In Our Own Tongue

Ten Great Men of the Pulpit

— Their Method and Message —

Edited by
Pastor George McGuinness

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JOHN ROBINSON
AND
THE PILGRIM FATHERS

The Gospel is more than a great faith; it is a great adventure. Its news is so good that it must be carried everywhere at all hazards. The most thrilling pages in Christian history describe the enterprise of the Evangel.

When a leading English review, that has a reputation for cynicism, some time ago described the missionary movement, its cynicism gave way to genuine enthusiasm. "They have kept alive at the heart of a selfish and materialized culture," it declared of our missionaries, "*a genuine heroic tradition;*" and went on to say that there were few families of note in England that had not made some contribution to the army of missionary martyrs, and that "*all the ends of the earth are hallowed by their graves.*" No man can read such records without emotion and pride. There is no history to compare with it, nor ever can be. It is something to realize in these days that unselfishness can devise and achieve greater things than selfishness ever can. We all know that science and commerce have inspired expeditions which have filled the world with admiration; but the simple truth is, that the adventures inspired by the disinterestedness of Christian evangelists have thrown all other enterprises into the shade.

There have been many types of missionary preachers and missionary adventures. Much that is best in America today derives from a pilgrim race. In the words of Mr. Lowell, they crossed the Atlantic *"to plant their idea in virgin soil."* They may not have looked romantic. Shovel hats and long black cloaks do not compare in picturesqueness with the embroidered raiment of the cavalier heroes of Vandyck. Yet these men and women, so prim and demure of outward aspect, set forth on the most astonishing of adventures, reading their destiny westward in the heaven of their ideals, and, by the good hand of God pros-

pering them, sowing the world with free commonwealths. A clever, modern novelist has invented for us the title, *"The Beloved Vagabond."* It might have stood for a description of the *Mayflower.* You may read on a tomb in that spellbound burial place at Plymouth part of an address delivered by a preacher whose body rests beneath. He describes his associates as "my beloved adventurers." That great writer, Professor Seeley, says, *"Religion alone can turn emigration into exodus."* Who shall define or describe the mystic determining impulse that drove the Pilgrims into the wild, to make a home for faith and freedom? Had they any prescience of the greatness of the goal? Did they, too, see an Abrahamic vision of a seed as the stars innumerable for those who would go forth, not knowing whither, but content to follow the gleam? Did they say, when the winds of heaven filled their sails and bare them far from friends and fatherland, *"the Spirit driveth us into the wilderness?"* Were they all equally clear that the will of God was with them, and that in the Book of Destiny their names were written as the humble pioneers of a New World and a new order? Were all hearts westward and forward, and all minds constant in their resolve? Did none nourish a treacherous appetite for the flesh-pots of Europe, murmur at the discouragements of the journey, *"Nor cast one longing lingering look behind?"*

How gladly would we know more than we do, or ever can, of the details of that golden romance, which surely, outside the pages of the New Testament, is the greatest story in the world! Savonarola ruled Florence. Calvin ruled Geneva. John Knox ruled the realm of Scotland. Each in measure asserted the authority of Christ over a turbulent and sometimes rebellious population. Their difficulty was that they were compelled to put new wine into old bottles, until new bottles could be wrought and shaped for the new wine. The Pilgrim Fathers would have a new bottle for their new wine. They demanded a free commonwealth suited to their free ideals of worship and of citizenship. They could not be content to graft their new branch on the old decayed stock, where it must be overshadowed by all the other branches that bear fruit of so doubtful a flavor. For the most part they were business people who found Leyden a tolerable town to thrive in. But their religion made them restless. The Promised Land was in their hearts. The more John Robinson preached to them of the primitive Church and the destiny of the Kingdom, the less they were satisfied with the compromise-society

that was possible to them where they were. We may perhaps be thankful that the result of faithful and real preaching is not always, as in the case of John Robinson that the congregation arise and flee. But I confess I always suspect my own preaching of weakness if it does not make many young people uncomfortable, and compel them to become missionaries of the ideal, even at some considerable sacrifice. *"Will you be content,"* argued John Robinson in effect, *"to go down to your graves with your witness undelivered and your bravest hopes unattempted? Or will you risk something, nay everything, to translate your theories of Christian freedom into a veritable free society?"* The problem of Savonarola, Calvin and Knox was whether the preached word was powerful enough to transform and convert an old order. The problem of John Robinson and the Pilgrims was whether the preached word was powerful enough to create and establish a new one.

Before I come to a somewhat closer study of the man and his ideals who inspired one of the world's most momentous enterprises by his preaching, I shall ask you to spare a thought for that revival of preaching which marked the heroic age in which the mind of England was turned permanently Protestant. I say the *mind of* England, for no serious student believes that we were made Protestant by the domestic vagaries of Henry VIII. We were made Protestant by an open Bible and its prophets. One lesson had been taught by the ballads of Chaucer and the visions of Piers Plowman, and was re-enforced afterwards by the tracts of Martin Marprelate, that *to win the ear of the people you must talk their language.* To popularize the Reformation and its new religious ideals it was necessary that preachers should arise who thought in the vernacular, and who seasoned words and phrases as made Tyndale's Bible understood, not only by the college-bred, but by the smith at the anvil and the labourer behind the plough.

When Hugh Latimer began to teach the new doctrine from St. Paul's Cross, every London apprentice knew and relished his message. After all, is not this one of the signs of a new Pentecost, "We did hear tell *in our own tongue* the wonderful works of God?" There is a saying of Jesus that we shall all do well to lay to heart: *"What I tell you in secret, that publish ye on the housetop."* Christianity is every man's religion, and therefore can be translated without loss into the language of the street. It is a religion for the open air. It is a religion that does not suffer by being brought home to the conscience and reason of simple folk. It is

susceptible of learned philosophical statement, I doubt not, satisfying to the greatest and profoundest thinkers; but John Ruskin once said, with the touch of exaggeration characteristic of him, *"What a little child cannot understand of Christianity nobody else needed to try."* The essential Protestant faith captured the ear and the heart of sixteenth-century London, through the pithy pregnant Saxon speech of Latimer, with his command of laughter and tears.

He presented the citizen in the street with a plain man's religion. He spoke it as simply, I say it with reverence, as the Saviour spoke to the peasants in the fields of Judea, or the fishermen by the Galilean lakes. He did not so much appeal to the theologically trained mind; and he certainly did not appeal to any sense of ecclesiastical authority. He appealed to common sense; he appealed to the instincts of the multitude. He appealed to their love of justice and of humanity. There never was a more human being than Hugh Latimer. The people well know the men who love them, believe in them, and understand them. The sheep hear the voice of the true shepherd. London has always been a city with much that is artificial and materialistic in its complicated cosmopolitan life; and no one ever held the key of its affections who was not a true man. Latimer's preaching is oratory stripped of all that is meretricious, and oratory that is not sterilized by conventionality. No timid, stilted pulpiteer, who has never learned that grace is more than grammar, and that to win your hearers you may break every pulpit convention that was ever designed by a sleek respectability to keep our volcanic Gospel within the bonds of decency and order, will ever capture the soul of a great city, or speak with a voice that will ring in the hearts of a free people. And if Latimer knew the secret, another knew it who is worthy to be named with him—that passionate pilgrim of the Puritanism which was only Latimer's Protestantism become logical and thorough—I mean John Penry. They burned Latimer at Oxford, and hanged Penry on a gibbet in the Old Kent Road; but not till these men and others like-minded had set England on fire. For one thing, they had shed their blood for freedom of thought and freedom of speech, and no martyr has ever died for those sacred principles in vain. The preacher's very existence was at stake in the controversy, whether religion was to consist of prayers and offices rendered in a foreign tongue, or the truths that free men were to think and speak in their own free speech. In the former system the prophet has no place; in the latter system he is the most precious possession of his age.

I hope I shall not weary you by insistence on this point; but the tendency of theology to become an esoteric philosophy, full of technical terms understood only by the experts, has the inevitable effect that its professors and teachers lose touch with life. Always the preacher must be a man of his time. His business is to restate the eternal message of salvation in the terms of today. Chaste and cultured archaisms are pleasant to the palate of the scholar; but the Gospel is for the people, and we need more than anything else men of the people who know their needs and their thoughts, and can make the Evangel what it eternally is, the property and heritage of the simple and the poor. Some of you will recall, by way of illustration, the scathing satires of Erasmus on the scholastic theologians and preachers who, in his time, made it their business to cultivate a reputation for erudition and profundity by talking in words that the vulgar could not understand. This is a specimen that Erasmus gives of the teaching of these inflated doctrinaires. *"They say that 'person' does not signify relation of origin, but duplex negation of communicability in genere, that is, it connotes something positive, and is a noun of the first instance, not the second. They say the persons of the Divine Nature exist reciprocally by circumincession, and circumincession is when a thing subsists really in something else which is really distinct, by the mutual assistance of presentiality in the same essence."* After reading two or three lines of that kind of thing you feel as if you were in a lunatic asylum. Do you wonder that men and women sickened and wearied of it? And do you wonder that the Reformation preachers brought a veritable new revelation to the world when they read out to the common people such great simple words as these, *"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me?"* If Tyndale had done nothing else by his translation of the Bible, he had taught us for all time that there is no more dignified and majestic diction than the simple speech of the common people.

I cannot explain to you just why it is that the true prophet is always master of simple speech, but it is certain that no man can speak home to the hearts of his fellow men without it. Inasmuch as the Reformation was a return to the natural and to the human from the artificial and the scholastic, it did more than change the world's history—it revived the order of prophets, and it created a literature. From Hugh Latimer and John Penry to Daniel Defoe and John Bunyan, you can read the influence of the Reformation in bringing religion back to life, and making it the inspiration of the common people.

After all, it was but natural that the Puritan preacher, with his love of reality, should be impatient of the mere tricks and artifices borrowed from the demagogue. The Richard Bernard who was only *"almost persuaded"* to become a pilgrim, and just missed immortality thereby, dealt out wholesome warnings to young preachers in his book entitled *"The Faithful Shepherd."* How he satirizes those brethren who, as Mr. Spurgeon used to say, "*mistake perspiration for inspiration*," and try to produce an impression by violence which could not be produced by the weight of their argument! Some forward ones, he declares, are *"moved to violent motions as casting abroad of their arms, smiting on the pulpit, lifting themselves up, and again suddenly stamping down." Others "through too great feare and bashfulness which causeth hemmings, spittings, rubbing the browes, lifting up of the shoulders, nodding of the head, taking often hold of the cloake or gown, fiddling with the fingers upon the breast buttons, stroaking of the beard and such-like toys."* There is sound sense as well as humour in this attempt to put us on our guard against ridiculous and meaningless nervous gestures, which distract and annoy the most indulgent of our hearers and add nothing to our power. It is always easier in this matter to enforce the truth by precept than by practice; but nothing is more certain than that the man who has learned early the right modulation of the voice, and to be content with those simple gestures which are natural and dignified, has mastered what is fundamental to the art of pulpit oratory.

That this was no chance judgment of some isolated Puritan divine, but one common to all in that generation, may be further gathered from an excellent passage in one of John Robinson's forceful writings. "*As a woman, over-curiously trimmed, is to be suspected, so is a speech. And indeed he that goes about by eloquence, without firm ground of reason, to persuade, goes about to deceive. As some are large in speech out of abundance of matter and upon due consideration, so the most multiply words either from weakness or vanity. Some excuse their tediousness, saying that they cannot speak shorter, which is all one as if they said that they have unbridled tongues and inordinate passions setting them a-work. I have been many times drawn so dry that I could not well speak any longer for want of matter; but I could ever speak as short as I would,"* I ask you, could the thing be better put? Could there be a better comparison than this of a highly rhetorical speech or sermon to *"a woman over-curiously trimmed?"* Have we not had to listen to many discourses where you

could not see the dress for the trimmings? It may be impossible to lay down any canons of good taste in this matter, but I shall venture to submit to you that the Puritan frugality of illustration and adornment is far more effective than the prodigality and even profligacy of quotation and ornament which is sometimes popular among us today, and which may dazzle, but does not really subdue and persuade an audience.

Nevertheless, you are not to suppose that John Robinson could not estimate the worth and value of apposite and pointed illustration. Dr. John Brown has borne testimony to the wealth of his reading, the catholicity of his range of knowledge. He has discovered quotations from Plato, Aristotle, Herodotus, Thales, Cicero, Terence, Pliny, Plutarch, Seneca, Epictetus and Suetonius among the classics; among the Fathers, from Ignatius, Tertullian, Cyprian, Ambrose, Augustine, Gregory Nazianzen, Lactantius, Jerome, Basil and Eusebius; among later writers, from Bernard, Anselm, Scaliger, Beza, Erasmus and Melancthon, as well as his own contemporaries. This renowned preacher and scholar, who was to inspire men and women to attempt and achieve one of the most heroic tasks in history, was a man steeped in literature, who had wrestled in his study with great themes, who had sat at the feet of men of mind of all schools and generations, whose culture was as catholic as his sympathies were wide, and who yet, as Tennyson says, *"wore his weight of learning lightly as a flower,"* and never lost touch with his fellows, or gave up to academic ambition what was meant for mankind. Had it been otherwise, he might have become a walking encyclopedia, but never the mainspring of that gallant adventure which planted a free Church on a free soil.

