—I am the Lord; I change not.' Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and for ever. And there is another reason why this promise of Scripture belongs to believers now; it is that all believers are one body, and therefore whatever belongs to one,

belongs to all. All believers are branches of one vine; and therefore if God say to one branch, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,' he says so to all. And therefore, for these two reasons, all the promises made to Jacob or Solomon or Joshua are made to me. And this makes the Bible not a book written for one, but a book written to me—a letter by the Lord, and directed to me: and therefore every word of divine love and tenderness that he has written in this book belongs to me.

II. And now, dear brethren, I would speak, in the second place, of the person here spoken of—'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' It is quite evident that it is not the language of a creature. Our parents will leave us, and our friends will leave us. These are not the words of a creature, then—'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' Observe, then, dear brethren, I entreat you, whose word it is—'He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' It is the word of the three-one God. You may take each of the persons of the Godhead, and apply this word to him—'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' You may take it as the word of Immanuel. You remember what Christ said to his disciples - 'Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.' This is the same promise. Brethren, when the Lord Jesus comes to you, and covers you with his garment, and says, 'Fear not,' he will never forsake that soul. A mother may forsake—'Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, she may forget; yet will I not forget thee.' Observe, brethren, that when once the Lord Jesus comes to a sinner to be his righteousness, he will never leave him—'I am with you always.' Oh! it is this that makes him a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. Why will he never leave us? The first reason is, his love is everlasting love. It is not like the love of a creature—it is unchangeable. Another reason is, he has died for that soul: he has borne all for that soul. Will he ever leave a soul that he has died for?

Again, you may take these words as those of the Spirit, and then they are like those words in fourteenth of John—'I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever—to abide with you for ever. It is the same as these words—'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' When God the Holy Spirit comes to a soul, he will never leave it. Some may often be made to say 'I think the Spirit will go away from me.' But, observe, he says, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' David cried out in the bitterness of his soul. 'Take not thy Holy Spirit away from me.' Here is the answer—'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' God will never forsake the temple in which he dwells. He forsook the tabernacle in the wilderness, and he forsook the temple at Jerusalem; but he will never forsake the living temple.

Or, you may take these words, and apply them to God the Father. And here they come to be very much the words God gave to Abraham: he said, 'Fear not, Abram; I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward.' He had returned from the slaughter of Chederlaomer, and of the kings that were with him. The king of Sodom came out to meet him, and said unto him. 'Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself.' But Abraham said, 'I have lifted up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and of earth, that I will not take from a thread even to a shoe latchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich.' And, immediately after, God appeared to him, and said: 'Fear not, Abram; I am thy shield, and they exceeding great reward.' This is what Asaph felt. He says, in the seventy-third Psalm, 'My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.' Ah, brethren, this is a sweet word to a poor soul who is mourning over the broken pots at his feet. This is a sweet word to those of you who are bereft—who have left houses and

lands—'I will never leave thee, not forsake thee.' This may be a sweet word to those of you who are mourning over the dead. O brethren! is this your portion? Can you look up to a three-one God, Father, Son, and Spirit, standing on these broken shreds at your feet, and say, 'Thou wilt never leave me, nor forsake me'? This is happiness. Well, well did the Lord say, 'Mary hath chosen that good part which shall never be taken away from her.' Ah, poor souls! that have chosen the world as your portion—that have chosen the portion that will be taken from you. Ah, brethren! be you wiser.

Let me mention now some of the times when we should remember these words.

1. A time of guilt. O the dark hour, when guilt is on the conscience, and when a frown looks down from heaven upon us. O in such an hour remember these words—'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' 'Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return unto me.' Thy redeeming God calls out, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to day and for ever.' Thy redeeming God calls out, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' 'Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you.' O there is a deceitfulness in sin! When Satan has got you down, he tries to make you think God has forsaken you.

2. A time of danger. There is no time when you may be more inclined to think God has forsaken you, than when sin and Satan are raging. There is a difference from sin raging and sin reigning, though the soul may not see it. In such a time, remember these words—'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' In a time of temptation, the believer should remember this promise. Jacob rested on it; Solomon rested on it: yea, it is a staff which has been leaned on by many believers, and you may lean on it too.

3. When creatures leave you. Some of you may be bereft of your substance, but remember, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' Some of you may be called upon—some have been called up onto part with those who are dear to you. Some of you may be called upon to part with your teachers; but remember—and, Oh! it is hard to remember—that he that makes the creatures pleasant, still lives. Brethren, I do not know a lesson in the world that is harder to learn than this. It was God that gave me the creatures; and, now that he has taken them away, in himself! can find all that I had in them. O then! remember this—'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' Bereavements come suddenly, they come like the whirlwind; but O remember that he comes and says, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' And, O brethren! remember that the word 'never' reaches to death— it reaches to the judgment seat. You may lay hold of that word there—'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' And when the judgment is past, these words will be the eternal solace of all those here who have believed—'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' Eternity alone will unfold the riches of this promise. He who died for us will be our eternal friend; and he who sanctifies us will for ever dwell in us; and then God, who loved us, will be ever with us. Then will we get into the meaning of his promise—'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' Amen. This sermon was preached on Thursday evening, 24th Nov., 1842, the evening on which the author arrived from the convocation of ministers held in Edinburgh. Taken from A Basket of Fragments.

S. The Salvation of God

"THE SALVATION OF GOD" by Robert Murray M'Cheyne

Isaiah 55:7-9 "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts [are] not your thoughts, neither [are] your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For [as] the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." This is one of the sweetest portions of the Word of God, and yet it strikes me that it is seldom understood. I observe that it is very frequently one of the devil's plans to prevent a proper understanding of these passages of the Word of God that are the sweetest and plainest, and thus to turn the honey into gall. Now, this passage is often understood in this way, Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and then God will have mercy on him. But you will notice, first of all, that this puts sanctification before justification; now we are justified and then sanctified. Those that are justified are then brought into the image of God's Son, and then those who are sanctified are glorified — this is the Scripture plan. Now, if we were to change our lives, and God on that account to have mercy, and abundantly pardon us, then there is no need of Christ. If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

I desire, by the help of the Holy Spirit, to show you the right meaning of this passage. I will have only time to open it up without dwelling upon it; but you can do so yourselves.

Let us notice:

1. What is to be forsaken.
2. What you are to return to.
3. What you will get by returning.
4. The time when you are to return.

I. Let us see what is to be forsaken, Isaiah 55:7 : "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts." Compare this with the eighth verse: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord." Observe then, dear brethren, what it is that all unregenerate men are called upon to forsake. You are called upon to forsake your way — your way of pardon — your way of peace with God, and the reason given is that God's way is not as your way, neither his thoughts as yours. Now, observe first that every carnal man has got some plan by which he thinks to get to heaven. This is what God thinks of here. The wickedest man here has got some kind of a way of pardon of his own. You will not find a man on the earth but hopes that at death, or at the judgment day, he will get free. Ah, brethren, if it were not for this, you would not rest as you do. If you had no thoughts of pardon, you could not laugh as you do. And, therefore, you may lay it down as an axiom that every natural man has a way by which he hopes to be saved. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly

pardon." The plans of all worldly men may be resolved into this one — self-righteousness. There is one man who says he hopes to be saved, for God is merciful. God will not destroy the souls that he has made. Another man thinks God will save him for his sincere endeavours. He is a kind God, and he will save me for my best endeavours. I dare say, the hearts of many agree to that. This is the answer I get in most houses I go to, when I ask, Are you willing to be saved? You say, I am trying to do the best I can. Another man not so ignorant of the Bible, hopes to be saved by faith as a work. He reads, "Abraham was justified by faith." Now, he says, If I could get this faith I would be saved. You think that God would save you if you had faith. No such thing, God will not save you for your faith. I believe this is one of the commonest ways by which many deceive themselves.

These are some of the ways that men look to for salvation. You will see that their aim is self-righteousness. This is the way you are commanded to forsake this day. O brethren, what is your way? Sinner, you are commanded to forsake your way.

Observe, farther, that this way is different from God's way — "For my ways are not as your ways, neither my thoughts as your thoughts." God's way of justifying a sinner is by the death and obedience of his Son. It is not by washing away your sins yourself, but it is by casting yourself under the doing and dying of his Son. I say, then, it is not your way; I say farther, it is higher than your way. You are groping in the dark, but God's way is in the light. And then it is a more glorious way; just as there is a greater glory spread over the bespangled heaven than there is over this poor earth, so is there over God's way. God's is high up — a perfect, righteous way. Your sins may be covered by this way as completely as the waters of the flood covered the earth.

Now, brethren, your way must be forsaken. This is a hard saying. Self-righteousness is engraved in your nature. Every natural man here is determined to be saved by his own righteousness. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." I often observe that when you drive a man out of one way, he goes to another; when you drive him out of his past life, he flies to his future life. But, brethren, if you would be saved, you must forsake your own way. You must forsake the tops of the houses. You must not be like the spider who, as soon as it is driven from the web it was weaving, begins to weave another. You must put self away as a corrupt thing. An unconverted man is like one in a burning ship; he will cling to the ship till it is burned to the water's edge, and sinks. Now, if a lifeboat comes, he must let go his hold of the burning ship, and drop into it, if he would be saved. Now, observe, the first thing is, to let go, and then drop into the lifeboat. Now, you must let go your own way, if you would be saved.

II. I come now to the second thing — What must you return to? "Return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon you; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." The "Lord" here spoken of is the Lord Jesus Christ, the same that is spoken of in Isaiah 55:4; "I have given him (that is, Christ), for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people." This is the Lord you must seek; this is the Lord you must return to. You will observe he is called "our God"; this expression is the same as Emmanuel — God with us — God in our nature. This is the being you are to seek. You will observe, dear friends, first of all, it is not enough to forsake your own thoughts — your own way. Just as in the case of the burning ship, it was not enough for the man to let go his hold, but he must drop into the boat, so you must not only leave your own way, but you must return to God. And notice, farther, it is not getting some new view, some new opinion — it is not such things;

conversion is something real. Ah, that is no true conversion that does not come from God! There are many that get new views; but if you would be saved, you must come to God.

Oh! I would here plead with those of you who seem to have forsaken your own mercies. Once you thought you could stand in the judgment; now you have found out the reverse; you say, "Enter not into judgment with me, for in thy sight shall no flesh living be justified," You have forsaken your own way; well now, sinner, return unto the Lord, return unto God manifest in flesh. "Let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten." Why will you stay back? Are you thinking God will not receive you, but does he not promise that if you come he will in no wise cast you out; but ah! you say, perhaps, I must wait till I am somewhat better, and then I will come. Ah! then, you have not forsaken your own way. I thought you had forsaken your own way. He is the Lord our righteousness. Oh! then, return unto him.

III. I come now, thirdly, to show you what you will get. "He will abundantly pardon," or, as the meaning is, he will multiply pardon. Verse 3: "Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live." etc. So he here says, "Return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon you, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." There is a stress to be laid on the word "will," he will abundantly pardon. My dear friends, the mercy that is laid up in Christ is sure mercy, none yet have been disappointed that came. The greatest sinner that comes finds his mercy the sweeter. Mary Magdalene came, the woman that was a sinner came, Manasseh came, a persecuting Saul came, and they all found mercy — they all forsook their own way. He has mercy, and it is sure mercy. All that ever came found mercy. And then, "He will abundantly pardon," or he will multiply pardon. The meaning is twofold — it is either, he will pardon great sinners or he will pardon pardoned ones. Those of you who are unregenerate men, he will pardon you. Then the other meaning is, he will pardon upon pardon. When you go away and sin and come back again, he will pardon you, if only you will give over your own way and follow God's way of righteousness. If only you will give over that way and return to Christ, then God swears by himself that he will receive you, and will multiply pardon unto you.

I would here plead with those of you who have sinned against much light, and for that reason keep away from Christ. Dear fellow-backslider, why do you stay away? You say, he has pardoned me before, will he pardon again? Ah, he will multiply pardon. Sin is a darkening thing; when we have sinned and been pardoned we often go back to our sin and dread to return; but ah! if we would be pardoned we must return to him.

IV. Now, there is just a fourth thing remaining, and that is the time. Verse 6: "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near." My dear brethren, you will observe that this controversy is not between you and me, but between God and you. You will not always hear about this way, it is only for a time. Ordinarily, I believe that the whole period of life is given to man to seek Christ. I believe your lifetime is the boundary God has set for you to find Christ. O seek him, sinner, while he may be found! Some of you may say, If my lifetime is the period, then I will wait till death. But observe it is said, "while he is near." There are times when Christ is nearer than others. A faithful ministry is a time when Christ is near. When the Spirit is poured out, that also is a time when he is near. You know when a man is breathing on you, you say, he is near. So when the Spirit is breathing on you, then he is near. O seek him now while he may be found, call upon him while he is near! My dear brethren, if you will not call upon Christ when he is near, the time will

come when you will call but he will not hear. I think I have seen some calling, and he did not hear. If you will not call on him while he is near, perhaps, brethren, there may come a time when you may knock at Christ's door, and he will not hear. If you have as many silent Sabbaths as you have had preaching ones, will it not be righteously done? "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Amen.

S. The Spirit Committed to God

The Spirit Committed to God by Robert Murray M'Cheyne Psalms 31:5. Into thine hand I commit my spirit; thou hast redeemed me, Lord God of truth.

There is something peculiarly interesting in these words; they are the words of the Lord Jesus when he hung upon the cross—he hung upon it for six long hours in bitter agony. The gall and the vinegar were bitter, but it was nothing to the wrath of God. It was at the last hour of his agony Christ said, 'Into thine hand I commit my spirit; thou hast redeemed me, Lord God of truth.' The very soul which he had made an offering for sin, he committed into the hand of God. There is something very precious in being allowed to use the same expression as Christ. There is something very pleasant in being allowed to use the words of a departed friend, and that a beloved friend. There is no friend like Christ. 'This is my beloved, and this is my friend.' There is something sweet in being allowed to use the words of Christ, in Psalms 40:1-17 : 'Innumerable evils have compassed me about, and mine iniquities have taken such hold upon me, that I cannot look up.' There is something pleasant for a sinner to be allowed to use the words of Christ in Isaiah 40:1-31, 'My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God.' In like manner it is sweet for a poor dying worm to be allowed to use the words before us. From these words let us consider:

1. The person that speaks.
2. The person addressed.
3. The thing committed. The person that speaks. It is an afflicted, tempest-tossed soul.

Such was David, no doubt, when he wrote this Psalm. He says, Psalms 31:4, 'Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me.' Or, Psalms 31:8, 'And has not shut me up into the hand of the enemy,' etc. He was a poor, afflicted, tempest-tossed man. He felt that Satan and his own wicked heart were too many for him. 'Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me.' Such was Christ's, in that day especially, when he said, 'This is your hour, and the power of darkness.' 'Strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round.' He was an afflicted, tempest-tossed soul. And, no doubt, there may be such within hearing; if so, these words are for them. They were used by the Head when he suffered for them, and he intended that they should be used by the members. Dear tempest-tossed soul, he can deliver thee. Put up this prayer, 'Into thine hand I commit my spirit; thou has redeemed me, Lord God of truth.'

II. The person addressed. This is the Redeemer. On the one hand there is a poor tempest-tossed believer; on the other hand there is the all-sufficient Redeemer. On the ground lies a poor tempest-tossed man; above him stands the all-sufficient Redeemer. It is to this mighty Redeemer we must go. When Christ spoke these words, he no doubt spoke to the Father, 'Into thine hand I commit my spirit; thou hast redeemed me, Lord God of truth.' Some will ask, Did Christ need to be redeemed? Ah! yes, he had our sins laid upon him, and on that account needed to be redeemed. And therefore he said, when he was at the end of the work, 'Into thine hand I commit my spirit;

thou has redeemed me, Lord God of truth.' The very spirit that had been made an offering for sin. When Stephen took up the same words, he did not address them to God, but to the Redeemer; he said, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' As if he had said, 'Into thine hand I commit my spirit.' Ah! brethren, this is the only hand that can receive our spirit, none other but him who has redeemed us.

III. What it is he commits into his hand—'my spirit.' The soul of man is the most precious part of man. I do not intend to speak lightly of the body, but it is not to be compared to the soul. The outer man is the setting, but the soul is the diamond. It was the spirit that was made in the likeness of God. The body will go to the dust, but not so the spirit. When free from the body it will sin no more—I mean the redeemed soul—it will be clouded no more; sin and it will be for ever separated. It was this that David committed into the hand of God. It was this that Christ committed into the hand of his Father. It is this that every poor tempest-tossed soul will commit to God. 'What shall it profit a man if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?' How long will the devil deceive you, brethren? How long will you neglect the unchanging, unsatisfied - spirit? In applying these words, I desire to show you a few of those times we should commit our spirit to God.

1. In the time of conversion. It is the first time that ever a sinner commits his spirit into the hand of God. I think this is what Paul means when he says to Timothy, 'I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him, against that day.' You will observe, in the Bible, that conversion is sometimes spoken of from God's part in it. Again, it is sometimes spoken of from the sinner's part in it. There is no contradiction in these two. Conversion begins first on God's part; but the Spirit works on the sinner; it produces faith in him, draws him to Jesus, and enables him to forsake sin. Dear brethren, I must speak to you seriously, and say that it is your solemn duty, as well as your sweet privilege, to commit your soul into the hand of God in conversion. In whose hand have you placed your spirit? Have you put it into the hand of the world? Was it crucified for you? Have you committed your soul into the hand of Satan, as Ahab did? He sold himself to work all manner of wickedness. What can he do for it? Can he give it peace? Can he give it joy? Can he fit it for heaven? But there are some who have committed their soul into the hand of God. There are those in this congregation who can look up to him against whom the sword of justice awoke, and say, 'Into thine hand I commit my spirit'—my poor, polluted, tempest-tossed spirit. I would urge upon you all to commit your spirit to him. If your spirit be not committed to him, will it be saved? In a little, your spirit will return to God, who gave it, and if it be not committed into the hand of him who bore our sins, in his own body on the tree, how will you appear? Ah! but some will say, Will he receive my spirit? Ah! will he not? Did ever he say, That spirit is too vile for me—that spirit has lived too long in sin? 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.' Chief of sinners, commit thy spirit to him.

2. To those of you who may be tempted believers. I say, a time of temptation is a time to put up this prayer. There are some believers who, for a long time after believing, know not what temptation is. They are like Naphthali, 'satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the Lord.' They have eternal sunshine; but perhaps they fall when temptation comes, and they feel with Job, 'When thou hidest thy face I am troubled.' Then he goes to his knees, but he finds no comfort. He goes to the Bible, but it is a sealed book. He goes to Christian friends, but miserable comforters are they all. Now, what can he do? There is hardly such a word he can put up as this—'Into thine

hand I commit my spirit; thou hast redeemed me, Lord God of truth,'—thou hast paid thy own precious blood to redeem me; wilt thou shut me up into the hand of mine enemy? 'Pull me out of the net.' 'Into thine hand I commit my spirit; thou hast redeemed me, Lord God of truth.' There is a ray of hope springs from these words, 'Lord God of truth.' Thou hast said, 'Thy sheep shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of thy hand.' Thou hast said, 'The very God of peace sanctify thee wholly, and I pray God your whole soul, and body and spirit, may be preserved blameless until the coming of Jesus Christ.' Wilt thou not do all that thou hast said?

3. To those among you who may be in affliction. Many Christians know nothing of affliction. They are allowed to sail smoothly on; no storm comes near their little bark. They do not know what it is to write 'Ichabod'— the glory is departed—on their dwellings; or like Naomi to say, 'Call me not Naomi, call me Marah, for the Lord hath dealt bitterly with me.' Dear brethren, it is not always that you will have these days. Days of darkness and disease will come, and what is to be done? There is only one place you can go to. 'Into thine hand I commit my spirit; thou hast redeemed me, Lord God of truth.'

4. To those of you who are looking forward to duty. When a believer first comes to Christ, his time is all taken up about the gate, not about the way. I have been much struck with young believers. When they have been hearing a sermon, they say, How did you like that sermon? not, What am I the better of it? But, if you are a believer, you will feel that you have as much to do with the way as with the gate. Commit thy spirit to him. O brethren, he can carry you! 'Even to hoar hairs I am he; and even to old age will I carry you.' There is none but he can carry you—before duty to guide, in duty to direct, after duty to accept. Commit thy spirit into his hand; he will guide you. 'Thou shalt hear a voice behind thee saying, This is the way, walk ye in it.'