The more I study the personality and the preaching of John Robinson, the less I wonder at the spirit and exploits of the community whose members owed everything to his inspiration. Under the strongest temptations to intolerance, he maintained a generous temper and a broad Christian outlook. He was immovably firm in the maintenance of principles, but even his controversial utterances are distinguished by a large charity that lifts him above his time. And I cannot be wrong in arguing that his ministry bears the marks upon it of the influence of his Church, which was almost alone among the Separatist communities of the time in its freedom from unworthy partisanship, and the frictions and bickerings which are the fruits of jealousy and pedantry. I imagine

John Robinson would have found it difficult to decide whether his people owed most to his preaching, or his preaching owed most to his people. One has the feeling that such a Church would have made almost any preacher eloquent; yet again, one is driven to conclude that such a preacher would have created a true Church out of almost any material. The fact of the matter is, of course, that the atmosphere of faith and prayer does make good preaching inevitable, whereas the attitude of suspicion and criticism will *"freeze the genial current of the soul,"* and give to any earnest and spiritual minister a sense of labouring at the oar to no purpose.

It is not possible to leave out of account that many preachers are called to preach to the worldly, the unbelieving, the indifferent and the hostile; and we should be contradicting some of the most glorious facts in Christian history if we did not recognize that God does not leave His witnesses alone when they go forth on His errands, no matter how difficult the journey. But it is almost impossible to separate John Robinson from the Church he loved so deeply, and which loved him with equal intensity and constancy. He was just one of the members of the body, deriving health and power from his vital relation to all the rest, and communicating his own life and strength to them. When he spoke to this outside world, when he put pen to paper, when he became a champion in controversy, and a defender of his faith and people, it was not he alone who spoke. The whole Church seemed to become eloquent in and through him. Equally impressive is it that the Church members, to whom he gave his blessing and a double portion of his spirit, seemed to reproduce his faith, courage and charity when far from his presence.

Leagues of tempestuous Atlantic waters never separated people and pastor in ideal or in fellowship. Still the mystic spiritual tie held. Still they thought together, and prayed together, and aspired together, and wrought together. It was as if he, their pastor, were present at every council meeting, was a guest in every cabin, prayed at the bedside of the dying, joined the hands of the newly-wed, and committed those who died in Christ to their last resting-place in the forest. Of all the blows that fell one by one upon that struggling Pilgrim community in the bitter heroic days, when death and famine seemed their most familiar acquaintances, the most crushing and heart-breaking was the news of the death of their beloved pastor; and every soul in Plymouth colony

felt as if his father had fallen, and sorrowed most of all that they should see his face no more.

We have got to believe more than we do in this sacred co-operation of preacher and people. We shall have no ideal preachers in the pulpit unless and until we have ideal hearers in the pew. For conquests that will startle and awaken the world the need will always be for prophet spirits who are sustained and illuminated by their contact with a society of consecrated souls. It is all very well to lecture students for the ministry on the vocation and equipment of the preacher, or on the ideal of his calling, but, in sober truth, such lectures ought from time to time to be delivered to the officers and members of Churches and congregations. *They* make or mar the ministry. They encourage or discourage the preacher. They make it possible for him to be at his best, and impossible for his arrows to miss the mark. They create the atmosphere in which faith can live, and doubt cannot. They arm him for unseen conflicts, and protect him by their prayers from insidious attacks on his moral integrity. Moreover, it is they who multiply his message, translate it into living fact and deed, and so give power and effect to his ministry. Let it never be forgotten that modern America sprang out of the ideal relation between a pastor and a church, a man of God and a people of God. Let it never be forgotten that the problem was thought out in Church meeting, and the enterprise planned and adopted within the atmosphere of a Christian assembly. It was there, while men and women pleaded for light and for faith to walk in it, that the Spirit of illumination was vouchsafed, under whose gracious guidance the yoke became easy and the burden light. Together, while the prophet-leader saw his vision, and the people kindled to it, they became equal to the sacrifice, and confident of the Will and the Way. I cannot analyze how much of those faithful discourses, that will stir men's souls to the end of time, was due to the rapt and resolute faces of simple heroes and heroines that were upturned to meet his gaze, and how much of their exaltation and enthusiasm was due to their contact with a soul in which indubitably dwelt Divine insight and fire; I only know that their sublime *co-operation* made the westward track of the *Mayflower* plain, and wrote the new Book of Genesis in the Bible of human destiny.

Forgive me if I linger lovingly on these familiar scenes, so big with fate and so weighty with instruction. The preacher who has not pondered over these origins of New England's history must blame himself

if he has missed much inspiration for his own work. The part played by Moses in the days of the Jewish exodus towards the land of promise is not one whit more notable or significant than the part played by John Robinson in the exodus that ended in this land of promise. I might spare a moment or two for examples of his genius in the employment of rare and suggestive texts of Scripture, and his skill in turning out-of-the-way incidents in Bible narratives to profitable account. There are many seemingly desert places in Scripture that a preacher who knows his Bible can make to blossom like the rose. Not that there was any strained ingenuity about John Robinson's way with texts. But who would forget that text out of the Book of Samuel from which he preached on the special day set apart for inquiring the mind of the Spirit as to this enterprise, "*And David's men said unto him, Behold we be afraid here in Judah: how much more then if we come to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines? Then David inquired of the Lord yet again. And the Lord answered him and said, Arise, go down to Keilah; for I will deliver the Philistines into thine hand?"* Among all your New England towns today I wonder if there is one named Keilah; and if not, whether it is too late to supply the omission? Unless all reports lie, there are still enough Philistines left to justify the experiment.

Then on the ever-memorable day when he preached to the Pilgrims for the last time, the sermon that has become an imperishable legacy for all forward souls, he found his text in the Book of Ezra, "*I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of Him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance."* Think how these felicitous words must have accomplished their purpose, which was to provoke to new fervour of prayer and faith those who at the crisis of their fate still needed to be assured that theirs was a God-prompted and God-guided enterprise. Often, when I study the preaching of our fathers, I am impressed by the fact that they knew their Bibles better than we do. They had less of the light of criticism, but they had, I think, notwithstanding, a more exact knowledge of Holy Writ. Today this great territory of Scripture is like a modern continent; extreme and unhealthy congestion at certain well-known centers, and vast tracts of country uncultivated and unknown. How many of those listening to me have been led against the "*Philistines at Keilah,"* or have heard "*a fast proclaimed at the River Ahava?"*

Perhaps we flatter ourselves that if we had part and lot in so wonderful a movement we, too, should be moved to search the Scriptures,

and to uncover some of their hidden gems of price. But that is to harbour an undeveloped imagination. Every hour of assembly is a time big with destiny. Every Sunday men and women go forth from the tryst with God to face measureless possibilities. Suppose that you and I, who have the unspeakable privilege of interpreting the book of life, realized that the men and women we are addressing are as capable of disinterested sacrifices and noble exploits as their progenitors at Leyden; and that before a week is out some of them may have launched their *Mayflower,* and embraced a God-given adventure, with what emotion would our speech to them be charged? If we fail, it is because we do not see the possibilities latent in what we call an *"ordinary congregation."* No assembling of ourselves together to meet with Christ can ever be *"ordinary."* That is only a fashion of speech. We say sometimes, *"It was just an ordinary service."* If we have ceased to expect extraordinary manifestations of God's power and revelations of His will—that our young men should see visions and our old men dream dreams—why is it? It was just as possible that your fathers at Leyden should say "Yes" or "No" to the beckoning hand of their Divine destiny, as that we should accept or reject the higher Will for our own. There was no single element present at their fateful assembly in their Leyden meetinghouse that may not be present at any hour of worship in these days, and in the land of their adoption. All that is necessary for us to repeat their enterprises and achievements is soul enough to believe in God's will and to surrender to His leadership.

I am impressed by the fact that the last picture of their beloved minister that the Pilgrims carried with them to their promised land, was the one so simply and vividly described by the historian of their enterprise. *"The tide which stays for no man calling them away, that were thus loth to depart, their Reverend Pastor, falling down on his knees, and they all with him, with watery cheeks, commended them with most fervent prayers unto the Lord and His blessing."* I suspect that we have all at times felt what we call the burden of extempore prayer. But I am certain that the soul of the prophet is most surely and powerfully revealed in his prayers. To speak to men of God is a high privilege. There is perhaps one higher: it is to speak to God for men. I do not doubt that many a great saying of John Robinson lingered in the memories of his pilgrim flock, and was recalled under the pine trees and behind the stockades in their new settlement.

But assuredly the most sacred recollection of all was of his tender and loving intercession on their behalf; and they came to feel that the greatest moments in their lives were those ever-memorable ones when that prophet-spirit talked with God, and they saw heaven open, and heard things scarce lawful for man to hear. God forgive us that our pulpit prayers tend to become so formal and even unreal! For this is the sublimest office the minister of the Kingdom is called to fulfil. It is out of such spirit of communion and sacred intercourse with Deity that the pilgrim ambition is born, and the pilgrim vow sealed and ratified. Nay, I go further, It is in our prayers that our real ideals and hopes for our people are revealed. If we have great aspirations for them; if in our personal desire we destine them to sacrificial service; if we so love them as to cherish for them the glory and honour of the God-dedicated and forward-moving life, they will make the discovery in our prayers. For it is in our prayers that the deeps of the soul are uncovered, and the passionate yearnings of the true minister for his people make themselves known. That is a great adjective that Scripture applies to the fervent prayers of a good man. They are "energizing." They charge receptive souls with new and sublime forces. They re-establish broken or imperfect connections with the source of Divine power. They baptize the waiting, willing, listening heart with new vitality. They "energize "dare I say" electrify" the mind? Who can doubt that those who knelt around their spiritual father at Delfthaven, with the rickety ship *Speedwell* lying near, as if to remind them of the perils and discomforts of their adventure, were braced and strengthened and "energized" for their deathless task by the fervent applications of that man of God? Let no preacher among us fail to realize the power of inspiration that may communicate itself through his sermons to his congregation; but least of all let him forget that the final stimulus to deeds of faith and devotion will be felt and known by his people in the supreme hour of fervent and energizing prayer.

I must ask you to spare one thought for a feature of the famous expedition on which perhaps we do not often dwell. No minister went with them; that is, no ordained preacher and pastor. Apart from the fragrant memory of their former leader's ministry they were dependent on what we sometimes speak of as a "layman's" service. I would like to press Elder Brewster's example upon you as another and unanswerable argument why we should not deprive ourselves, as we do, of the spiri-

tual wealth of men and women in our churches who have not devoted themselves to the formal ministry, but whose thought and experience would enrich our corporate life. Would to God that all the Lord's servants were prophets! When shall we get away from the paralyzing misconception that a man of affairs is thereby incapacitated from being a spiritual leader? I make no doubt that the meditations of Elder Brewster were all the wiser and nobler that he had many public anxieties to bear and responsibilities to carry. It ought to be for*ever* symbolical of New England that the religious spirit was united to the spirit of practical citizenship in him who, unordained of man, assumed spiritual leadership within the Pilgrim theocracy.

So the preaching of the Word, and the higher Idealism, resulted in the founding of a new world *"dedicated to the proposition*," as Lincoln would say, that Christ's will is the only worthy and wholesome law for a state. To recover that ideal we need a new race of prophets—seers of inspired vision like John Robinson, statesmen of spiritual experience and moral stature like Brewster. How the Pilgrim Church created the Pilgrim State; how it drew up, as Mr. Bancroft says, "*the first instrument conferring equal civil and religious rights on every member of the commonwealth*;" how it sought to do the will of God on earth is matter of history. Imperishable as that history is, it is of little worth for the world of tomorrow in comparison with the necessity that her new preachers and spiritual leaders should *"highly resolve,"* that they will bring to the stupendous task of creating yet another *"new world,"* a double portion of the spirit of their sires—the same faith, fortitude and sacred adventure, a like endurance in the teeth of danger, suffering and death, and *"an equal temper of heroic hearts*."