Last of all, to dying believers. It was our Head that used this prayer, and it may well suit all the members. It is a solemn thing to die, because we will have to go alone. It is solemn because we are going where we never went before; all is strange and new. When we go to a throne of grace, we have been there before, and know the way; but to go there is dark, because we go we know not where. And then it is dark, because it is a final step. It is a solemn thing to die, because if we die wrong we cannot come back to die again. These are some of the things that make up the valley of the shadow of death. In such a time, what are we to do? Commit thy spirit into his hand. You must commit your spirit to Christ in the same way as you did in the converting hour. There is no hand that can reach across Jordan but his. There is none that can say 'Peace, be still,' but Jesus. 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever.' Dear brethren, are you preparing for death? Do you not know that soon another voice will be heard here, another voice will lead the psalm? It is a hard thing for a believer to commit his spirit into the hand of Christ. What then will you do, you that are giving your soul to the god of this world?—what will you do when God says, Go to the gods which you have chosen, commit your spirit to the world you have loved? Amen. This sermon was preached on Sabbath afternoon, 10th July, 1842, benig first after a severe attack of illness which the author experienced. Taken from A Basket of Fragments.

S. The True Pleasantness of Being a Child of God

The True Pleasantness of Being a Child of God by Robert Murray M'Cheyne Psalms 16:6. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.

Proverbs 3:17. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. The words which I have read to you, dear friends, from the sixteenth Psalm, are properly and originally the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. 'The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.' You will see this, if you look at the tenth verse of the Psalm: 'For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.' This verse, you know, is over and over again applied to Christ in the New Testament. You know, dear brethren, that Christ, when on earth, was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, and we hid, as it were, our faces from him. 'Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows, yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted,' Isaiah 53:4. And yet, brethren, it is quite evident that all the time of his life there was a holy joy remaining through him. Though we are never told that Christ laughed, yet it is said 'he rejoiced.' You will find evident marks of this running through the Gospels, and more through the Psalms. So that, although Christ was the surety of a guilty world—though from the womb to the cross there was a crown of thorns bound around his brow, yet he had a holy joy; yea, even in his death he could say, 'The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.' As it was with Christ, so it is with his followers. You have your peculiar sorrows, believer, that the world does not know of; yet you have got a calm, upspringing well of joy, so that like our Lord, you can say 'The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.' Christ's 'ways are ways of pleasantness, and all his paths are peace.' I take those of you to witness who are believers and afflicted, is it not true, that for all your peculiar sorrows you have got a peculiar joy? Christ one day said to his disciples, 'I have bread to eat that the world knows not of.' So we have a joy that the world knows not of—a joy that all the tempests and troubles of time cannot ruffle. 'The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea I have a goodly heritage.'

I would show you from these words the true pleasantness of being a child of God. I would show you, 1. That the pleasures of the unconverted are false pleasures.

2. That the pleasures of God's children are true pleasures.

I. The pleasures of the unconverted are false pleasures, because:

1. They are not satisfying. They pretend to satisfy, but they are not satisfying. When the devil leads you into the worldly pleasure, he says, 'Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant.' But when you come to taste the stolen waters, tell me, is there not something awanting. Look at Proverbs 14:3, 'Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful, and the end of that mirth is heaviness.' Ah! brethren, is it not so? You that have enjoyed most of the world's pleasures—most of its gaiety, is it not true, that 'even in laughter the heart is sorrowful, and the end of that mirth is heaviness'? Is it not true that your lips and your heart are often contrary? Is it not often true that

there is a cloud of sorrow in your heart, when there is a smile on your countenance? When you are in the midst of your gaiety is it not true, that 'even in laughter the heart is sorrowful, and the end of that mirth is heaviness'? 'Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again.' 'I said, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth; therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also is vanity,' Ecclesiastes 2:1. 'I said of laughter, It is mad; and of mirth, What doeth it?' Ecclesiastes 2:3. Ah! brethren, as long as you are unconverted, with an eternal hell below your feet, it must, and it ever will be the case that 'even in laughter the heart is sorrowful, and the end of that mirth is heaviness.'

2. They are short. I told you last Sabbath, that your being was to be eternal—your history is to be for eternity. Your history on this little piece of ground is nothing compared with your history throughout eternity: it is like the tick of a clock. All the joy that an unconverted man will see is here—beyond is hell. This is what made Moses forsake the pleasures of Egypt. He was the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and he had all the pleasures he could desire. The pipe and the tabret were in their feasts; he had all the company that the world delight in; but ah! Moses found out, by the teaching of God, that the pleasures of sin are only for a season. He 'chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.' O sinner, you have pleasure, but it is only for a reason! O Christless man, you have pleasure, but it is only for a season! Look at Ecclesiastes 7:6, 'For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool.' You know, brethren, when you put thorns under a pot, if you did not know to the contrary, you would think they would last for a long time; but it is a bright blaze and soon over. So is the laughter of the fool. Laugh on if you will; live on with your wicked companions if you will; live on without knowing Christ, and without knowing the Father, if you will; but remember I have told you your pleasure is short; your candle will soon be out.

3. They are suddenly interrupted. It is fearful to think how suddenly they are interrupted. If my heart were not made of stone, I could weep before you for things that are passing around us. Look at Psalms 73:18 : 'Surely thou didst set them in slippery places; thou castedst them down into destruction: how are they brought into desolation as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors.' These of you that are unconverted are standing on slippery places. You know when a man is walking on the ice, his foot may slide, and he fall, without any warning. So it is with those of you who are unconverted. Your feet will slide suddenly. One young man who is lying this night cold and dead, was once as lively as you in the world, he sat where you sit, until the world became too sharp for him, and he forsook us and went into the world, but his feet were set in slippery places. He could hardly speak to me when I went to see him, but he shewed from his gesture, that he was consumed with terror; and then he said: Will you pray for me in the closet, and in the family, and in the church? 'Thou castedst them down into destruction, how are they brought into desolation, as in a moment.' I tell you, if you are a Christless man, your pleasures will be suddenly interrupted. You remember the rich fool in the Gospel, Luke 12:19: 'I will say to my soul, Soul. thou hast much goods laid up for many years: take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.' O unconverted man, where would you be, if God were this night to require your soul? 'Thou are weighed in the balance and found wanting.' 'Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.'

4. God will judge you on account of them. It is true that every pleasure you get apart from Christ, God will judge you on account of it. Look at Ecclesiastes 11:9 : 'Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart,

and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.' God will bring you into judgment for every godless word, for every idle word, for every enjoyment and pleasure you get apart from Christ. O brethren! Is it true that you are living unpardoned? Is it true that you are happy—that you can enjoy social company—that you can enjoy your games—that you can enjoy your dance? Is it true, sinner, that you are happy away from God, and thinkest thou that God will not bring you into judgment? Can you throw so much contempt on Christ, on his blood, on his righteousness, on his free offer of mercy, and think that God will not bring you into judgment? You say very often. What is the harm? It is a social company—an innocent pleasure: what is the harm? I will tell you the harm, you are despising Christ, you are despising the blood shed on Calvary, and finding your pleasures away from him, and is it not contempt of Christ to find your pleasures away from him, even supposing your pleasures had no sin in them? I do not now stop to enquire whether they are right or wrong; it is such infinite contempt of Christ, that I wonder God does not open the ground where you dance—when you have your mirth, and let you fall through into hell.

I have dwelt too long on this part of the subject, longer than I intended.

II. I come now to speak, in the second place, on the true happiness of the children of God. 'The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.' 'Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.'

1. I observe, dear brethren, in the first place, that the joy of a believer are true because he is forgiven. Look at Matthew 9:2 : 'They brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed; and Jesus, seeing their faith, said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee.' The first reasonable joy that a sinner ever has is when his sins are forgiven him. You will not know true joy till then. You will not know solid happiness till the voice of Jesus says, 'Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee.' 'Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole.' There is no joy like that of being forgiven—brought out of darkness into marvellous light. There is something very heavenly in these words. 'Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee.' Those of you who have believed on Christ, you are forgiven. 'As far as east is distant from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.' Your sins have been already forgiven, as many of you as have believed on Christ. If you really lay hold on Christ, sinner, tonight your sins will be forgiven thee. Oh, brethren, this is happiness - this is the first sip of the cup of eternal bliss—this is peace: 'Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing.' Romans 15:13. O it is sweet, happy, pleasant peace! 'The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.' 'Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.'

2. The joys of a believer are solid because he is sanctified. Every one that comes to Christ receives the Holy Spirit to dwell in their heart. It is a question, whether it be sweetest to be forgiven, or to be sanctified. I would say it was sweetest to be sanctified. 'The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.' When a fresh burden of sin comes upon the conscience, the believer feels that he cannot be made happy unless he is made holy. I have often seen a young believer sunk on the brink of hell by the discovery of his sin. Who can comfort such a soul? I will tell you, 'My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon

me.' O these are sweet words to a soul who has begun to see the plague of his own sin. If there is such a soul here tonight, I would say, 'My grace is sufficient for thee.' Though there is a fountain of iniquity within that will never stop till you arrive among the blessed, never mind. 'My grace is sufficient for thee.' That is enough to comfort any soul. 'The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.'

3. Again, the joys of a believer are solid, because Christ will come to us in storms. Look at Matthew 14:24-27, 'But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with the waves; for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit, and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid.' Brethren, this is just a type of the way Christ cheers his disciples through the world still. If you are Christ's you will meet with storms. The world will be contrary, your own evil hearts will be contrary. But, ah! at the very time when the storm is greatest, Christ comes near the tempest-tossed ship, at the fourth watch of the night, and says, 'Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid.' Ah, brethren, there is peace again. 'Therefore are the lines fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.' Then again, we have true and solid peace. I can't say you will have no persecution. 'All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.' But I can assure you of this, that Christ will be present; he is a 'very present help in time of trouble.' Ah! brethren, I know it is so, that if troubles are in store for the Church of Scotland, that Christ's little flock will be safe. He will come at the fourth watch of the night and say, 'Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid.' If the storm dashes us on the rock—the Rock of Ages, it will do us no harm. 'The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.'

4. But, again, the joys of a believer are solid, because they are eternal. 'The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day,' Proverbs 4:18. The happiness of those of you who are unconverted is but for a moment. Your games, your dances, your social parties will soon be over. There are no games in hell. But brethren, the joy of those of you who are Christ's is for ever. Your peace will be eternal. It is like a river that widens in its course, until it is lost in the ocean. 'The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life,' John 4:14. Oh! brethren, surely that joy is true that shall never end. 'Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.' Luke 10:42. Every thing else can be taken away from you, your money, your friends, etc.: but if you have once embraced the Lamb of God, you have that good part which shall never be taken away from you. You are chosen to 'an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.' Then we can say without any fear, 'The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.'

I would have you to learn from this subject, two lessons.

1. Those of you who are Christ's should live a pleasant life in the world. If it is true that you are pardoned—if it is true that his grace is sufficient for you, then you have good reason to live a pleasant life. Remember how you are commanded in the Bible to do everything with joy. 'The Lord loveth a cheerful giver.' God does not love the service of slaves: 'Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father,' Romans 8:15. God commands you over and over again, that what you do, do it heartily. If you sing

praise, do it heartily. If you give to the cause of Christ, do it heartily; whatever you do, do it as one who has the Spirit of God. O it is a happy thing to labour in God's service! Do not do it with that downward look that the world have on a Sabbath day. Remember that you are to suffer cheerfully. The apostles suffered with joy. You remember they had their clothes torn and their backs lacerated, yet they sang praises to God in the prison at midnight. Brethren, let us even die cheerfully. It is said of Stephen, when they stoned him, that 'he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he said this, he fell asleep,' Acts 7:60. O happy Stephen, it is more like a child falling asleep in its mother's arms, for it is said, 'He fell asleep.' And oh! how would his face shine five minutes after. He would forget all their anger; he would forget all their hard words; he would forget his suffering. If we are really to sit on the throne with Christ, why should we be like chained slaves here? Why should we not rather long to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better?

2. Last of all, learn the utter folly and madness of those of you who are Christless. I know that those of you who are out of Christ, think that it is we who are out of our mind; but if there is such a thing as truth in the world, I beseech you to consider whether it is you or us who are mad. I believe that you have peace - that you have joy that you have pleasure—that you have comfort; but is it not true that you are an unpardoned sinner on the road to hell? Your peace will soon be at an end; but ours is a remarkable joy, and yet you despise it. Do you know the reasonableness of joy? We are happy, because the louder the storm, the nearer is Christ. We are happy because we have got a happiness which God has. It is God who has made us happy. If this is madness, I would that you all had this madness. I would that this town had this madness. I would that the whole human race had this madness—then would the world be happy. Do not, then, despise this happiness. Many of you who are sitting here tonight, know that you were never brought to Christ, never washed in his blood. Yet how is it that you can live happy? Look around you, how many are dying Christless? Brethren, if you live as they did, you too will die Christless, and where he is you will never come. Amen.

Thursday Evening, 22nd September 1842.

Taken from A Basket of Fragments

S. The True and False Shepherd

SERMON IV "THE TRUE AND FALSE SHEPHERD" by Robert Murray M'Cheyne

John 10:1-6 "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them."

We learn, dear brethren, from the sixth verse that this passage is one of considerable difficulty. How much need then have I of a fresh baptism that I may speak rightly from it; and how much need have you to have your heart opened, as was that of Lydia, that you may attend unto the things that are spoken, if you would understand them. "This parable spake Jesus unto them but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them."

Let us notice:

1. The false shepherd. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that entereth not by the door into the sheep-fold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber."
2. The true shepherd. "But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep."
3. The character of the sheep, which I fear I will not have time to enter upon.

I. First of all let us meditate for a little on what is said of the false shepherd. And we shall consider:
1. Who the false shepherd Isaiah 2:1-22. What is the mark of the false shepherd. 3. What is the object of the false shepherd.

1. Who the false shepherd is. It seems evident that this chapter is a continuation of the last. Christ had been speaking of the Pharisees — those false shepherds, and in this chapter he shows that all false shepherds that will ever be in the world enter not in by the door, but climb up some other way. It is evident that he speaks of one great false shepherd, and I have no doubt that it means the great false shepherd, the god of this world, who is continually trying to climb over the wall into the sheep-fold.

Now, Satan has got three ways in which he attacks the sheep-fold. The first of these is by Antichrist. We know quite well that it is Satan who gives Antichrist all his power. You will see this in 2 Thessalonians 2:8: "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming; even him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders." Compare this with Revelation 13:1-2: "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the

name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion; and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority." Now, we know quite well that the beast is the Church of Rome; we are told that the beast sits on seven hills; and we are told at the end of the 2nd verse that the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. So that there is no doubt, dear brethren, but that the great enemy of the sheep — the false shepherd, who comes like a lamb, but who has the paw of a bear — is Antichrist. Now, there can be no doubt but that he gets his power from Satan. But there is another way in which Satan attacks the sheep-fold, and this is by the world. All you who are the children of disobedience, are the children of the devil. Satan has two ways in which he attacks the sheep-fold by the world. 1. He makes the world to frown. 2. He makes it to smile upon you. Another way is through false teachers. It is said that Satan entered into Judas; and it is said that Satan filled the hearts of Ananias and Sapphira. So no doubt he fills the hearts of many who are false ministers. You will see this in 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 : "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." So you see, brethren, that there are many who are the ministers of righteousness, who are the ministers of Satan. It is he that helps them over the wall.

2. The marks of the false shepherd. John 10:1 : "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that entereth not by the door into the sheep-fold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." The great mark of false shepherds is that they enter not by the door. John 10:9 : "I am the door; by me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." Christ is the door into the sheep-fold. The mark of every false shepherd is, he is not saved himself. This is the mark of the devil; he is lost! lost! lost! Those of you who follow Satan as a master are following one who is lost himself. And this is the mark of the Antichrist, just that he enters not in by the door. They make another way into the sheep-fold; they have other mediators than the one Mediator between God and man. This is the mark of the world, they enter not in by the door. Is it a lost world? Oh, dear sheep, why do you fear the world? It will soon perish. The same is the mark of all false ministers. Ah, brethren, remember that you live in a dangerous time.

3. But farther, let us observe the object of the false shepherd. Verse 10, "The thief cometh not but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy." You know, dear brethren, this is Satan's great object in the world; it is to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. This is the object of Antichrist. This is the object of the world. This is the object of all false ministers. This is the object of your enemies, little flock, for whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Satan comes to rob God of your souls; Antichrist comes to rob God of his throne — to rob God of his laws; and the world comes to rob God of his Sabbath. So with worldly ministers in like manner, they come to rob you of your soul, of peace, of joy, of holiness. Antichrist robs you of the true way to the Father. And the world comes to rob you — that pleasant world which says, "Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant." And so with worldly ministers — this is their object, to rob, to steal, and to destroy. O my brethren, be warned to flee; be warned to flee from Antichrist; be warned to flee from an ungodly world! "Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go," Proverbs 22:24; or with a covetous man thou shalt not go. And beware of worldly ministers; if your minister should be taken from you, beware of them, for they will come to destroy.

II. The true shepherd, John 10:2, John 10:5. The shepherd of the sheep is Christ himself. He says, John 10:11, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep"; John 10:14, "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine." And why is he called the shepherd of the sheep? Just because he died for them. The sheep were once condemned to die; he came in the character of a man and died for them. Is he not worthy, then, to be called the shepherd of the sheep? He did not flee when he saw the wolf come. He sees the sheep that is lost, and goes after it. "What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?"

Then, let us consider what are the marks of the shepherd of the sheep:

1. He that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep," John 10:2. We see that the door is Christ himself. Some of you will ask, then, Why could Christ enter in by the door, when he is the door himself? But this is just the very thing he did. Hebrews 9:11-12 : "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." He showed himself the good shepherd by his entering in by the door, that is, "by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." True, if he had remained without our taking our sins upon him, he would not need to have entered in, but he took our sins upon him. Ah, brethren, this is the mark of every true shepherd whom Christ sends — he comes in by the door, that is, the blood of Christ. He speaks of sin, because he has seen its greatness; he speaks of pardon, because he has been forgiven; of blood, because he has felt its power. "He that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep." No other qualification will do. All the learning at colleges will never make a minister. All the eloquence in the world will never make a minister. Pray that Scotland may have such ministers.

2. There is another mark here given of the true shepherd — John 10:3, "He calleth his own sheep by name." This, first of all, shows the complete knowledge he has of the sheep. You remember Zaccheus, when he was a stray sheep, Christ said to him when he was in the tree, "Come down; for today I must abide at thine house." You remember Nathaniel, when a stray sheep under the fig-tree, "he saw him." You remember, after his resurrection, he saw Mary, and said to her, "Mary"; and she turned herself, and said unto him, "Rabboni: which is to say master." So it is still. Ministers do not know you; elders do not know you; but Christ knows you, and he calls his own sheep by name, and they follow him. And this implies, also, the love of Christ. You know when you love one, you love their name. Christ does not only know you, but he calls you by his name. He called Bethany, "the town of Mary and her sister Martha" Christ loves the names of those for whom he died. Your names are graven on his heart, and on the palms of his hands; and this shows he changes their names. He said to Abraham, "Thy name shall no more be called Abram, but Abraham shall thy name be." And you remember he said of Peter, "Thy name shall be called Peter," which means a stone. And it is said of the Jews, "I have called thee by my name, thou art mine." So it implies that they get a new name, that is, a new nature. And, when we come to the temple above, he says, "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God; and I will write upon him my new name." And you that are of the world, if you will come, you will get a new name.

3. Last of all, there is another character of the true shepherd here mentioned, and that is, "He goes before them," verse 4. In the countries of the east, brethren, you know that the shepherd goes before the sheep, and they follow him. When he says, "Let us go to the well," they follow him. When he says, "Let us go down into that dark valley," they go after him. So it is with Christ. Christ never asked a sheep to go where he never went himself. He has borne all that he calls his sheep to bear. Christ went in a lower level of sorrow than you will be called to bear. Do not be alarmed then when you are called to suffer, you will not be called to go where he has not gone. Do not be afraid to put down your tender feet where he put down his. And it is still true that he goes before you. "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." Do not be afraid then when Christ is before you.