—*The Romance of Preaching*
C. Silvester Horne. M.A.
1926

HUGH LATIMER

Hugh Latimer was one of the most zealous and successful instruments in the English Reformation, and his work was preeminently that of the preacher. He had the qualities which fitted him for arresting the attention and influencing the minds of his audience, and from the time when he "forsook the school doctors," and became an earnest student of true divinity, he appears to have adopted as his motto the words of the apostle, "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel." The account given of his sermons in the University, by Becon, who heard them, is, that "none except the stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart ever went from his preaching without being affected with high detestation of sin, and moved unto all godliness and virtue." There were none for whom he entertained greater fears, none whom he more faithfully warned, than the "preaching prelates," or those whom he designated "strawberry preachers;" because, instead of feeding the people with food all the year round and every day, they preached their sermons once only in the year, as we are furnished with that delicate and perishable fruit.

To estimate correctly the preaching of Latimer we must remember the comparatively rude state of the English mind in his times, and how necessary it was to be plain-spoken in order to find access to the mind and heart of the people, the object at which he constantly and successfully aimed. Any one who, observing the great success of the good Bishop of Worcester, should take his sermons as a model, would appear "as one born out of due time," although he might learn from them most useful lessons as to the manner in which the prevalent sins of the age should be reproved.

Latimer possessed a lively imagination, a ready wit, a large share of true courage and natural eloquence, qualities, which he freely consecrated to the great work of rebuking folly, exposing error, and "holding forth the word of life." Fox, in his graphic account of "the famous preacher," tells us that his parents, seeing his ready, prompt, and sharp

wit, purposed to train him up in erudition and knowledge of good literature. In his youth he so profited at school, that at the age of fourteen he was sent to Cambridge, where he soon "gave himself to the study of such divinity as the ignorance of that age did suffer."

Master Thomas Bilney, being at that time a "secret over thrower of Anti-Christ's kingdom," evidently set his heart on the conversion of Latimer to the truth. "He was stricken with a brotherly pity towards him, and thought by what means he might best win this his zealous, yet ignorant brother, to the true knowledge of Christ." The remarkable method of going into Latimer's study, and requesting leave to make his confession, was crowned with success; for, while hearing this confession, "he was, by the good Spirit of God, so touched, that hereupon he abandoned his former studying of the school doctors, and all other such foolhardiness, and became a true scholar in the true divinity."

The "true scholar" labored early and late to fill his mind with "the true divinity," and became apt to teach, and mighty in the Scripture. The good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, brought forth good things. If he were not in the highest repute as a scholar, he was, and he continued throughout his long life a most diligent student of those divine truths that he wished to preach. "Every morning ordinarily, winter and summer, about two of the clock in the morning, he was at his book most diligently." By the divine blessing on his daily and indefatigable searching of the scriptures of the Old and New Testament, he became a complete master of all the scriptural arguments, which he required in constant on the errors of the Church of Rome. He was thoroughly furnished for his Master's work, and that "ready wit" now consecrated to God, was constantly of the great service. The readiness of Latimer, and his ample preparation to meet the calls of duty as they came, were shown in a most remarkable manner very soon after he began to preach the gospel. Bishop West, then Bishop of Ely, hearing of his conversion, determined to go and hear him preach, but that it should be "suddenly and without any intelligence to be given to Latimer." Latimer was preaching in the University church, and had made some progress in his sermon, when the bishop and "certain men of worship" entered the church, we may suppose, not without some disturbance to the congregation, but evidently without distracting the preacher, who, after a pause, observed, that a new and more honorable audience required a new theme, and added, "therefore it behoves me now to divert from mine intended purpose, and somewhat to entreat

of the honorable estate of a bishop."

He then selected for his text, "Christus existens pontifex futurorum bonorum," and this text he so fruitfully handled, expounding every word, and setting forth the office of Christ so sincerely, as the true and perfect pattern unto all other bishops that should succeed him in his church, as evidently to give the bishop very little satisfaction with himself or the preacher. In consequence of this sermon, and the conversation by which it was followed, Latimer was sent to Cardinal Wolsey, at York-place. In this interview the proud prince of the church was so much pleased with the "ready wit" and thorough honesty and learning of Latimer, as shown in the answers given to the cardinal's chaplain, that after a gentle admonition be discharged him with his license to preach throughout England. This license opened to Latimer a wide and effectual door among his many adversaries, and when the cardinal afterwards lost the favor of Henry VIII, and "divers reported that it was rescinded," Latimer answered thereto in the pulpit, and said, "Where do you think that my license dies with my lord cardinal's temporal fall, I take it nothing so. I now set more by his license than ever I did before when he was in his most felicity."

Latimer always considered the character of his audience, and well knew how to vary his mode of teaching, so as to secure that essential attribute of adaptation, for want of which discourses of great excellence often prove utterly useless. No sober-minded person will approve of the ridicule which provokes laughter in the house of God, and we therefore cannot give unqualified approval to the raillery which Latimer directed against the friar Buckingham, who had been inveighing the heretical notions of having the Scriptures translated into English for the use of the common people. If that heresy prevailed, the friar contended that "we should soon be an end of everything useful among us. The plough man, reading that if he put his hand to the plough and should happen to look back, he was unfit for the kingdom of God, would soon lay aside his labour; the baker likewise, reading that a little leaven will corrupt his lump, would give us very insipid bread; the simple man also finding himself commanded to pluck out his eyes, in a few years we should have a nation of beggars."

Latimer undertook to answer the arguments of the friar on the next Sunday, when a crowded audience, including the whole university, was congregated to hear the reply. Among the audience was the

friar himself, with his cowl about his shoulders, and seated with an air of great importance before the pulpit. Latimer recapitulated the learned friar's arguments, placed them in their strongest light, and refuted them with his usual good humor and flow of wit, so as to make their author appear in the highest degree ridiculous. "A figurative manner of speech (he said) was common in all languages. Thus for instance (he continued) when we see a fox painted preaching in a friar's hood, nobody imagines that a fox is meant, but that the craft and hypocrisy are described which one so often finds disguised in that garb." This observation was addressed to that part of the audience in which the friar was seated, and had the effect of shutting him up within the walls of the monastery. In the same sermon the preacher appealed to the people with great address, and descanted on the low esteem in which they were held by their spiritual guides; and expressed his desire that the people might have the use of the Scriptures until they proved themselves such absurd interpreters as the friar had seemed to make them.

When afterwards Latimer was attacked by Venetus, a distinguished scholar, on the same subject, he answered like a scholar as much of the discourse as needed refutation, and left the absurd parts to refute themselves.

Part Two

Some of the most remarkable discourses of Latimer were delivered in the presence of the young King Edward VI. To accommodate the unusual numbers that flocked to hear the venerable preacher, the pulpit was placed in the priory garden, which furnished for the time a chapel royal, and the King listened to the sermons from a window in the palace. An old print preserves a faithful representation of this interesting scene, and depicts the youthful monarch seated in a casement window, attended by three of his lords, while other members of his court are in an adjoining gallery. The garden is filled with the standing audience, some uncovered and others wearing a cap like that of the King. The cap of the King and some of his court was distinguished by a feather. Among those in the garden the only person seated is a woman, apparently one of the domestics of the palace, who is on the upper step of the pulpit, with an open book on her knee, probably that sacred volume that was the object of the preacher to place in the hands of the people. "Master Latimer" and his youthful auditor King Edward are carefully indicated

by the artist, who has represented them by scrolls proceeding out of their mouths, on which their names are inscribed. The venerable preacher is presented in a graceful attitude, holding a little book in his left hand, and extending his right arm, indicating his great earnestness, while the King shows fixed attention, not only by the seriousness of his aspect, but by the open book and the pen in his hand, for he is evidently taking notes of the sermon.

And well did these sermons deserve all the attention they received, each of them realizing the description given by Latimer of the sermon of Jonas in "Nineveh," which he says was "a nipping sermon, a pinching sermon, a biting sermon: it had a full bite, it was a nipping sermon, a rough sermon, and a sharp biting sermon." Speaking of the size of Nineveh he asks, "What is London to Nineveh? Like a village as Islington, or such another, in comparison of London." From a digression in one of these sermons, we find that there were some of the courtly hearers of Latimer who did not follow the excellent example of their royal master.

"I remember now a saying of St. Chrysostom, and peradventure it might come hereafter in better place, but yet I will take it since it has come to my mind. The saying is this: 'They heard him,' saith he, 'in silence, not interrupting the order of his preaching.' He means, they heard him quietly, without any shuffling of the feet, or walking up and down. Surely it is disorderly that folk shall be walking up an down in the sermon-time, as I have seen in this place this Lent, and there shall be such huzzing and buzzing in the preacher's ear, that it maketh him oftentimes to forget his matter. O let us consider his Majesty's goodness! This place was prepared for banqueting of the body, and his Majesty has made it a place for the comfort of the soul, and to have the word of God preached in it; showing hereby that he would have all his subjects attend, if it might he possible. Consider what his Majesty has done for you? He allows you all to hear with him. Consider where you are.

First, you ought to reverence God's word, and though poor men preach it, yet it is the same word that our Saviour spoke. Consider also the presence of his Majesty, God's magistrate on earth, having a respect to his person. You ought to reverence to it and consider that he is God's supreme justice, and yet he allows you all to be partakers with him of the hearing of God's word. This benefit of his would be thankfully taken, and it would be highly esteemed. Hear in silence, as Chrysostom

saith. It may chance that some in the company may fall sick or diseased: if there be any such, let them go away with silence; let them leave their greetings till they come in the court, let them depart with silence. I took occasion of Chrysostom's words to admonish you of this thing."

The sermon in which this complaint is made is one of the most remarkable of Latimer's discourses, and it will be seen, by the following passage, how well its lively and varied style was calculated to rivet the attention, to improve the understanding, and save the souls of his hearers. His text was from Romans 15:4.

He says: "I heard of a bishop of England that went on visitation, and as it was the custom, when the bishop should come to be rung into the town. The great bell's clapper was fallen down, the tile was broken, so that the bishop could not be rung into the town. There was a great fuss made of this, and the chief of the parish was condemned for it in the visitation. The bishop was somewhat sharp with them, and signified that he was much offended. They made their answers, and excused themselves as well as they could. 'It was a chance,' said they, 'that the clapper broke, and we could not get it mended sooner." Among the people there was one wiser than the rest, and he came to the bishop and said, 'Why, my does your lordship make so great a fuss about the bell that lacks its clapper?' 'Here is a bell,' said he, and pointed to the pulpit, 'that hath lacked a clapper the last twenty years. We have a parson that receives out of this parish fifty pounds every year, but we never see him.'

I warrant you, the bishop was an un-preaching prelate. He could find fault with the bell that lacked a clapper to ring him into the town, but he could not find any fault with the parson that never preached. Since the office of preaching has been neglected it has rarely had as service in the name of God. They must sing *'Salve festa Deus'* around the church and no man was the better for it except to show off their bright coats and garments.

"I came once myself to a place on my journey home from London, and I sent word over night into the town that I would preach there in the morning, because it was holy day; and I thought it was a holy days work. The church stood in my way, and I took my horse and my company, and went to the scene. I thought I should have found a great company in the church but when I arrived the church door was locked. I waited for half an hour and more and at last the key was found. One of the parishioners came to me and said, 'Sir, this is a busy day with us,

we cannot hear you; it is Robin Hood's day. The people are gone abroad to gather for Robin Hood: I pray you hinder them not.' I was compelled by circumstance to give place to Robin Hood. I, who thought my vestment, should have been regarded, though I was not and I was compelled to yield to Robin Hood's men. It is no laughing matter, my friends, it is a weeping matter, a heavy matter, under the pretence of gathering for Robin Hood, a traitor and a thief, to put out a preacher, to have his office less esteemed; to prefer Robin Hood to God's word. If the bishops had been preachers, there should never have been any such thing: but we have good hope of better things. We have had a good beginning: I beseech God to continue it! But I tell you, it is spread abroad that the people have such opinions. The bishops, they could laugh at it. What was that to them? They would have them to continue in their ignorance still, and themselves in unpreaching prelacy."

…"Luther, when he first went public and disputed against the Decretals, the Clementines, Alexandrines, Extravagantines, what trouble he had. But you will say, perhaps he was deceived in some things. I will not take upon me to defend him in all points. I will not stand to it that all he wrote was true; I think he would not so himself: for there is no man but he may err. He came to further and further knowledge; but surely he was a goodly instrument."

In the sermons of Latimer we find some opinions to which we are unable to subscribe, but which it is no part of our present purpose to controvert. His heart was sound in the statutes of the Lord, he had clear views of the way of salvation only by faith in the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the necessity of that "holiness without which no man can see the Lord," and which grows out of faith in the gospel. On the great reformation doctrine, the "articulus stantis aut cadentis ecclesia," Luther could not have spoken more in harmony with the teaching of Paul than does Latimer. We give a specimen from his sermon at Grimsthorpe, on the Twelfth Day, in 1553.

"I desire you in the reverence of God to bear away this one sentence, which I will tell you now; for it shall be a good stay against the temptations of the devil. The sentence is this: 'what the law could not do, for it was weakened by the flesh;' what can the law do when it has nothing to hinder? Marry, it can justify. By the infirmity of our flesh man was not able to do it; the lack was in us; for we are wicked, and the law is holy and good. Now that which we lacked, that same hath God fulfilled and supplied, in that he has sent his Son to supply that which

man's works could not do: and with his fulfilling of the law and painful death he merited, that as many as believe in him, though they had done all the sins of the world, yet shall they not be damned, but are righteous before the face of God, believing in Christ; so that remission of sins and everlasting life may be sought no where else but only in Christ! "He that spared not his only Son, but gave him for us, why should he not have given us all things with him?"

"By this text it appears that he who has Christ, has all things. He hath Christ's fulfilling of the law; he has remission of his sins; and so, consequently, everlasting life. Is not this a comfort? What greater consolation, comfort, and heart-ease can there be in heaven and earth, than that; namely, to be sure of the remission of thy sins, and that Christ bound himself unto the law, to that end that he might fulfil it to the uttermost? This, I say, is the greatest comfort; especially when the devil goes in hand with us, and casts our sins in our teeth; as, no doubt he forgets them not, but has them (as they say) at his finger's end; when he will so go to work with us, saying, 'Sir, thou art damned; you are a sinful wicked man; you have not kept God's most holy commandments; God must needs judge you according unto his law,'

"Now then, when I have the grace to have in remembrance the circumcision of Christ: when I remember that Christ hath fulfilled the law for me; that he was circumcised, that he will stand between me and my damnation; when I look not upon my works, to be saved by them, but only by Christ; when I stick unto him; when I believe that my soul is washed and made clean through his blood; then I have all his goodness, for God hath given him unto me; and when I believe in him, I apply all his benefits unto me. I pray God, the Almighty, to give us such a heart that we may believe in him, for he is 'the end of the law; 'the fulfilling of the same, to the salvation of all that believe on him! 'What can be more comfortable? Therefore let us believe on him and be thankful."

Latimer died a martyr in the flames and his last words are memorable and ought to be memorized by all. "Play the man. We shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England as I trust shall never be put out."

—*The Evangelical Pulpit*
1859

THE REVEREND EDWARD BICKERSTETH

Few ministers of the gospel in our times have more magnified their office, and glorified the name of their heavenly Master, than the Reverend. Edward Bickersteth. Besides his excellence as a scriptural preacher, as a zealous promoter of Christian missions, by his personal labours in the field, by his active discharge of the duties of the secretary of the Church Missionary Society, and his numerous journeys and speeches in support of that institution, he held a conspicuous place among "those that handle the pen of the writer," and has eminently realized the benevolent wish of the apostle Peter, when he said, "I will that after my decease you may be able to have these things always in remembrance." His "Scripture Help," his "Treatise on Prayer," and on the "Lord's Supper," his "Christian Student," his "Familiar Expositions of St. John and St. Jude," his widely circulated "Hymn Book," are too well known to require any commendation we can render.

It is edifying and refreshing to be able to look into the hidden life of such a man, and to observe how his mind was fed and his soul nourished up to the spiritual prosperity by which he was distinguished.

In the valuable memoir by Mr. Birks there are numerous extracts from the diary and letters of Mr. Bickersteth, which give us the opportunity of seeing the means by which his piety was advanced, and his activity as a Christian minister sustained. We think we may render some good service to our friends, by bringing two or three of these extracts under their notice.

As we have discovered from a recent correspondence, some misapprehension as to the theological truths that it is the object of "THE EVANGELICAL PREACHER" to promote, we seize this opportunity to express our own views, as we happily are enabled to express them in the following passage selected from the preface to a late edition of Mr. Bickersteth's sermons:

"The author trusts that he holds, with greater simplicity and firmness than ever, those holy truths which it has been his endeavor to embody in his past writings for twenty years—of our fallen nature in Adam, our total ruin in ourselves, and the infinite love of God in the gift of his Son, and the promise of his Spirit. He desires to maintain, with increasing steadfastness, the recovery of God's people in and by Christ; their election in him before the foundation of the world; their regeneration by his Spirit, through his Word; their free justification by faith alone; their sanctification in use of the means of grace, such as hearing the word, prayer, and the sacraments; and the life of faith, hope, and love, nourished and maintained by the application of divine truth in God's ordinances to the heart, through the Spirit. He rejoices in the thought that they who are thus given to Christ are upheld by divine power to the end; shall have victory over Satan, death, hell, and the grave; a glorious resurrection, acceptance in the judgment to come, and final and everlasting felicity, at the coming, and in the kingdom, of their Lord and Saviour. With these views are ever to be connected the unspeakable danger of neglecting the truth, and the certain and everlasting destruction of those who "know not God, and obey not the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ."

The following extract will show how intimately his personal piety and his public usefulness were associated.

" September 4: …Looking forward to the brief span of life before me, I know not whether it shall be a day, or many days—a year, or many years. O Lord God my Saviour, I entreat thee to give me sufficient grace, that I may serve thee, and glorify thy name! "The snares around my future path appear to be these. Sinking into it a worldly, self-indulgent, pleasure-seeking life. Sinking into a mere literary, reading, and studious habit. Overwhelming myself with employments, none of which would be well done.—Entering into much religious visiting and dissipation of mind. Entering into the secular concerns of a parish."

"Lord my God, preserve me from these snares, and from every spiritual danger, whether now foreseen, or not at all thought of; or known by me! Now, O my God, the grace I ask of thee is:

1. To devote myself ardently and fully to the work of the ministry. In preaching the glorious gospel diligently and laboriously. In visiting unwearied every part of my parish, from house to house, with many tears, with much prayer.

2. To foster the spirit of religion in the county. By clerical meetings and intercourse. By religious associations, and meetings in different places. By opening my house to every plan for doing good.

3. To pursue religious publications, as God shall enable me, first trying to improve my present works. To write an Address upon Missions. To write a treatise on Baptism, and on Visiting the Poor.

4. To attend specially to the religion of my own household. My wife, children, and servants must have more of my thoughts, prayer, and time, as it regards their spiritual welfare.

To give that time to the Church Missionary Society which does not interfere with other duties. The most important aid will be in journeys and committees. And in all, and above all

6. To walk closely with God, content with nothing but as I have communion with God, and seek not my own glory, but His whose I am and whom I serve. And here of special importance—prayerfully reading of the Scriptures, close self-examination, and much fervent prayer.

Here is an example for one that seeks to give a good account of his stewardship.

January 6th, 1853.—O that all my talents this year may be laid out for God. I desire to have this as my motto for the year. "Occupy Till I Come." Let me look backwards and forwards, then, for help to do this. My talents are money, time, influence, ability, the ministry.

Money: In what is past, I have not laid it out too wisely. Too much has been spent on self, in literary gratification, and pleasing my family. In what is to come, I desire to think more of the poor, to be more ready for cases of necessity to count it more a privilege to give, and not to procrastinate, when there is opportunity.

Time: I have been very guilty here, in not giving my time, as I ought my people. It has been too much spent in desultory study, and too little in active duties. "In what is to come, O Lord, help me to redeem time, giving to each hour its appointed work, as I believe thou wouldest have it occupied; and to adhere as much as may be to a fixed plan. O preserve me from waste of time!"

Influence: I have but little thought how I might, by this, benefit others. My servants—my children—my friends. It has been a talent little improved for God. "In what is to come, O Lord, help me to be more circumspect and diligent, seeking to lay out all my influence to benefit the bodies and souls of my fellow creatures."

Ability: O for more fidelity to all the powers entrusted to me. Let nothing be neglected that can glorify my God, and benefit his church. O may I be faithful over what I have!

The Ministry: Here I am most guilty. When I look at my parish, and see how many I have never personally warned and instructed—I may well mourn how many are living in drunkenness and ignorance—I may well mourn over them, and over my own unfaithfulness. May this year be distinguished by a new course of labors for the good of the people. O that my own Visitation Sermon were my animating spring, and my daily practice! Lord, make me a faithful minister of thy Word!

How much in keeping with such conscientious devotedness was the "pleasant dream" which this faithful pastor enjoyed towards "the closing scene" of his history, and the heavenly conversation to which it gave rise.

"I have had a pleasant dream! I thought I was in the green pastures with all the flock of Christ wandering beside the still waters, and resting in those cool, green pastures. Was not that pleasant? And did you see Jesus there? Yes, that was the delight of it, you know, to be with him, and while he was there, every want was supplied. He supplies the wants of the whole world, by the atonement he has made with his flesh and blood. That is a wonderful thought: "My flesh is meat indeed, and blood is drink indeed." While we have that we cannot want. In the course of the same night: "Such multitude of thoughts come into my mind, passages of my past life. I have had a busy life; and in the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts refresh my soul." ☞

PEACE, perfect peace, in this dark world of sin?
The blood of Jesus whispers peace within.

Peace, perfect peace, by thronging duties pressed?
To do the will of Jesus, this is rest.

Peace, perfect peace, with sorrows surging round?
On Jesus' bosom nought but calm is found.

Peace, perfect peace, with loved ones far away?
In Jesus' keeping we are safe, and they.

Peace, perfect peace, our future all unknown?
Jesus we know, and He is on the throne.

Peace, perfect peace, death shadowing us and ours?
Jesus has vanquished death and all its powers.

It is enough: earth's struggles soon shall cease,
And Jesus call us to heaven's perfect peace.

EDWARD HENRY BICKERSTETH. 1825-1906

—*THE EVANGELICAL PULPIT*
1859

JOHN KNOX IN THE PULPIT

It is not our wish to hold up the great preacher of the Scottish Reformation as the model for all preachers in all places and at all times. It would be wise for the gospel minister of our day while he marks the pulpit characteristics of John Knox, to distinguish between those which are adapted to promote the success of the gospel ministry under all circumstances, and those peculiarities which resulted partly from his temperament, partly from his extraordinary mission, and partly from the remarkable characteristics of the age. Observing this caution, which is applicable to the study of all preaching models, the preachers of our time may derive great benefit from the study of John Knox in the pulpit.

At the period when Knox was summoned to his work the Reformation had arrived at a stage at which the labors of the preacher were required to follow those of the translator and the writer, and perceiving the special duties of his time, this zealous "servant of the age" endeavored faithfully to discharge them. His excellent biographer remarks, "His situation was very different from that of the first Protestant reformers. They found the whole world in ignorance of the doctrines of Christianity. Men were either destitute of books, or such as they possessed were calculated only to mislead. The oral instructions of a few individuals could extend but a small way; it was principally by means of their writings circulated with amazing rapidity, that they benefited mankind, and became, not merely the instructors of particular cities and countries where they resided and preached, but the reformers of Europe. By the time that Knox appeared on the field, their translations of Scripture, their judicious commentaries on its different books, and their able defense of its doctrines, were laid open to the English reader."

He thus gives his own view of the part that he was called to take in the glorious struggle of his times: "That I did not in writing communi-

cate my judgment upon the Scriptures, I have ever thought myself to have most just reason. For, considering myself rather called of my God to instruct the ignorant, comfort the sorrowful, confirm the weak; and rebuke the proud, by tongue and lively voice, in these most corrupt days, that to compose books for the age to come (seeing that so much is written, and by men of most erudition, and yet so little observed), I decreed to contain myself within the bounds of that vocation whereto I found myself specially called."

His whole career as a preacher shows that, "'with all good fidelity" he labored "by tongue and lively voice" to impress the great truths of the gospel on the minds and hearts of the attentive crowd that gathered around him, not only in his own land, but in England, and among our exiled countrymen in Frankfort and Geneva.

In all his preaching labours John Knox was influenced and sustained by a deep and abiding sense of his obligations as a minister of the Lord Jesus Christ. His call to the work of the ministry took place while he was conducting the education of his pupils in the castle of St. Andrews. In the chapel within that castle he read lectures on the Scriptures, and catechized his pupils publicly in the parish church of that city. The people were so much pleased with his talents and his manner of teaching, that they strongly urged him to preach in public, and become the colleague of John Rough, who was then the preacher to the garrison. He, however, resisted all their solicitations, assigning as his reason that he did not consider himself as having a call to the ministry, into which he would not intrude. The congregation, not satisfied with this refusal, came to the resolution that a call should be publicly addressed to him, in the name of the whole body, to become one of their ministers, and on a day fixed for the purpose.