Brethren, let me ask you, in conclusion, Are you following him, or are you following a stranger? I do not ask you, Are you following a godly minister? but, Are you following Christ? Do you hear his voice in the Word? Do you hear his voice in the preaching of the gospel? And do you follow him? Happy flock, follow on to know the Lord: soon shall we be where no tempting devil — where no deceiving world — where no false ministers are. There "they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Amen.

Sabbath Forenoon, 4th September 1842.

S. The Word Made Flesh

Sermon I "THE WORD MADE FLESH" by Robert Murray M'Cheyne

John 1:14. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth."

You remember, brethren, when Philip went down to Samaria, it is said that "he preached Christ unto them, and there was great joy in that city." You remember that the apostle Paul says, "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified." Now, brethren, it is really the case that the only object in the world that can give peace to your soul is "Christ, and him crucified." Those of you who are not awakened are in a great mistake in this matter; you think you have to find out something good in yourselves; you little know, dear friends, that you are seeking rest in the creature, which if you could find it, you would make out that Christ has died in vain. It is for this reason that I have chosen this text tonight, though it is so deep and full that I approach it with fear and trembling; yet certain am I that if anything will give you peace it is the getting a sight of his glory, "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." It is just beholding his glory. The first truth that is laid open here is the humiliation of the Son of God. It is laid down to us in two parts. First, "The Word was made flesh." Second. "He dwelt among us.

I. The humiliation of the Son of God consisted in his being made flesh. I do not stop to inquire why he is called "the Word." I would just remark that as the word of a man expresses the mind of a man, so Christ was revealed that he might express the mind of God.

Let us consider what is meant in his being made flesh.

1. What is not meant. 2. What is meant.

1. It is not meant that he really took a body without a soul. We know that Christ, as he dwelt among us, had not only a body, but a soul ? a loving, human soul: John 12:27, "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour." Now, brethren, I do not so much insist upon the word "soul," as upon ? "what shall I say?" Ah, this expresses the tenderness of a human soul. Speaking with reverence, I would say, there seems to be a holy perplexity in his mind. Matthew 26:38 : "Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." And then the next verse shows he had a human will: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." From these passages, it is obvious that when it is said, "The Word was made flesh," it is not meant that the Godhead was united to a human body without a soul. Again, you are not to understand that it was a sinful body. The word "flesh" is often used in this sense, thus: "The Spirit lusteth against the flesh." Some have thought so, but it has not always this meaning; thus, in Ezekiel it is said, "I will take the hard and stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh." And, again, we know quite well from the Word of God that Christ was holy. The angels said at his birth: "That holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God." And we know that in his

manhood he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. And we are expressly told that the one thing in which he differed was that he was without sin; Hebrews 4:15. And we are told that in dying, "He offered himself without spot to God." Now, we know that it was his human soul and body he offered up to God. So it is true that his humanity was holy.

2. I come now to the real meaning of the words ? that he who was the second Person in the Godhead, became one with a holy human soul, and with a body with our infirmities, such as thirst, pain, etc., capable of tears, weariness, suffering, etc., for so much is implied in the word "flesh." "All flesh is grass." This is spoken of our feebleness. "The Word was made flesh." Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh. Perhaps some of you may ask why God was manifest in the flesh. There were three great reasons. The first was that he might obey the law of God in the same nature that had broken the law. When the devil had got man to trample the law beneath his feet, as if it had never been, he thought that the law would never lift its head again. Now, the Word was made flesh that he might obey it; and so it is said, "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law." I remember explaining this once before to you. First, that he was made under the law that he might obey it. And then, he was made under the curse of the law that he might endure it. Now, it is to the first of these that I now speak, namely, that Christ might obey the law, and do more honour to it, than if it had never been broken. This was one of the great reasons why he became flesh. If it had not been for this he might have visited the earth for an hour. But the reason why he had to stop so long was to show that it was a good law. You know, brethren, if you look across the world, and if you take God's holy law and shed the light of it over the world, there is something overpowering to think how fearfully his law has been broken; think of all the Sabbath-breaking there is in the world, and all the thefts, swearing, adultery, etc., all of these streaming over the world, and blotting out, as it were, the law. And oh, brethren, it is sweet to think it was worth the condescension of the Godhead becoming flesh to obey the law, so as to show to men and angels and devils that God's law was so much more honoured, than if it had never been broken. The second reason why the Word was made flesh was that he might die ? that he might bear the curse of the law: Hebrews 2:9, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man." Hebrews 2:14 : "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil." In these two verses it is distinctly said that the Word was made flesh in order that he might die. You know, brethren, if he had remained in the bosom of the Father he could not have suffered ? for the divine nature cannot suffer; but in order that he might die he must be made flesh. The reason why he took upon him a body was that he might bear the curse. You know we are under the curse; now, Christ took upon him flesh, that he might bear the curse.

I would just mention the third reason why he was made flesh. It is that he might have sympathy for men. Hebrews 2:17 : "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God." Brethren, there are no persons that can have compassion, as those who have felt like us. You know God said to the Jews, "You shall be kind to strangers: for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." So God says to Christ, You know the heart of a man. This was one reason why he was made flesh. Those of you who are afflicted believers, you know what it is to

have a friend that was tried in all points like as you are.

II. I come now to the other part of his humiliation, "He dwelt among us." In the Greek it is, "he tabernacled among us, as in a tent." It is believed by divines that there is here an allusion to the tabernacle in the wilderness. And just as the tabernacle was the meeting place with God, so Christ is the meeting place between a sinner and God. But further, it implies his going from place to place. You know this was the case with the tabernacle; so this was one of the parts of the humiliation of Christ. He was not only born, but born in a low condition, and his life was one of poverty. Why did he this? One reason was that he might sanctify affliction. Some say, "I have not clothes to come to the church with." My brethren, do you not know that Christ had not where to lay his head? Ah, my brethren, this is one reason why he dwelt among us as in a tent. Away with your excuses that you cannot come to the church because you have no clothes; Christ was poor, though he might have chosen a palace. But here we see the glory that burst through his humiliation. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth." Some may perhaps ask, When he became flesh, did he cease to be God? No, he did not. Then did he entirely veil his glory? No. Then did all see it? Oh, no, "We beheld it." True, his glory was seen by some that did not believe on him. Angels saw his glory, and you remember there was a star that appeared at his birth? outward, carnal eyes could see that star. And you remember as he sat in the temple disputing with the doctors, they were astonished at his words? all the world could see that glory. And you remember at the marriage of Cana of Galilee, he made the water into wine? outward, carnal eyes could see that. So with all his miracles. But this is not the glory spoken of here; at least it not all the glory. What is this glory then? I answer, it was the glory of the divine perfections, divine wisdom, divine love, etc.

1. There was the glory of the divine wisdom shining through him. Who could see it, but those whose eyes were open? Brethren, in all that he did he was bearing the sufferings of many. And oh, brethren, have you seen this glory? for this is the glory of the only begotten of the "Father. Have you seen this glory? for this was the glory that shone through the Word made flesh. It was not only the star; it was not only he wisdom he showed in the temple; it was not his miracles; it was not these so much as the plan of redemption? the scheme he accomplished, when he said, "It is finished." It was that that showed us wisdom.

2. There was the love of the only begotten of the Father. His very appearance in the manger at Bethlehem showed the love of the only Begotten of the Father. Have you seen that love?

I would now begin to ask you the question, Have you beheld that glory? John says, "We beheld it." The first moment that a sinner is brought to peace is when he beholds a divine person bearing the curse due to him for sin. Then the soul says, "Here will I rest." Have you seen that glory? I know you cannot see it till your eyes are anointed.

Last of all, The provision laid upon in Christ: "Full of grace and truth." Perhaps some here are saying, If Christ is so glorious, I cannot come to him, I can only say with Peter, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O lord." If it is true that all the perfections that dwell in the Father dwell in Christ, then I cannot come to him? How can I come to him? There is but one answer to that: "He is full of grace and truth." I do not know if I can make it plainer; but the meaning is just this, that he is full of grace? grace for those that deserve wrath. Once he sat in Levi's house with publicans

and sinners ? how could they sit beside him? Ah! the reason was, "He was full of grace." Brethren, I think I could say that you could not imagine a Saviour so suitable to your soul as Christ is. Some of you would perhaps wish that he was not so glorious ? that he was not so just. Ah! think you that you could come to him more easily if he were less just? Oh, brethren, you could not imagine a more suitable Saviour than he is. And then he is full of truth. "The law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." The law was a shadow, Christ is the substance. All that is in Christ is truth. The pardon he gives is true pardon. The peace he gives is true peace. Brethren, will you come to him? I would now invite all heavy laden sinners to come to him; and I would give you two reasons why you should come. First, He is full of grace. Second, He is full of truth. My brethren, you need a divine Saviour, and yet you need one full of grace. Brethren, what Saviour can you imagine to yourself if Christ does not do. How graciously does he invite you to come. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." And if you will not come, then he comes to you and says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." How full of grace he must have been who said, "Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men." Consider how long you have lived without him, trampled on his blood, despised his invitations, and yet he has waited all that time. Consider how long you have provoked him since you were awakened, making him a liar by not believing his Word. Consider how long he has stood. Brethren, he is full of grace, though he is full of glory. Will you not let him save you? Is it much he asks of you? Will you not allow him to justify you? Ah, brethren, if you do reject so gracious a Saviour, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" Surely, brethren, an eternity in hell will not be too much for those who despise the blood of Christ. I beseech you, brethren, that you receive not the grace of God in vain. You do not know the guilt of that man who will go away to-night despising Christ. You do not know the guilt and danger of despising him who is so able, as well as so loving a Saviour. Amen.

S. Time is Short

Time Is Short by Robert Murray M'Cheyne

"But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away" (1 Corinthians 7:29-31). In this chapter the apostle is discoursing concerning marriage. The mind of God upon this subject seems to be—I. That in ordinary times marriage is honourable in all, provided it be in the Lord. There are some who seem to imagine that there is peculiar holiness about an unmarried life; but this seems quite contrary to the Word of God. In the sinless world before man fell, God said: "It is not good for man to be alone:" and the closest walker with God in Old Testament times was a married man: "Enoch walked with God three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters." 2. That in a time of distress and trouble to the Church it is better not to marry: "I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress." (1 Corinthians 7:26) When the ark of God is in danger, as at present in our Church, it seems the mind of the Spirit, that all who can should keep themselves as much as possible disentangled from earthly engagements. When the wife of Phinehas heard that the ark of God was taken, she travailed in birth, and died, calling her child Ichabod— The glory is departed. So, brethren, it does not become those who love Zion to be marrying and giving in marriage when the ark of God is in danger. 3. That even in such times it is lawful to marry: "But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned." (1 Corinthians 7:28) I doubt not, brethren, the days are near when they shall say: "Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps that never gave suck." Still, if any will venture to meet these times, and if you think the faith of two may bear you up better than the faith of one, "I spare you." I would lay no snare upon you. You have not sinned.