"Rough preached a sermon on the election of ministers, in which he declared the power which a congregation, however small, has over any one in whom they perceived gifts suited to the office; and how dangerous it was for such a person to reject the call of those who desired instruction. Sermon being concluded, the preacher turned to Knox, who was present, and addressed him in these words: "Brother, you shall not be offended although I speak unto you that which I have in charge, even from all those that are here present, which is this: in the name of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ, and in the name of all that presently call you by my mouth, I charge you that you refuse not this holy voca-

tion, but as you tender the glory of God, the increase of Christ's kingdom, the edification of your brethren, and the comfort of me, whom you understand well enough by the multitude of labours, that you take the public office and charge, of preaching as you look to avoid God's heavy displeasure that He shall multiply his graces unto you.' Then addressing the congregation he said, 'Was this not your charge unto me and do you not approve this vocation?' They all answered, 'It was—and we approve it.' Overwhelmed by this unexpected and solemn charge, Knox, after an ineffectual attempt to address the audience, burst into tears, running out of the assembly, and shut himself up in his chamber. 'His countenance and behavior, from that day till the day he was compelled to present himself in the public place of preaching did sufficiently declare the grief and trouble and trouble of his heart; for no man saw any sign of mirth from him, neither had he pleasure to accompany any man for many days together.'"

From this period he felt that the Lord had called him to preach the gospel, that his commission had been handed to him by the church of Christ, and that he might adopt the words of the apostle and say, "Necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is me if I preach not the gospel."

It was this deep conviction, aided by his own natural courage and moral firmness, that kept him so calm in all those storms he had afterwards to encounter, and enabled him to stand unmoved in the presence of those princes who were summoned to hear the word of the Lord from his lips. His preaching was eminently scriptural.

The divine Word, which has always been the great instrument of true revivals and reformations, was the "new sharp threshing instrument" with which he was to "thresh the mountains and beat them small." His first sermon was the result of an offer he had made to prove the Romish Church of his time farther degenerate from the purity which was in the days of the apostles, than was the church of the Jews from the ordinances given by Moses when it consented to the innocent death of Jesus Christ.

"On the day appointed, he appeared in the pulpit of the parish church, and gave out the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth verses of the seventh chapter of Daniel, as his text. After an introduction, in which he explained the vision, and showed that the four animals hieroglyphically represented four empires,—the Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman, out of the ruins of the last of which rose the empire described

in his text. He proceeded to allow that this was applicable to no power but the papal. He compared parallel passages in the New Testament, and showed that the king mentioned in his text was the same elsewhere called the Man of Sin, the Anti-Christ, the Babylonian harlot; and that, in prophetical style, these expressions did not describe a single person, but a body or multitude of people under a wicked head, including a succession of persons occupying the same place. In support of his assertion, that the papal power was anti-Christian, he described it under the three heads of life, doctrines and laws. He depicted the scandalous lives of the of the Popes from records published by Roman Catholic writers, contrasted their doctrines and particularly on the heads of justification, holidays, and abstinence from meats and from marriage. He quoted from the canon law the blasphemous titles and prerogatives ascribed to the Pope, as an additional proof that he was described in the text. In conclusion, he signified that, if any of his hearers thought that he had misquoted or misinterpreted the testimonies which he had produced from the Scriptures, ecclesiastical history, or the writings of the fathers, he was ready, upon their coming to him, in the presence of witnesses, to give them satisfaction,"

The preaching of John Knox was uniformly distinguished by the faithfulness with which he reproved sin, and by the overwhelming power of his censure on great sinners. Well might the Regent Morton, an the day of his funeral, pronounce that high eulogy, "There lies he who never feared the face of man." We have lately noticed the faithfulness of the venerable Latimer, when preaching in the presence of Edward VI.

Knox was also called to preach before the youthful monarch, and on one of these occasions, preaching from John 13:18 "He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me," He said, "It hath been often seen, that the most excellent and godly princes were surrounded with false and ungodly officers and counselors.

Having inquired into the reasons of this, and illustrated the fact from the Scripture examples of Ahitophel under King David, Shebna under Hezekiah, and Judas under Jesus Christ, he added.—'What wonder is it, then, that a young and innocent king be deceived by crafty, covetous, wicked, and ungodly counselors? I am greatly afraid that Ahitophel be counselor, that Judas bear the purse, and that Shebna be scribe, comptroller, and treasurer.'"

When the Lords of the Congregation resolved to abolish the popish service and set up the reformed worship in all those places to which

their influence extended, John Knox was appointed to meet them and preach in St. Andrews, where it was agreed that these operations should commence.

"The Archbishop, apprised of his design to preach in the Cathedral, assembled an armed force, and sent information to him, that if he appeared in the pulpit, he would give orders to the soldiers to fire upon him. The noble men having met to consult what ought to be done, agreed that Knox should desist from preaching at that time, and strongly urged upon him the reasons of their opinion. Their retinue was very slender; they had not yet ascertained the disposition of the inhabitants of the town; the Queen-Regent lay at a small distance with an army; and his appearance in the pulpit might lead to the sacrifice of his own life, and the lives of those who were determined to defend him from violence. Fired with the recollection of the part that he had formerly acted on that spot, and with the near prospect of realizing the sanguine hopes that he had so long cherished in his breast, he resisted all the importunities of his friends … 'As for the fear of danger that may come to me,' he continued, 'let no man be solicitous; for my life is in the custody of Him whose glory I seek. I desire the hand nor weapon of no man to defend me. I only desire an audience; which, if it be denied here unto me at this time, I must seek where I may have it.'"

"This intrepid reply silenced all remonstrance; and next day Knox appeared in the pulpit and preached to a numerous assembly, including many of the clergy, without experiencing the slightest interruption. He discoursed from the subject of our Savior ejecting the profane merchants from the temple of Jerusalem, from which he took occasion to expose the enormous corruption which had been introduced in to the church under the Papacy, and to point out what was incumbent upon Christians, in their different spheres, for removing then. On the three following days he preached in the same place; and such was the influence of his doctrine, that the mayor, magistrates, and inhabitants, harmoniously agreed to set up the Reformed worship in the town; the church was stripped of images, and monasteries were pulled to be pulled down. This happened on the 14th of June, 1559."

The courage that enabled Knox to strike so much terror into the hearts of bad men enabled him, also, to cheer and animate his fellow labourers in the great work of the Reformation. The mission of Knox greatly resembled that of the prophets Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, who were raised up to animate the hearts of Zerubbabel, Joshua, and

the Jews, during the rebuilding of the temple. Of the effect which was produced on the minds of his bearers when he exhorted them to perseverance in their grand struggle, a remarkable description was given by the English Ambassador, one of his constant hearers, who says, writing to Cecil, "Where your honor exhorteth to stoutness, I assure you the voice of that one man is able in an hour to put more life into us than six hundred trumpets continually blustering in our ears."

When on one occasion the affairs of the congregations begun to wear a gloomy aspect, the soldiers were beginning to mutiny for lack of pay, the secret emissaries were meeting with much success, numbers were falling away, and universal dejection spreading among those that remained, the spirit of Knox continued unsubdued. He mounted the pulpit in Stirling, and delivered a discourse which bad a wonderful effect in rekindling zeal and courage of the congregation.

"Their faces, he said, were confounded, their enemies triumphed, their hearts had quaked for fear, and still remained oppressed with sorrow and shame, Why had God thus dejected them! The situation of their affairs required plain language, and he would use it.

In the present distressed state of their minds, they were in danger of attributing these misfortunes to a wrong cause, and of imaging that they had offended in taking the sword into their hands; just as the twelve tribes of Israel did, when they thrice discomfited in the war which they undertook, by Divine direction, against their brethren the Benjamites. The audience who had entered the church in deep despondency, left it with renovated courage."

There were other excellencies in his preaching, which are thus described by his faithful biographer, Dr. McCrie: "His ministerial functions were discharged with the greatest assiduity, fidelity, and fervor. No avocation or infirmity prevented him from appearing in the pulpit. Preaching was an employment in which he delighted, and for which he was qualified by an excellent acquaintance with the scriptures, and by the happy art of applying them, in the most striking manner, to the existing circumstance of the hearers. His powers of alarming the conscience, and arousing the passions have been frequently celebrated; but he excelled, also in unfolding the consolations of the gospel, and in calming the breasts of those who were agitated by a sense guilt, or suffering under the ordinary afflictions of life. When he discoursed of the griefs and joys, the conflicts and triumphs of genuine Christians, he

described what he himself had known and experienced. The letters he wrote to his familiar acquaintances breathe the most ardent piety. The religious meditations in which he spent his last sickness, were not confined to that period of his life; they had been his habitual employment from the time that he was brought to the knowledge of the truth, and his solace amidst all the hardships and perils through which he had passed."

We must conclude by noticing that leading feature in his character as a preacher, which we believe is more than any other associated with his name—ardent enthusiasm in the delivery of his sacred message.

Wilkie has depicted Knox preaching to the Lords of the Congregation and although we are told that the scene is "sadly disfigured by the extravagant action and expression of the Reformer," we recognize in that earnest and excited figure the enthusiasm so graphically described in the language of James Melville, a student, who frequently witnessed those wonderful exhibitions of pulpit fervor. We quote the words of Melville, who says "Of all the benefits that I had that year 1571, was the coming of that most notable prophet and apostle of our nation, Mr. John Knox, to St. Andrews, who, by the faction of the queen, occupying the castle and town of Edinburgh, was compelled to remove there with a number of the best, and chose to come to St. Andrews. I heard him teach there the prophecies of Daniel, that summer and the winter following. I had my pen and my little book, and took away such things as I could comprehend. In the opening of his text, he was moderate the space of an half-hour; but when he entered to application, he made me so to terrified that I could not hold a pen to write. He was (physically) very weak. I saw him every day of his teaching with a fur cape around his neck, a staff in the one hand, and good, godly Richard Ballenden, his servant, holding up his other as they took him from the abbey of the parish church, and by the said Richard, and another servant, lifting him up to the pulpit where he desired to lean when he first entered: but before he had finished with his sermon, he was so active and vigorous that he was likely to smash the pulpit in pieces, and fly out of it."

It is remarkable that this description applies to Knox in his old age, when he was no longer animated by the fervor of manhood, and when physical strength was fast failing him. His zeal was a holy zeal, inspired by love to Christ and to the souls of men, fed from sources which are

beyond the reach of physical and earthly influence, undying as the truth which he proclaimed, and which "abideth for ever."

—*The Evangelical Pulpit*
1859

AN EXAMPLE FOR PREACHERS
REV. WILLIAM JAY

The excellence of this popular and venerable preacher consisted not in some one extraordinary feature that is difficult of description, but was the effect of combining many elements of great simplicity that by their union formed an admirable whole. It has been properly said that "there was in his style comparatively of the grandeur and sublimity of the great masters of eloquence, but a constant succession of chaste, tender, and smiling allusions." It is not necessary to inquire whether Mr. Jay, had he chosen it, could have sustained the sublime flights which seemed natural to other distinguished pulpit orators, whose lofty and fervid utterances, classical diction, sublime conceptions, and glowing imagery, carried away their hearers in an ecstasy of intellectual enjoyment certain it is that he never tried, and that he choose a method of teaching, which, while it was delightful for its heavenly and spiritual character, never carried him beyond the reach of the many to whom he delighted to convey his Lord's message.

His object was to combine, in due proportion the various attributes in some one of which others excelled, and this object he was enabled to secure. He mentions, this when he went first to London, and was all anxiety to hear the preachers of the famed metropolis, he was told by a friend that if he wished to hear a good doctrinal sermon, he must hear 'Mr. _____ if an experimental one, he must hear Mr. _____ if a practical one, he must hear Mr. _____ when he inquired whether there was no minister in London who preached all these, as he should like to hear him. His *beau ideal* of a good preacher he was enabled to realize in his own person. It generally occurred that every class of his hearers heard something which afforded peculiar gratification, while the attention was alive, and the mind refreshed and benefited, as the preacher intermingled narrative and doctrine, reasoning and pathos, the dogma of the theologian, and the ethics of the Christian moralist. We may some-

times compare a particular preacher to some one of those precious stones, which form the foundation of the New Jerusalem. Here is a chrysolite and there an emerald, and there again an amethyst; but William Jay was a beautiful mosaic, formed of portions of them all, arranged with careful regard to the laws which regulate the harmony of color, so that there is nothing wanting which can please the eye, or gratify the taste. Many preachers are remarkable for inequality in their sermons, and some are said rarely to preach two discourses of the same excellence in the same day; we have never heard this said of this venerable man, though his ministerial course extended over more than sixty years.

We have had the privilege of hearing him discourse at an ordinary week evening service, in Argyle Chapel, with as much of holy fervor and heavenly wisdom, as could have been anticipated at either of the services of the Lord's day. There was the same kind of excellence in his familiar expositions of Scripture at the Monday evening prayer meetings when the venerable pastor took his seat in an arm chair at the table "like a father in the midst of his children," and brake to them the bread of instruction. It is said that he prepared for these services only by fixing on a portion of Scripture before he left his home, which he turned over in his mind as he walked to the chapel. The few specimens, which have been furnished from the notes of friends, induce the wish that these precious fragments were all collected, and incorporated with those of the preacher, by which "he, being dead, yet speaketh."

Method has always been regarded by the highest teachers as an important element of instruction, and the want of method could never be charged on Mr. Jay, who frequently enjoined it on others, and invariably displayed it himself. One of his constant and most intelligent hearers observes that "the simple and clear way in which Mr. Jay divided and explained all his sermons, added to the attractive styles of delivery, made all he said easily remembered; and, indeed, so attractive was his mode of preaching that numerous individuals whom I have met with during my life-time, have been at the end of years able to give the substance, if not the division, of the only sermon they ever heard from his lips"" It is not essential that the order of the preacher should always be announced by numerals, although Mr. Jay chose to have recourse to such assistance for the sake of the hearers, who found them most material helps to memory. If a sermon is worth hearing, it is worth remembering, and aids to memory are not beneath the regard of the wisest teacher.

The discourses of Mr. Jay were remarkable for the manner in which they were adorned with the language of the sacred Scriptures. They were in their structure formed on the text, that text being the ground plan of the whole, and then the discourse throughout was enriched with "words which the Holy Ghost speaketh," introduced in a manner which showed the intimate acquaintance of the preacher with the Word of God, and his earnest desire that it should dwell in the minds of his hearers "in all wisdom."

One great source of his usefulness, as well as of his usefulness, as well as popularity, was the simplicity that marked his thoughts, and the style in which they were presented. The kind of simplicity to which we refer was not the result of inability to assume the style of the philosopher, which he uniformly avoided, but was the effect if his deliberate determination, as well as of his natural taste. His object was to imitate the style of teaching pursued by the sacred writers, of whom he observes, that "instead of defining they describe, and instead of describing they exemplify. They hold forth all this not, indeed, in the nakedness of abstraction, but clothed with their attributes, and palpable in their effects. To show us what the power of religion is, they tell us what it does. The believer *comes* to Christ. The penitent *looks* on Him whom he has pierced, and *mourns*. We have not the rules and tactics of the war, but we see the warrior from his arming till he has triumphed. We have not other representation of the pilgrimage, but we have the pilgrim, and follow him step by step, from the City of Destruction up to the celestial abode."

The discourses of this interesting preacher were often remarkable for their graphic character; not only for the occasional introduction of pleasing imagery, but for the attention paid to pictorial effect in the mapping out of the whole sermon. There is great beauty in the following plan, which we do not remember ever to have seen in print. Mr. Jay was discoursing on the lament of Jacob over the supposed death of his beloved Joseph, when he received his son's coat dipped in blood, and said, "It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him. Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces."

"Here," said the preacher, "we see: —

1. An old sufferer with his wounds bleeding afresh.

2. Folly smarting under its own rod.

"He should not have provided that coat of many colors, which excited the envy of his other sons."

3. Grief drawing conclusions in the dark.

"Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces."

It is justly said of Mr. Jay by his biographers that "He was a master of the true pathetic. His voice gave him great advantage here. His very intonations touched and opened the springs of feeling. When the people were in a prepared state of mind, be has sometimes melted them by his manner of repeating an interjection or a single word." We remember witnessing his power in this respect in a remarkable manner when described the brethren of Joseph sitting down to their meal after they had cast him into the pit. He uttered, but in little more than a whisper, the word *wretches*! in such a manner as most deeply to move the whole congregation. He was preaching for the Wesleyan Missionary Society, in Great Queen Street Chapel, London, and his text was, "We are verity guilty concerning our brother."

This faithful preacher had an ardent love not only for his work, but for the duty of preparation, that preparation, as to the number of sermons he planned out, being considerably beyond his actual requirement. His excellent son-in-law, Mr. Bolton, mentioned to us that he had known him, during a single morning, form the scheme of as many as sixteen sermons, all of which he could, probably, have preached with very little additional labour. There is literal truth in the statement of his biographers that, "at home and abroad, when travelling or recreating himself at some watering place, he was in one sense always sermonizing. He rarely returned to his own home, after a retreat for a while to the coast, without bringing back with him some plans of sermons, or texts that had struck him in his reading or meditations during his season of innocent relaxation from pastoral duties. To be a useful preacher was his aim; and it was thus by constant and unwearied efforts that he became one."

It is always instructive to trace the intellectual history of those who have risen to eminence as the world's rulers, and that interest is heightened when we have for our subject those who by their instrumentality, as the preachers of the gospel, "have turned many to righteousness," and of whom it is promised that "they shall shine as the stars for ever and ever. He was a conscientious student; entering his study every morning at five, devoting his chief attention to the Word of God, and diligently reading the various authors who could assist him to understand and explain it. He was daily making additions to his mental trea-

sures, such as would best fit him to bring forth "things new and old," and make him a workman not needing to be ashamed." Especially in his after lifetime it is related that "all his reading, his reflections, and his writing centered in that object (pulpit work). He studied the best models of preaching and learned French, chiefly to lead Bossuet, Bordaloue, Massilon, and Saurin, in their own tongue."

"And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out and set in order many proverbs. The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words; and that which was written was upright, even words of truth. The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the master of assemblies which are given from one shepherd."

—*The Evangelical Pulpit*
1859

ROBERT FLOCKHART
THE STREET PREACHER

Street preaching is not now the reproach of men. It is the ambition of the good, and the attraction of the outcast. There was a time when to stand at the corner of a lane, or in an open square, was regarded with coldness and with scorn. Priests and Levites passed by on the other side, and the wicked subjected the zealous preacher to reproach, insult, and cruelty. Much, however, is due to the earnest, untiring, and godly men in humble life that removed the reproach from this means of usefulness by their self-denying and philanthropic labors. They prepared the way for ministers of highest reputation, who now in all large towns rejoice in the opportunity to go out into the streets and lanes to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. It is due, therefore, to the pioneers of this good work in our time to preserve the records of their lives and labors as an example to future generations. It will repay us to read the story of their experience. Their character, principles, motives, toils, and triumphs indicate what they were by nature and by grace, and may serve to cheer some to become and do what they became and did by the blessing of God.

The case we select for memorial is one of deepest interest. He has told the tale of his life in his own words. We wish that we could transfer to these pages his thrilling narrative entirely, but our readers may peruse that for themselves. We shall, however, leave him to speak as fully as our space will allow, using our own words occasionally to condense and connect the narrative.

Robert Flockhart was born at Dalnottar, near Glasgow, on the fourth of February 1778. After five years at school, he was apprenticed to nail making for seven years. He saw no religion at home or in the neighborhood, and grew up a wild, restless youth. In 1797 he enlisted in the eighty-first regiment, and was sent to Guernsey. The army was then in a most immoral condition. The men were drunken, blasphemous, and licentious. Thefts were common. Vice was gross. Insubordination was

frequent, and punishment severe. "*It was no uncommon thing to see ten or twelve men flogged before breakfast*." Robert Flockhart entered into all the sin that depraved the soldier.

"*I ran greedily*," he says, "*in the practice and commission of every sin that my wicked heart could devise*. The Sabbath used to be the day on which I committed most evil, and I gloried in my sin with my ungodly companions. … I believe that there is not a sin in the Bible I have not been actually guilty of, except murder. … You see from the conduct of soldiers in our cities, and even when they are at home, that they are chiefly guilty of three heinous sins—the first, drunkenness; the second, swearing; and the third, the worst of all the three, the defiling of both soul and body. All other sins are without the body, but uncleanness is against the body. This is generally their conduct wherever they go. But you see nothing at home like what you see abroad. Soldiers are restrained here by the presence of their friends and those who know them, as well as by the police. But abroad all restraint is entirely cast off. I feel greatly ashamed when I remember that I myself am the very man that was guilty of the three heinous sins just mentioned, and that I went to such a length as to cast off all shame. I was worse than a beast. I would be ashamed to speak of those things I did in secret, particularly when in the Cape of Good Hope and in the East Indies. The language of my heart was that of the first verse of the fourteenth Psalm, '*The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God*.' I wonder often at the long-suffering and patience of God with me above many. Surely there never was a greater sinner than I have been. I have read John Bunyan's life, but he was nothing to me. … I had the worst men in the company that I belonged to for associates. We used to try who would be foremost in intemperance, filthy conversation, and every evil practice; and we gloried in it."

Notwithstanding the wickedness of his life, Flockhart was never flogged. His conduct was concealed from his superiors, and he was made corporal. His advancement, however, was not to his real advantage. It gave him more opportunities, and he was soon reduced to the ranks for drunkenness.

"How mysterious," he says, "the means used by the Lord to bring sinners from their evil ways! This was strikingly manifested in my case, as will appear from what I am going to relate. One day I had been the worse for drink, and, as was my custom, lay down in my bed to sleep off its effects. I was in this condition when the orderly sergeant of the

company awoke me, to go and show the officer regimental orders. I told him I was not orderly. He insisted, however, that I should go and do what he desired me immediately. I said I would do no such thing. He then told me if I did not do as he desired he would put me in the guardhouse. I replied, 'If you do I will report you to the officer.' I went accordingly; but while on the way he sent an active sergeant after me to detain me until he got a corporal and file of the guard to apprehend me, which they did, and brought me a prisoner to the guard-house. This was the first step God, in his mysterious providence, employed to apprehend me in my mad career. It certainly was my duty to obey the sergeant's orders; but being the worse for drink, and suddenly awakened out of sleep, I refused. In consequence of this I was ordered to be tried by a court-martial for disobedience and insolence to my superior officer. This was the first time I was in prison, and I remained in it three days. During this period I employed myself, along with the other prisoners, in trying myself by the articles of war. I had serious thoughts about the result, and really expected to be flogged. In due time my case came on. I was tried, and sentenced to be reduced from a corporal to a private, and to receive one hundred and fifty lashes. Lieutenant-Colonel Dalrymple, who commanded the regiment, remitted the corporal punishment. Drum major M'Kee cut the stripes off my arm before all the regiment. I was glad, no doubt, to escape the flogging, but reducing me to the rank of a private humbled my proud spirit. I took it very sore to heart, but it produced no sanctifying effect on me at the time, and I still went on in my old ways. A number of my old companions and I met in the barracks. It seems I was foremost in wickedness, as I employed my time in speaking abominable language till they were all like to fall down with laughing. It is a most mysterious circumstance that I should be drawn out from the entire company, while the vent of my heart was to commit sin."

After spending six years in India in a course of iniquity it pleased God to afflict him; but he returned to his evil ways when he recovered. 'My wickedness,' he says, 'reached up to the heavens,' and had its 'foundation as deep as hell.' The number of my sins was 'as the sand of the sea.'" Being again in the hospital, and having a taste for reading, "Alleine's Alarm" came into his hands. Its solemn appeals impressed him, and considerably influenced his conduct. He gave up swearing, forsook the company of the profane, sought religious books and the company of a pious sergeant, who kept up family worship. The sergeant was the means

of Flockhart's conversion. The sinner was led to the Saviour, and, amid the jeers and laughter of the patients in the hospital, he went into an empty ward to pray. He says of this: "I began now to go to an empty ward to confess my sins before God, and to review my past life. At such times when the patients saw me, they all burst into such fits of laughter as almost cracked their jaws. I knew the patients that laughed at me, and remarked that not one of them came out of the hospital alive."

What a solemn consideration is this regarding these scoffers! What a testimony to the truth of the word of God! They who despised the mercy of God and ridiculed the anxious soul seeking that mercy were soon before their Judge. "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish."

Flockhart was deeply concerned for his salvation, and attended the meetings held by the pious sergeant. "Sometimes," he says, "my heart would be so overcast with the love of Christ that I would return home quite happy. I thought all the angels of God surrounded me rejoicing, (Luke 15) and that the Spirit was applying the word of Christ to wash away my sins, putting these sins at the same time upon my head, and I felt such a weight upon me that I was hardly able to look up." He now passed through great agonies of conviction. He was sorely tried by temptation. He felt the terrors of the law. He feared the doom due to sin. "I was led," he remarks, "by the Spirit, with a broken spirit and a bleeding soul to the 'fountain opened,' pleading for mercy through the blood of the Lamb, to get my wounded spirit healed, and my burdened soul freed from its load of guilt. Thus I continued for months. I took my Bible and went to the most sequestered spot I could find. Being ignorant of the Bible, and my mind in darkness, I did not know where I should begin, or what part of the word of God I should first read. I cannot describe the distressed state of my mind. I was in the horrible pit of nature, and in the miry clay of original and actual sin. As I was a patient in the hospital, I could spend two or three hours a day in private by myself and not be missed. I used to spend whole nights in reading and meditation, and in confessing my sins. Thus I continued persevering in the use of every means. I never ceased to pray night and day. Satan would often suggest to my mind that I would be in hell at night. I resisted him again in that temptation. I knew that he was telling lies. I found out that the Lord would not tell the devil that I would be there at twelve o'clock at night."