Having opened up this subject, the apostle proceeds with this affecting statement, suitable to all, married or unmarried: "But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away." In these words there is—I. A statement made: "The time is short;" and again: "The fashion of this world passeth away." The time to be spent in this world is very short; it is but an inch of time—a short half-hour. In a very little, it will be all over; and all that is here is changing—the very hills are crumbling down—the loveliest face is withering away—the finest garments rot and decay: "The fashion of this world passeth away." 2. A lesson drawn from this: Believers should sit loose to everything here. Believers should look on everything in the light of eternity. Value nothing any more than you will do then. Sit loose to the objects, griefs, joys, occupations of this world; for you must soon change them for eternal realities.

Doctrine.—The shortness of time should make believers sit loose to all things under the sun.

I. The shortness of time. True in two respects.

1. The time a believer has to live in this world is very short. (1) The whole lifetime is very short. From the cradle to the grave is but a short journey: "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." The half of men die before the age of twenty. Even when men lived for many hundred years, it was but a short life—a moment, compared to eternity. Methuselah lived nine hundred and sixty-nine years, and he died. Men are shortlived, like the grass. "All flesh is as grass," and the rich and beautiful are like the flower of the field—a little fairer and more delicate. "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it." (Isaiah 40:7.) "For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." (James 4:14.) You know how swiftly a weaver's shuttle flies; but your life flies more swiftly: "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle." (Job 7:6.) "My days are swifter than a post; they are passed away as the swift ships; as the eagle that hasteth to the prey." (Job 9:25-26.) (2) How much is already passed away. Most believers spent their first days in sin. Many hearing me gave their best days to sin and the world. Many among you have only the lame, and the torn, and the sick, to give to God. All of you can look on the past as a sleep, or as a tale that is told. The time since I came among you appears to me just like a dream. (3) What remains is all numbered. All of you hearing me have your Sabbaths numbered—the number of sermons you are to hear. The last one is already fixed upon. Your years are numbered. To many this is the last year they shall ever see in this world. Many will celebrate their next new year in glory. The disease is now in the body of many of you that is to lay you in the dust; and your grave is already marked out. In a little while you will be lying quietly there. Yes, dear brethren, "the time is short."

2. The time of this world's continuance is short. "The end of all things is at hand"—"The fashion of this world passeth away." A believer stands on a watch-tower—things present are below his feet—things eternal are before his eyes. A little while, brethren, and the day of grace will be over—preaching, praying will be done. Soon we shall give over wrestling with an unbelieving world—soon the number of believers shall be complete, and the sky open over our heads, and Christ shall come. His parting cry was: "Surely I come quickly." Then we shall see Him "whom, having not seen, we loved." A little while, and we shall stand before the great white throne: a little while, and the wicked shall not be—we shall see them going away into everlasting punishment; a little while, and the work of eternity shall be begun. We shall be like Him—we shall see Him day and night in His temple—we shall sing the new song, without sin and without weariness for ever and ever. In a little moment, brethren, all this shall be: "For a small moment have I hid My face from thee; but with everlasting mercies will I gather thee."

II. The believer should learn from this to sit loose to all things under the sun.

1. Sit loose to the dearest objects of this world: "It remaineth, therefore, that they who have wives be as though they had none." Marriage is honourable in all. Husbands should love their wives, even as Christ loved the Church: "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies." Still it must not be idolatry. A married believer should be, in some respects, as if he were unmarried—as if he had no wife. "Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." You cannot be too kind, too gentle, too loving, to the parents whom God has given you; yet be as though you had none. Parents, love your children, and bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; yet feel that the time is short. They are only a loan from the Lord. Be not surprised if He take His own. Esteem your ministers highly in love, for

their work's sake; yet be as if you had none. Lean as entirely on Christ as if you had never seen or heard a minister. Brainerd mentions an instance of one woman, who, after her conversion, was resigned to the divine will in the most tender points: "What if God should take away your husband from you—how do you think you would bear that?" She replied: "He belongs to God, and not to me He may do with him just what He pleases." When she longed to die, to be free from sin, she was asked what would become of her infant; she answered, "God will take care of it; it belongs to Him—He will take care of it." Rutherford says: "Build your nest upon no tree here; for you see God hath sold the forest to Death, and every tree whereon we would rest is ready to be cut down, to the end we may flee and mount up, and build upon the Rock, and dwell in the holes of the Rock." Set not your heart on the flowers of this world; for they have all a canker in them. Prize the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley more than all; for He changeth not. Live nearer to Christ than to the saints, so that when they are taken from you, you may have Him to lean on still.

2. Sit loose to the griefs of this world. They that weep should be as though they wept not. This world is the vale of tears. There are always some mourning. No sooner is the tear dried up on one cheek that it trickles down another. No sooner does one widow lay aside her weeds, than another takes them up. Those that are in Christ should weep as though they wept not; "for the time is short." Do you weep over those that died in the Lord? It is right to weep: "Jesus wept." Yet weep as though you wept not; "for the time is short." They are not lost, but gone before. The sun, when it sets, is not lost; it is gone to shine in another hemisphere; and so have they gone to shine in a brighter world. It is self-love that makes you mourn for them; for they are happy. You would not mourn if they were with a distant friend on earth—why do you mourn that they are with the sinner's Friend? "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light upon them, nor the heat; for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto fountains of living waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." (Revelation 6:16-17.) "The time is short;" and you will follow after. A few days, and you may be leaning together on the bosom of Jesus; you are nearer them today than you were yesterday. "The time is short;" and you will meet with all the redeemed at the right hand of Christ—we shall mingle our voices in the new song, and wave together the eternal palm! "Weep as though you wept not." Do you weep over those that died out of the Lord? Ah! there is deeper cause for weeping here; and yet the time is short, when all this will be explained to you, and you will not be able to shed a tear over the lost. A little while, and you will see Jesus fully glorified, and you will not be able to wish anything different from what has happened. When Aaron lost his two sons, he held his peace. Do you mourn over bodily pain, and poverty, and sickness, and the troubles of the world? Do not murmur: "The time is short." If you have believed in Christ, these are all the hell you will ever bear. Think you the dying thief would complain of his pains when he was within a step of paradise? So it is with you. Your hell is dried up, and you have only these two shallow brooks to pass through—sickness and death; and you have a promise that Christ shall do more than meet you—go with you, foot for foot, and bear you in His arms. When we get to the presence of Jesus, all our griefs shall look like childrens' griefs: a day in His presence will make you remember your miseries no more. Wherefore take courage, and run with patience.

3. Sit loose to the enjoyments of this world.

It is quite right for a believer to use the things of this world, and to rejoice in them. None has such a right as the believer has to rejoice and be happy. He has a right to use the bodily comforts of the

world—to eat his meat "with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God." He has a right to all the joys of home, and kindred, and friendship. It is highly proper that he should enjoy these things. He has a right to all the pure pleasures of mind, of intellect, and imagination; for God has given him all things richly to enjoy. Still, he should "rejoice as though he rejoiced not, and use this world as not abusing it;" for "the time is short." In a little while, you will be at your Father's table above, drinking the new wine with Christ. You will meet with all your brothers and sisters in Christ—you will have pure joy in God through ceaseless ages. Do not be much taken with the joys that are here. I have noticed children, when they were going out to a feast, they would eat but sparingly, that they might have a keener appetite for the coming dainties; so, dear friends, you are going to a feast above, do not dull your appetite with earthly joys—sit loosely to them all—look upon them all as fading. As you walk through a flower garden, you never think of lying down, to make your home among its roses; so, pass through the garden of this world's best joys. Smell the flowers in passing; but do not tarry. Jesus calls you to His banqueting house—there you will feed among the lilies on the mountains of spices. Oh! it ill becomes a child of God to be fond of an earthly banquet, when you are looking to sitting down so soon with Jesus—it ill becomes you to be much taken up with dress and show, when you are so soon to see the face that was crowned with thorns. Brethren, if you are ever so much taken up with any enjoyment that it takes away your love for prayer or for your Bible, or that it would frighten you to hear the cry: "The Bridegroom cometh:" and you would say: Is He come already? then you are abusing this world. Oh! sit loose to this world's joy: "The time is short."

4. Sit loose to the occupations of the world. It is right for Christians to be diligent in business. I often wonder how unconverted souls can be so busy—how, when you are bustling along, filling up all your time with worldly things, it never occurs to you that there will be none of this in eternity. How can I be so busy for my body, when my poor soul is unprovided for? But those in Christ may well be diligent. (1) They have a good conscience—that oils the wheels. "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine." A light heart makes easy work. (2) They love to honour their Lord. They would not have it said that a believer in Jesus was an idler or a sluggard—the love of Jesus constrains them to all that is lovely. And yet a believer should "buy as though he possessed not;" for "the time is short." Oh! believers, ye cannot be misers; for you are but stewards. All that you possess here is your Lord's; and the day is at hand when He will transfer you to take care of another property in a brighter land. You are but servants. It would not do if you were to set your hearts on the things of this lower room; for in a few days the Master is to call you to serve in His own dear presence. Dear believers, be ready to leave your room for the golden harp, at a minute's warning; be ready to leave your desk for the throne of Jesus—your pen for the palm of victory; be ready to leave the market below, for the street of the new Jerusalem, where the redeemed shall walk. If you were in a sinking ship, you would not cling hard to bags of money—you would sit loose to all, and be ready to swim. This world is like a sinking ship, and those who grasp at its possessions will sink with it. Oh! "buy as though you possessed not; for "the time is short."

III. What the unconverted should learn from the shortness of time.

1. Learn your folly in having lost the past. Although life be very short, it is all saving time. This is the reason for which God has given it to us. The long-suffering of God is intended for our salvation. God gives men time to hear the Gospel—to pray—to get saving conversion. But unconverted souls have wasted all the past. Think how much time you have lost in idleness. How many golden

opportunities for prayer, and hearing the Word, and meditation, have you lost! how much time have you spent uselessly in your bed, or in idle talk, or in loitering about your doors! If you saw how short your time is, and how death and hell are pursuing you, you would have fled to Christ; but you have not. Think how much you have spent in sin, at the tavern, or in vain company, or in dances, or in night walking, or in sins of which it is a shame even to speak. God gave you time for saving your soul, and you have spent it in ruining your soul. God gave you time to flee to Christ; and you have spent it in fleeing toward hell. Think how much time you have spent in business, without one thought for eternity. Think how you have lost your best time. Youth is your best time of being saved. Many of you have lost it ' Time of awakening—Sabbaths—holy time—years of Sabbaths have now gone over many of you. "The harvest is past, the summer is ended; and we are not saved."

2. Consider what value they put on time who are now in hell. Once, brethren, they cared as little for it as you—once, they could see their years pass away without caring—once, they could let their Sabbaths slip away; but now they see their folly. What would they now give, brethren, for such an opportunity as you have this day? What would they give for another year of grace—for another week—for another day? It is probable that some of your friends or companions, now in hell, are wishing they could come back to tell you how precious is an inch of saving time!

Oh! brethren, be wise. "Why stand ye all the day idle?" It has come to the eleventh hour with some—your unconverted head is grey—your feet are tottering. If you saw a man condemned to die, lying in chains, who had but three hours to live; if you saw that man playing at dice, or singing wanton songs, would you not be shocked? You would say he was a hardened wretch. Ah! are there none among you the same? You are condemned already—your days are numbered—you are hanging by a thread over the mouth of hell; and yet you are cutting and slashing at the hand that holds you. In a little moment, brethren, it will be all over. Throughout the never-ending ages of eternity you will remember the few days we spent together. Ah! the remembrance will add fuel to the flame, and be a never-dying worm in your poor soul.

S. Watching Unto Prayer

Watching Unto Prayer by Robert Murray M'Cheyne "But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer" (1 Peter 4:7)

1. OBSERVE where a believer stands. He stands within sight of the end of all things. He stands upon a watch-tower, high above the noise and the cares of this present evil world. Things temporal are beneath his feet, things eternal are spread out before him. This is the Bible description of a believer, "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen" (2 Corinthians 4:18). Consider how short the whole of a lifetime is. From the cradle to the grave is but a few steps. "The days of our years are threescore years and ten, and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow, for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." The half of men die before the age of twenty. Even when men lived many hundred years, it was but a span—a moment, compared to eternity. Methuselah lived 969 years, and he died. "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle. My days are swifter than a post. They are passed away as the swift ships. As the eagle hasteth to the prey." The time of this world's continuance is short, "The end of all things is at hand". A little while, and the day of grace will be done. Preaching and praying will soon be over. The last sabbath sun will soon set. "My Spirit shall not always strive with men." Soon ministers will give over wrestling with the unbelieving world. A little while and the number of believers shall be complete. We shall come "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ". The parting cry of Christ was, "Surely I come quickly". Soon the sky shall open over our heads, and Christ shall come. A little while, and we shall stand before the great white throne. A little while, and the wicked shall not be. We shall see them going away into everlasting punishment. A little while, and the work of eternity shall be begun. We shall serve him day and night in His temple.

2. Observe the duties of a believer. "Be sober, and watch unto prayer."

(i) Be sober. Let nothing dim the eye that is looking on eternal realities. Let nothing engross the heart that is already given away to Christ. Sit loose to the dearest objects in this world. Brainerd mentions an instance of a poor Indian woman who, after her conversion, was resigned to the divine will in the most tender points. She was asked, "What if God should take away your husband from you, how do you think you could bear that?". She replied, "He belongs to God and not to me. He may do with him just as He pleases." An old divine says, "Build your nest upon no tree here; for you see God hath sold the forest to death, and every tree whereon we would rest is ready to be cut down, to the end we may flee, and mount up, and build upon the rock, and dwell in the holes of the rock". Be sober in the griefs of this world. Weep as though you wept not. This world is the vale of tears. It is a Bochim. There are always some mourning. No sooner is the tear dried up on one cheek than it trickles down another. Still the believer should be sober and chastened in his grief. Weep not for those that died in the Lord; they are not lost, but gone before. The sun, when it sets, is not lost; it is gone to shine in another hemisphere. And so have they gone to "shine like the sun, in the kingdom of their Father". Weep not for those who died out of the Lord. When Aaron lost his

two sons, "Aaron held his peace". Weep not over bodily pains and losses. Murmur not. Be sober. If you are in Christ, these are all the hell you will ever bear. When we win to the presence of Jesus, all our griefs shall look like children's griefs. A day in His banqueting house will make you "forget your poverty, and remember your misery no more".

Sit loose to this world's enjoyments. Be sober. In a little while you will be at your Father's table above, drinking the wine new with Christ, you will meet with all your brothers and sisters in the Lord, you will have pure joy in God through ceaseless ages. Do not be much taken with the joys that are here. If ever you are so much engrossed with any enjoyment here that it takes away your love for prayer, or for your Bible, or that it would frighten you to hear the cry, Behold the Bridegroom cometh—then your heart is "overcharged". You are abusing this world.

(ii) Watch. "Knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." Nothing is more difficult than to watch. We are naturally like him who said, "a little more sleep, and a little more slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep". One thing is essential to all true watching—the gift of the Holy Spirit. "Anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see" (Revelation 3:18). Take out the beam that is in thine own eye. Not only abstain from dimming the spiritual eye, but dear it. what shall I watch? Watch the work of grace in thine own soul. Has God cast the seed into the field of thine heart? Then see if the blade appear, or the ear, or the full corn in the ear. Has your soul been made a vineyard of red wine? Then say often to your Beloved, "Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appears, and the pomegranates bud forth" (Song of Solomon 7:12). Watch thine enemies. You have enemies within, and enemies without. Many seek to take thy crown. "Cast all your care upon the Lord, for he careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant, for your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." Watch the Redeemer's cause. The disciples slept while Jesus' body sweated drops of blood. Many disciples do the same in our day. Lie not on a bed of ivory while Joseph is in affliction. Be one of the "watchmen over the walls of Jerusalem" (Isaiah 62:1-12). Be one of those who watch for the morning.

(iii) Watch unto prayer. Some watch and pray not. Right watching quickens prayer. Seest thou the wants, corruptions, infirmities, backslidings, temptations of thine own spirit, the heart deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, yea, unsearchably wicked to human eye. Watch unto prayer. Let the eye look within, and then above. Seest thou the cause of Jesus bleeding, Israel turning back before their enemies, plants of the Lord's planting withering, many walking no more with Jesus, Ephesus losing her first love, Laodicea turning lukewarm, ministers fainting in the day of adversity, Jonah fleeing from the presence of the Lord, the hands of Moses weary, Amalek prevailing against Israel? "Watch unto prayer."

Seest thou a spring-time of love, Immanuel coming over the mountains of Bether, winter departing, flowers appearing, showers of blessing falling? "Watch unto prayer." Soon Scotland's day of grace will be ended. "Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain." Hearest thou Ephraim bemoaning himself, the dry bones of Israel shaking, saints loving her stones? Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; never hold thy peace day nor night, give Him no rest—"Watch unto prayer."

S. Who Shall Separate Us?

Who Shall Separate Us? by Robert Murray M'Cheyne

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." (Romans 8:35-37) IN this passage there are three very remarkable questions:

1. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? Paul stands forth like a herald, and he looks up to the holy angels, and down to the accusing devils, and round about on a scowling world, and into conscience, and he asks, Who can accuse one whom God has chosen, and Christ has washed? It is God who justifieth. The holy God has declared believers clean every whit.

2. "Who shall condemn? "Paul looks round all the judges of the world—all who are skilled in law and equity; he looks upward to the holy angels, whose superhuman sight pierces deep and far into the righteous government of God; he looks up to God, the judge of all, who must do right—whose ways are equal and perfect righteousness—and he asks, Who shall condemn? It is Christ that died. Christ has paid the uttermost farthing: so that every judge must cry, out, There is now no condemnation.

3. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? "Again, he looks round all created world—he looks at the might of the mightiest archangel—the satanic power of legions of devils—the rage of a God-defying world—the united forces of all created things; and, when he sees sinners folded in the arms of Jesus, he cries, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Not all the forces of ten thousand worlds combined, for Jesus is greater than all. We are more than conquerors through him that loved us." The love of Christ! Paul says: "The love of Christ passeth knowledge." It is like the blue sky, into which you may see clearly, but the real vastness of which you cannot measure. It is like the deep, deep sea, into whose bosom you can look a little way, but its depths are unfathomable. It has a breadth without a bound, length without end, height without top, and depth without bottom. If holy Paul said this, who was so deeply taught in divine things—who had been in the third heaven, and seen the glorified face of Jesus—how much more may we, poor and weak believers, look into that love and say: It passeth knowledge!

There are three things in these words, of which I would speak. 1. The love of Christ. 2. The question, Who would separate us from it? 3. The truth, that whoever or whatever they are, they shall not be able.

I. I would speak of the love of Christ.

1. When did it begin?—In the past eternity: "Then I was by him as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of the earth; and my delights were with the son so fmen." (Proverbs 8:30-31.) This river of love began to flow before

the world was—from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. Christ's love to us is as old as the Father's love to the Son. This river of light began to stream from Jesus toward us before the beams poured from the sun—before the rivers flowed to the ocean—before angel loved angel, or man loved man. Before creatures were, Christ loved us. This is a great deep—who can fathom it? This love passeth knowledge.

2. Who was it that loved? It was Jesus, the Son of God, the second person of the blessed Godhead. His name is, "Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace," "King of kings and Lord of lords," Immanuel, Jesus the Saviour, the only begotten of his Father. His beauty is perfect: he is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person. All the purity, majesty, and love of Jehovah dwell fully in him. He is the bright and morning Star: he is the Sun of righteousness and the Light of the world: he is the Rose of Sharon and the Lilly of the valleys—fairer than the children of men. His riches are infinite: he could say, "All that the Father hath is mine." He is Lord of all. All the crowns in heaven were cast at his feet—all angels and seraphs were his servants—all worlds his domain. His doings were infinitely glorious. By him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible. He called the things that are not as though they were—worlds started into being at his word. Yet he loved us. It is much to be loved by one greater in rank than ourselves—to be loved by an angel; but, O, to be loved by the Son of God!—this is wonderful—it passeth knowledge.