This conflict went on for some time; but as he recovered his bodily strength, he was less subject to those assaults of the wicked one. He gives the following account of his deliverance, and of his joy and peace in believing: "A Church had been formed in the regiment some time previously, and a few of the members used to come into the sergeant's room. There they were informed of the state of my mind, and of the temptations to which I had of late been subjected, and, gathering around me, told me to 'believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and I should be saved.' I tried all I could, but believe I could not. It was as impossible for me to believe at that time as it would have been for me to lift Edinburgh Castle and cast it into the sea. I required to be convinced of the sin of unbelief. 'And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment; of sin because they believe not on me.' What they said to me made me worse, if worse could be. While I remained in a state of unbelief, I seemed to be tried in the balances of the sanctuary and found wanting. I had no faith. I was like a man in hell. While in this condition I went away to my own ward, and cried for mercy through the blood of the Lamb. I spent the whole night in this way. "I still persevered in reading the Bible, in confessing my sins, and in praying to God. I was like Noah's dove, I could 'find no rest for the sole of my foot;' or like the man-slayer fleeing to the city of refuge, with the avenger of blood at his heels; or like Lot among the Sodomites, when he went out to persuade his sons-in-law to flee from the guilty city, or rather, when he went out to expostulate with his abandoned and accursed fellow-citizens, when they had encompassed his dwelling. I was surrounded with the blackguards of hell, when 'the Lord put forth his hand and pulled me in.' On one occasion the sergeant came to me at a critical moment, and asked me to accompany him to a quiet place to sing a hymn, and to engage in prayer. We sang the fourth and fifth verses of the 32d Psalm, of Watts' collection:

"While I my inward guilt suppressed,
No quiet could I find;
Thy wrath lay burning in my breast,
And racked my tortured mind.
"Then I confessed my troubled thoughts,
My secret sins recalled,
Thy pardoning grace forgave my faults,
Thy grace my pardon sealed.

"While singing the last verse, I said in my heart, 'I have done all this; I have confessed my sins.' Then a thought came into my mind, quick as lightning. 'I must let all my doings fall to the ground.' When I was enabled to do that I felt that I deserved nothing but hell, and fully expected that it would be my portion. Then the Lord the Spirit stretched out his hand and brought me in by Christ the door. Of his own sovereign pleasure he did this. I was expecting hell, and he gave me heaven in my soul. Surprising mercy! What a translation from darkness to light, from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of God's dear Son! My guilt removed and my pardon sealed, peace flowed like a river into my soul. 'Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.' My 'faith came by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.' It did not come from man, nor from myself, but from God. It was God's gift, and Christ was the author of it. This blessed truth suggests to my mind that passage in the Corinthians, 'For God, who commandeth the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' All this was fulfilled in my experience at that time. I felt that light, and that life, and that joy coming into my heart; not into my head, but into my heart. My heart was warmed with his love shed abroad in it by the Holy Ghost given unto me, and I rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory. I now saw the Bible to be a new book, and was able in some measure to enter into the spirit of the apostle where he says, 'And hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life!'"

Having found the Saviour, he became a zealous and consistent disciple. He formed a new purpose of life, which for fifty years afterward he pursued with unquenchable ardor. "My constant prayer at times was, 'O Lord, if it be thy pleasure, spare me as long in thy service as I have been in Satan's, and make me as zealous in saving souls and in converting sinners by my good example, as I once was in destroying souls and ruining my fellow-men by my bad example.'" He was greatly benefited at this time by the Rev. Mr. Chamberlain, one of Dr. Carey's fellow-laborers. "He possessed," says Flockhart, "a true missionary spirit. He infected me, and I have since endeavored through God's grace to infect others. I got a slip from this geranium, and many a one, through God's blessing, has got a slip from me."

After remaining two full years in the hospital, where he read the Bible to the other patients, and prayed with them, he wished to join the fellowship of the Christian Church. The members of the Church in the regiment were Baptists, and wished him to be baptized. He was partly prejudiced against this, but overcame his scruples and gave his name as a candidate. The ceremony took place on the twenty-sixth of August 1810, at Calcutta, where his regiment then was. Mr. Ward, of Serampore, preached and administered the sacraments of baptism to the candidates, and of the Lord's supper to the members.

"After making a public profession of religion," he says, "I enjoyed sweet fellowship with the brethren in the regiment. Our love to one another resembled that of the Christian Church after the day of Pentecost. I used to experience great delight in meeting with two or three of the Christian brethren for pray and praise behind a battery. Some of the ungodly soldiers found out our place of meeting, and sent in showers of stones among us; but in place of terrifying us, it only made us more earnest to come back, and the fire of grace and love burn more bright and warm."

Robert was in the expedition sent to the Isle of France. During the engagement with the French, he says, "My mind was in a praying frame. I expected every moment would be my last. I never lived nearer the Lord than at that time. Lifting up my voice I sang the following stanza:

"'Plagues and death around me fly,
Till he bid I cannot die;
Not a single shot can hit,
Till the love of God sees fit.'
"This verse I also repeated:
"'When I tread the verge of Jordan,
Bid my anxious fears subside;
Death of death, and hell's destruction,
Land me safe on Canaan's side.
Songs of praises
I will ever give to thee.'"

When he returned to England, he says, "I chose for my company the people of God, and used to attend the public ordinances of religion, as a means of keeping the life of grace in my soul, which I felt always needed to be fed by Christ, in the use of his institutes."

When billeted in the Isle of Wight, in a disreputable house, he warned the inmates to flee from the wrath to come. Of course he could not stay there, and sought another place. When the landlord remonstrated, Robert had an answer ready: "I am too long here; I could not sleep on the road to hell."

In Ireland he was as faithful, reading the Bible, and praying with the Roman Catholics in whose houses he was quartered. "I used all means," he said, "that I thought were calculated to lead them the right way, knowing the value of their souls, and that they were on the brink of a dreadful eternity."

On reaching Glasgow, Flockhart got leave to visit his parents, then resident at Old Kilpatrick. His first act after the salutation of these so dear to him was to request them to join in thanksgiving to God for his mercy in sparing him to meet with them, and for bringing him home a renewed man.

The ungodliness of his fellow-soldiers moved his soul, and led him to desire their salvation. One morning he seemed to hear the voice of God, saying, "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." He felt as commanded to preach the Gospel. "I know few will believe it," he records, "but what I have to write is, that unless I had got the authority, I never could have been able to stand all the persecutions from men, and rage from devils, and discouragement from the people of God. … I would to God that every minister had the same assurance that he was sent by the Lord to preach the Gospel, as had that poor, unworthy, ignorant, and unlearned old veteran, Robert Flockhart. I do not say that this is God's general way to call such men as I am, but he taught me experimentally as he taught John Bunyan. God is not confined to fixed methods; sometimes to accomplish his purpose he goes out of his usual way. When I mounted guard, I reproved sin, and preached Christ and salvation from sin through his blood."

He now commenced his open-air preaching, which he continued throughout many years afterward. He was still in the regiment. The soldiers were his first auditors. His account of his early experiences in Edinburgh Castle will be perused with deepest interest. It reads like a romance.

"Some mornings," he says, "the soldiers used to be there (the barrack square) an hour before the parade began, and they met in groups of about a dozen in different places, talking about the battles they had

fought and the victories they had won. I was there as soon as they were, and I opened my mouth, and lifted up my voice like a trumpet, and showed them their sins. 'Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins.' (Isaiah 58:1) I did that faithfully and fearlessly, and shut up all their refuges but one, and that was Jesus, who is a 'hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest.' The groups broke up, and came round about me, and heard me, and I made the square ring. One morning, to my astonishment, the adjutant ordered me immediately to be confined in the black hole, which is just above the arch as you enter the castle. There is an iron plate now, to prevent the prisoners looking out, but there was none then. I could look through, and preach, and pray, and sing, and I gathered a great congregation below, who looked at me with astonishment. The commanding officer was coming by, and heard me, and ordered me immediately to be released. Next morning I was earlier in the barrack square, and repeated preaching, and had a great congregation, and they listened with greater attention. … The adjutant, Gunn, on my preaching the second time, sent me away to the black hole again. The men that used to persecute me, when they saw me put in the second time, said, 'We will not persecute Robert any more, we see the root of the matter is in him.' I was in the black hole on a Sabbath day, and there were a number of thoughtless young men and young women that came into the Castle to hear the Perth band play. I could see them through the stanchions of my window. My heart was in right tune, and I began to sing a sweet, melodious hymn or psalm, that arrested their attention and astonished them. After I had done singing I prayed a few words, telling the Lord their sin in breaking the Sabbath day, by coming to hear carnal music on carnal instruments. As far as I recollect, I prayed that the Lord might captivate their minds with heavenly music. Then I preached to them, and did not spare them. I studied to open their wounds before I applied the plaster.

"The next day I was still in the same place, when the commanding officer, Major Rose, came into the Castle, and the Lord gave me favor in his eyes. The parade fell in, and Major Rose ordered me to be released, and brought me before the regiment and the adjutant, and said to me, 'Robert, what is the reason you have been twice in the black hole?' I replied, 'Please your honor, before the parade drum-beat, the men of the regiment met in troops, and were telling the wars they were

at, and the battles they had fought, and the victories they had won. I could have done the same, but I had better news to tell them. If they took liberty to tell news about the world and the wars, will you not give me liberty to tell good news from heaven?' 'Yes, Robert, you have my liberty.' This was before the adjutant and the regiment. I asked the commanding officer if he would allow me to go through the barracks, to take the Bible with me, to read the Scriptures and to pray. He said, 'Robert, you have my liberty when duty does not interfere.'"

Thus the devoted soldier of Christ endured hardness, and unfurled the standard of the cross. Sometimes he was struck, sometimes insulted; but he never ceased to speak for Christ, and to reprove sin.

A new opposition now met him. The Rev. Christopher Anderson, a venerated and useful man, and the Pastor, whom Robert attended, disapproved of his preaching without the Church's leave. A difference arose, and the soldier was forbidden to come to the Lord's table. But rather than discontinue his work, he left the Baptist Church, and after a little wandering, settled finally under the ministry of the Rev. Dr. Gordon, of the High Church, by whom he was kindly received.

The Grassmarket of Edinburgh, where the martyrs had been put to death, was at that time a very wicked place, and there the devoted Flockhart began to preach, and to warn the people to flee from the wrath to come. He was warm and earnest. While thus engaged, Dr. Stuart, a medical gentleman, well known for his Christian character, went up to him and examined his pulse. He urged Robert to go to the country for a few days, which was assented to; but what was the surprise of the street preacher when he found himself in Morningside Lunatic Asylum!

"As soon as I got in, the governor, who was an Englishman, and had charge of the whole place, shaved my head and put a blister on it. I said to myself, 'They have served me worse than they did Samson; they did not blister his head.' I bore it patiently and submissively; and I had the same daftness (insanity) when I preached in the streets of Edinburgh, on the day of the National Fast, April 25th, 1854, forty-one years after, as I had then. This happened in 1813, and it was a new thing for a man like me to preach in the street."

When the governor of the Asylum swore at him, Robert began to preach. Being allowed to walk in the garden, he deserted, but was recovered. His Bible was taken from him, but Robert refused his food until it was restored. To keep him from reading it, the governor ordered

his windows to be closed. The supposed lunatic, however, was not thus to be confined. In the nighttime he broke the window shutters, passed his clothes through the close stanchions, and let himself through. Then by tying the sheets together, and to the bar, he went down like a sailor on a rope."

After visiting his wife, he went by a circuitous route to his father's, at Old Kilpatrick. On his return he was again confined, but after six months he was released. During his confinement, he was pensioned for life with fifteen pence a day, a sum that sustained him for forty-five years thereafter.

When Robert Flockhart got home he gave himself anew to the Lord and to the work of preaching. During the day, for twenty-five years, he taught a school with much success. The advantage he had reaped from committing passages of Scripture to memory when at school himself, which, though forgotten for twenty years, yet came home with power to his soul when he was awakened, induced him to make this a special part of his instruction.

Wishing for more extended usefulness, he got admission to the hospital, which he continued to visit for twenty years. The patients hailed his visits, and were much benefited by his scriptural counsels and earnest prayers. Here he had the opposition of godless doctors and students, but the veteran was too inured to battle to desist from his labor of love.