3. Whom did he love? He loved us! He came into the world "to save sinners, of whom I am the chief." Had he loved one as glorious as himself, we would not have wondered. Had he loved the holy angels, that reflected his pure, bright image, we would not have wondered. Had he loved the lovely among the sons of men—the amiable, the gentle, the kind, the rich, the great, the noble—it would not have been so great a wonder. But, ah ! he loved sinners—the vilest sinners—the poorest, meanest, guiltiest wretches that crawl upon the ground. Manasseh, who murdered his own children, was one whom he loved; Zaccheus, the grey-haired swindler, was another; blaspheming Paul was a third; the wanton of Samaria was another; the dying thief was another; and the lascivious Corinthians were more. "And such were some of you." We were black as hell when he looked on us—we were hell-worthy, under his Father's wrath and curse—and yet he loved us, and said: I will die for them. "Thou hast loved me out of the pit of corruption," each saved one can say. Oh, brethren ! this is strange love: he that was so great, and lovely, and pure, chose us, who were mean and filthy with sin, that he might wash and purify, and present us to himself. This love passeth knowledge!

4. What did this love cost him? "When Jacob loved Rachel, he served seven years for her—he bore the summer's heat and winter's cold. But Jesus bore the hot wrath of God, and the winter blast of his Father's anger, for those he loved. Jonathan loved David with more than the love of women, and for his sake he bore the cruel anger of his father, Saul. But Jesus, out of love to us, bore the wrath of his Father poured out without mixture. It was the love of Christ that made him leave the love of his Father, the adoration of angels, and the throne of glory. It was love that made him not despise the Virgin's womb—it was love that brought him to the manger at Bethlehem—it was love that drove him into the wilderness; love made him a man of sorrows—love made him hungry, and thirsty, and weary—love made him hasten to Jerusalem—love led him to gloomy, dark Gethsemane—love bound and dragged him to the judgment hall—love nailed him to the

cross—love bowed his head beneath the amazing load of his Father's anger. "Greater love hath no man than this." "I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."

Sinners were sinking beneath the red-hot flames of hell; he plunged in and swam through the awful surge, and gathered his own into his bosom. The sword of justice was bare and glittering, ready to destroy us; He, the man that was God's fellow, opened his bosom and let the stroke fall on him. We were set up as a mark for God's arrows of vengeance; Jesus came between, and they pierced him through and through—every arrow that should have pierced our souls stuck fast in him. He, his own self, bare our sins in his own body on the tree. As far as east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. This is the love of Christ that passeth knowledge. This is what is set before you to-day in the broken bread and poured-out wine. This is what we shall see on the throne—a Lamb as it had been slain. This will be the matter of our song through eternity: "Worthy is the Lamb!"

1. O the joy of being in the love of Christ! Are you in this amazing love? Has he loved you out of the pit of corruption? Then, he will wash you, and make you a king and a priest unto God. He will wash you in his own blood whiter than the snow—he will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. A new heart also will he give you. He will keep your conscience clean, and your heart right with God. He will put his Holy Spirit within you, and make you pray with groanings that cannot be uttered. He will justify you—he will pray for you—he will glorify you. All the world may oppose you—dear friends may die and forsake you—you may be left alone in the wilderness; still you will not be alone—Christ will love you still.

2. O the misery of being out of the love of Christ! If Christ loves you not, how vain all other loves! Your friends may love you— your neighbours may be kind to you—the world may praise you—ministers may love your souls; but, if Christ love you not, all creature-love will be vain. You will be unwashed, unpardoned, unholy—you will sink into hell, and all the creatures will stand around and be unable to reach out a hand to help you.

3. How shall I know I am in the love of Christ? By your being drawn to Christ: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." Have you seen something attractive in Jesus? The world are attracted by beauty, or dress, or glittering jewels—have you been attracted to Christ by his good ointments? This is the mark of all who are graven on Christ's heart—they come to him; they see Jesus to be precious. The easy world see no preciousness in Christ; they prize a lust higher, the smile of the world higher, money higher, pleasure higher; but those whom Christ loves he draws after him by the sight of his preciousness. Have you thus followed him, prized him—as a drowning sinner cleaved to him?—then he will in no wise cast you out—in no wise, not for all you have done against him. "But I spent my best days in sin"—Still I will in no wise cast you out. "I lived in open sin"—I will in no wise cast you out. " But I have sinned against light and conviction"—Still I will in no wise cast you out. "But I am a backslider"—Still the arms of his love are open to enfold your poor guilty soul, and he will not cast you out.

II. Many would separate us from Christ's love. From the beginning of the world it has been the great aim of Satan to separate believers from the love of Christ; and though he never has succeeded in the case of a single soul, yet still he tries it as eagerly as he did at first. The moment he sees the Saviour lift a lost sheep upon his shoulder, from that hour he plies all his efforts to

pluck down the poor saved sheep from its place of rest. The moment the pierced hand of Jesus is laid on a poor, trembling, guilty sinner, from that hour does Satan try to pluck him out of Jesus' hand.

1. He did this in old times: "As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." (Romans 8:36) This is a cry taken from the Book of Psalms. God's people in all ages have been hated and persecuted by Satan and the world. Observe, (1) The reason: "For thy sake"—because they were like Jesus, and belonged to Jesus. (2) The time: "All day long"—from morning till night. The world have a perpetual hatred against true believers, so that we have to say at evening: "Would God it were morning; and at morning, Would God it were evening." They have no other perpetual hatred. (3) The manner: "We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." The world care no more for ill-treating a Christian than the butcher does when he lays hold of a sheep for the slaughter. The very drunkards make a song of us. Such was the cry of believers of old. The same cry has been heard amid the snowy heights of Piedmont; and, in later days, amid the green hills and valleys of Scotland. And we are miserably deceived if we flatter ourselves that the same cry will not be heard again. Is the devil changed? Does he love Christ and his dear people any better? Is the worldly heart changed? Does it hate God and God's people any less than it did? Ah! no. I have a deep conviction that, if God only withdraw his restraining grace, the flood-gates of persecution will soon break loose again; and many of you, left unconverted under our ministry, will turn out bloody persecutors—you will yet avenge yourselves for the sermons that have pricked your bearts.

2. The apostle names seven forms in which trouble comes. Two of them relate to the troubles that are common to man, and five to those that are more peculiar to the children of God.

(1) Tribulation and distress: "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth as a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not." God's children are not freed from distresses—sickness, poverty, loss of friends. Jesus said to them: "In the world ye shall have tribulation." "Whom I love I rebuke and chasten." Now, Satan tries to take advantage of these times of tribulation, to separate the soul from the love of Christ; he tempts the believer to despise the chastening of the Lord—to plunge into business, or among worldly friends, or to follow worldly means of soothing sorrow. Again: he tries to make the soul faint under them—repine and murmur, and charge God foolishly—not to believe his love and wisdom in the furnace. In these ways Satan tries to separate from the love of Christ. A time of tribulation is a time of danger.

(2) Persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword—all these are weapons which Satan makes use of against God's children. The history of the Church in all ages has been a history of persecution. No sooner does a soul begin to show concern for religion—no sooner does that soul cleave to Jesus, than the world talk, to the grief of those whom God hath wounded. What bitter words are hurled against that soul! In all ages this has been true: "They wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy." Those that eat the bread of God have often been driven from their quiet meal—those who are clothed with Christ have often had to part with worldly clothing, and have been exposed to famine, nakedness, peril, and sword—the last extremity. Cain murdered Abel. They killed the Prince of Life; and so all his creatures ever since have been exposed to the same. Do not say, The times are changed, and

these are the days of toleration. Christ is not changed—Satan is not changed, and, when it suites his turn, he will use the same weapons.

III. All these cannot separate us.

"In all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us."

How are we more than conquerors?

1. We conquer even before the battle is done. In all other battles we do not know how the victory is to turn until the battle is won. In the battle of Waterloo, it was long thought that the French had gained; and Napoleon sent several despatches to Paris, telling that he had won. But in the fight with the world, Satan, and the flesh, we know how the victory is to turn already. Christ has engaged to carry us through. He will guard us against the darts of the law, by hiding us in his blood. He defends us from the power of sin by his Holy Spirit, put within us. He will keep us in the secret of his presence, from the strife of tongues. The thicker the battle, the closer will he keep to us; so that we can sing already: "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." We know that we shall overcome. Though the world were a million times more enraged—though the fires of persecution were again to be kindled— though my heart were a million times more wicked—though all the temptations of hell were let loose upon me—I know I shall overcome through him that loved me. When Paul and Silas sang in the low dungeon, they were more than conquerors. When Paul sang, in spite of his thorn, "I will glory in my infirmities," he was more than a conqueror.

2. We gain by our conflict. Often a victory is a loss. So it was in that battle in Israel, after the dark night in Gibeah. All Israel mourned, for a tribe was nearly cut off out of Israel; and so, in most victories, the song of triumph is mingled with the sobbings of the widow and orphan. Not so in the good fight of faith. We are more than conquerors. We gain by our enemies. (1) We cling closer to Christ. Every wave of trouble for Christ's sake lifts the soul higher upon the Rock. Every arrow of bitterness shot after the believer makes him hide farther back in the clefts of Jesus. Be content, dear friend, to bear these troubles, which make you cling closer to your Beloved. (2) They shake us loose from sin. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own. If the world smiled and fawned upon you, you would lie on its lap. But when it frowns, then Jesus is our all. (3) Great is your reward in heaven. We gain a brighter crown. Be not afraid; nothing shall ever separate you from the love of Christ. O that I could know that you were all in Christ's love—that the arms of Jesus were enfolding you—then I would know that all the hatred of men, and all the policy of hell, would never prevail against you! "If God be for you, who can be against you?" "If God has chosen you—called you—washed you—justified you—then he will glorify you. O yield to his loving hands, you that are not far from the kingdom of God! Let him wash you, for then he will carry you to glory.

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
 - 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net