Again he says, "I went to the Lock Hospital of my own accord, out of love to Christ, and to save souls. Having myself first been brought to a knowledge of the truth in a hospital, I thought it my imperative duty to strive to do for others in my own country what God had done for me in a foreign land." … "I used to visit the Canongate Jail, at times, for Mr. Porteous; likewise Bridewell on the Sabbath-day, as well as the Trade's Maiden Hospital, and several other public institutions."

Robert commenced preaching in the streets of Edinburgh very soon after his dismissal from the army. He thus writes of it: "Whenever I saw a man committing sin I reproved him, and then a multitude would gather round me. I would then begin to speak to them from a text of Scripture, and would continue to speak so long as there was any one to hear. Then the policeman would lay hold upon me, and drag me off to the police office, and my wife would get me out, and I would begin to preach again as if nothing had happened. … I was four times in the

police office in the West Port for preaching the Gospel, once in Hope Park, then again for preaching in the Castlehill and High Street. Altogether I was nine or ten times in prison for preaching the Gospel in Edinburgh. Captain Brown, the superintendent of police, had been an officer in the 79th Regiment. It was said that his lady was an Irish woman, and she prevailed on her husband to have chiefly Irish policemen, who were very severe upon me, as they could not bear my preaching, which was not intended to please men. I remembered that the Lord commanded Jonah to 'preach the preaching' that he 'bid' him, and I knew if I preached another 'preaching' I was not the Lord's servant. One day when I was in prison for preaching the Gospel, Captain Brown came in and said, 'Where is that preacher?' I immediately answered, 'Here.' 'Stand up,' said he, 'that I may hear you preach.' I obeyed his command, and what I said to him on the occasion made him a little like Felix. 'O,' said he, 'I see you can preach; come down.' I always saw it to be my duty to preach to the policemen, in whatever police office I might be. I said to myself, these men cannot get to church, and who knows but the Lord has sent me to preach to them? and I will preach to them. I never saw the police office yet where the inmates were anxious to keep me a prisoner; they were always too glad to get me out."

"I may remark," he says in another place, "that my persecutions and sufferings from the magistrates and policemen of Edinburgh, while I preached in the street, would be deemed incredible, were I fully to relate them. The latter being mostly Irishmen and Roman Catholics, did not sympathize with me. In all my preaching I considered it an important part of my duty to expose error and heresy, as well as to proclaim 'the truth as it is in Jesus.' And this procedure on my part raised me up many enemies and opponents. Papists, Unitarians, Morrisonians, and such like, were my bitter gainsayers. The theories of their leading men I attacked and refuted from the Scriptures. I spared none that held opinions that robbed God of his glory, and Christ of the dignity of his person and the efficacy of his work. The adversaries of the truth tried every means they could think of to deter me from performing the work God had given me to do, but in vain. Their opposition only made me bolder in the cause of my blessed Master. I had 'counted the cost,' and was determined to 'follow' him through 'evil' as well as through 'good report.' I was stoned, imprisoned, and otherwise maltreated, but God stood near and protected me. With Paul, who said

that he had fought with beasts at Ephesus, I might well say that I had fought with beasts in the streets of Edinburgh. Compassion to the souls of men drove me to the streets and lanes of my native city, to plead with sinners and persuade them to come to Jesus. The love of Christ constrained me to face all opposition in the performance of this great and glorious work. I was grieved to see multitudes thronging the 'broad road' that leads to destruction, while I myself was in the enjoyment of a good hope through grace. In my preaching I dwelt much upon death and its consequences, the everlasting punishment that awaited ungodly and impenitent sinners, and the everlasting weight of glory that was laid up for the righteous."

In the streets of Edinburgh Robert Flockhart preached every evening, in all weathers, and amid many persecutions, for forty-three years. On weeknights he occupied a post at St. Giles's Church, and on Sabbath evenings in front of the theater. Often has the writer, in his college life, listened to the "old man eloquent," crying aloud to men to repent and believe the Gospel. "He began," says Dr. Guthrie, "by singing a few verses of a psalm; this had the effect of arresting attention, and at length of gathering an audience. With the crowd before him, composed chiefly of outcasts, I have occasionally mingled. It was a sight to move any one, to see the gray, old, shattered man pouring forth his soul in prayer to God, or making appeals to the people of great power and tenderness. The age that cools men's passions had not cooled his zeal; his spirit rose above the weakness of his worn-out frame; and when he was tottering on the grave, it might be said of him, in regard to his inner life, 'that his eye was not dim, neither was his natural strength abated.'"

His preaching had some fruit and induced many to esteem the devoted man. He was a great student of his Bible, and the writer has heard him make observations full of quaint wisdom and of holy unction. They were words not to be forgotten. We have seen him frequently among the students of divinity, attending the theological lectures of Dr. Chalmers and Dr. James Buchanan, and have heard him remark that he liked the objective truths, which pointed to a Saviour, and which Dr. Chalmers so much recommended to the students of his class.

In his old age (in his sixty-fifth year) he began his autobiography, which he did not live to finish. On his deathbed, he requested Dr. Guthrie to give it to the world. It is as touching a record of God's grace

as has ever been published, and it reveals an example of self-denial, zeal, and devotedness not often paralleled. Robert Flockhart was unwearied in well doing. We once asked him how he was able to preach every night. "Man," said he, "I have grand pipes."

Palsy overtook him while abounding in labors. "I feel," said he, "my wings are clipped now. I'm like a bird with a stone tied to its leg: it tries to get up, but cannot rise. The time's coming, though, when I'll be relieved o' this heavy load. Then I'll clap my glad wings and flee away. I'll be young again when I reach that happy home. How I'll make the arches o' heaven ring with loud hallelujahs to God and the Lamb forever! O what a glorious body 'the celestial body' will be! No blear-eyed Leahs nor limpin' Jacobs up yonder!"

His sunny spirit was never shadowed. He was always glad in the Lord, and by constant preaching of the "glad tidings of great joy," he sought to make others happy also. He was unceasing in prayer. Few friends parted from him without prayer. In his latter days he seemed to be always praying. Praise was his special delight, and he never omitted that blessed exercise whether in the street or in family worship.

Robert Flockhart had his eccentricities and imprudence, but he had a single purpose, to preach Christ; he had the best of motives, love to the Lord Jesus. With unflinching constancy and rare consistency he fulfilled his work, and finished his course with joy in the fall of 1857. The soldiers of the various recruiting parties in the city bore him to his grave, and two hundred and fifty citizens, with several ministers of various denominations, accompanied his remains to the Grange Cemetery. The streets were lined with many who had heard his living voice, and who mourned because they could hear that voice no more.

The Rev. James Robertson, of Newington, Edinburgh, has given in an appendix to the autobiography some of his reminiscences of Robert Flockhart. We transfer a few of them to illustrate the character of our hero of the street. Of the Bible he would, say, "I have just been sitting under its shadow with great delight, and finding its fruit sweet to my taste. There are grand sweet apples on that tree. There's the apple of justification: 'justified freely by his grace.' There's the apple of sanctification: 'we are partakers of his holiness.' There's the apple of adoption: 'now we are the sons of God.' And best of all, there's the golden apple of glorification: we'll get that by and by; but 'it doth not yet appear what we shall be!' I mind when I've been in tropical countries,

I've seen trees whose fruit seemed as if it wanted to drop into your mouth, it was so rich and ripe. And doesn't the Lord say to us, when we come to this blessed book now, 'Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it?"'

Mr. Robertson once overheard him praying in his own room. He was talking with God as a man does with his friend. "Lord, dinna forsake Edinburgh! dinna forsake Edinburgh! Why should our preaching here be so powerless? Consciences are not pricked, hearts are not broken, souls are not saved!" He remarked to his friend after recognition, "You know 'we must give ourselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the word.' Prayer is one half of our work, the first half, and the best half too. O what poor weak things we should be if we were not made 'mighty through God!"'

Of his wife he said, "I had one of the best of wives. We were just like two ponies in a chariot; we pulled so well together. We began our acquaintance with prayer, and we continued with one accord in prayer and supplication for nine and twenty years. When we first met, and I told her my errand, 'Well,' she says, 'my wish has been, if I did not get a praying man, never to get any.' And my answer was, 'The thing is surely of the Lord; let us acknowledge him in prayer together before we go further.' A few days after somebody said to her, 'You're such a fool to take a soldier. So she sent me word that she had changed her mind. Shortly after that I went to see her, and said, 'What ails you now, Annie?' She made several excuses, and I only said, 'Then I'll have to go home and pray for you.' The next night she sent me word that 'all was right again.' So I got her."

His sayings were full of felicitous wisdom. While preaching on the spirituality of the law, and that the wrath of God would come upon the guilty, some passers-by came and listened for a while, and then went away. But he lifted his voice and cried out after them, "Ye're not fond, I see, of the sparks fleeing about your ears. I doubt ye may be like the dog in the smith's shop when the red hot iron is on the anvil; just when the hammer is coming down, the dog, poor beast, runs in below the bench for fear. And is that the way with you?"

Speaking of the law and gospel, he remarked, "You never saw a woman sewing without a needle. She would come but poor speed if she only sewed with the thread. So, I think, when we're dealing with sinners, we must always put in the needle of the law first; for the fact is,

they're sleeping sound, and they need to be wakened up with something sharp. But when we've got the needle of the law fairly in, we may draw as long a thread as you like o' Gospel consolation after it."

The Rev. Dr. Guthrie visited the veteran on his deathbed at his request. "On entering his apartment," he says, "I was much struck by his aspect. Propped up for easier breathing, his head lay quietly on a snow-white pillow; and although the film of death was in his eye, and the features were sharp and pinched, his countenance was, as it were, radiant. I have seen many die, but none whose face wore an air so heavenly. It looked as if light was streaming down from those gates of glory, that angel hands were rolling open to admit his departing spirit.

"They told him that I had arrived. Making an effort, and stretching out his hand, which was burning hot—by this time he was passing fast to eternity—he said in a low whisper, and in his own kind and homely way, 'O, man, I'm glad to see you.' Perhaps I should have congratulated him, as one who had been a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and had through grace fought the battle well, that his fight was so nearly done, the crown so nearly won. But, having a great regard for him, and great admiration of his large and loving heart, of the self-denying devotedness, and of the true Christian heroism with which he served one common Master, I could not help thinking more of our loss than of his gain, and saying I was sorry to see him laid so low. It would be difficult to convey to the reader any adequate idea of the delight expressed in the look and tone with which he quickly replied, 'I'm going home, I'm going home.' The scene was worth a thousand sermons, and would have given birth in the coldest worldling to the wish, 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.' Robert then in trembling tones committed the manuscript of his life to the doctor's care, and soon fell asleep.

"Robert Flockhart," says Dr. Guthrie, "had been a great sinner, and He who in other days had changed the bitterest persecutor of the Church into its noblest preacher, had changed him into a great saint. He had sinned much, had been forgiven much, and so he loved much. He had often exposed himself to disgrace, danger, and death itself in Satan's service; and, if there had been need for it, I believe there was no man in Edinburgh who would have gone to the stake or scaffold for Jesus Christ with a firmer step, or a nobler bearing, than this brave old soldier of the cross. He united the most ardent piety and untiring zeal

to indomitable courage, and had no idea of flinching, whether he was called to fight the French at Port Louis, or for Christ and God's truth, face ribald crowds in the High Street or West Port of Edinburgh.

"As to his bodily appearance, his presence, like that of Paul, might be called 'contemptible.' He was a man of diminutive stature, he had a shuffling gait, he was ill hung in the limbs, and had a curious cast of the eye. On the other hand, his face, reflecting like a mirror the emotion of the inner man, and every feeling which swept over his soul, was full of expression. He abounded in the gesticulations of a natural oratory; and, being endued with keen sensibility, and easily affected himself, he had therefore the power of moving others."

He was a burning and shining light. He was a brave and faithful soldier of the cross. He was faithful unto death, and has now received the crown of life.

"My race is run, my warfare's o'er,
The solemn hour is nigh;
When, offered up to God, my soul
Shall wing its flight on high.
"With heavenly weapons I have fought
The battle of the Lord!
Finished my course and kept the faith,
Depending on His word.
"Henceforth there is laid up for me
A crown which cannot fade;
The righteous Judge at that great day
Shall place it on my head."

—*Lives Made Sublime*
Carlton & Porter, New York
N.D.

THE EVANGELICAL PREACHER—SAURIN

In the history of our continental Protestant preachers, there is a name which holds a place as honored as that of the Bourdalous, the Bossuets, and the Massilons, whose eloquence used to charm the Monarch of France, and his courtiers, in the magnificent chapel of Versailles. Louis the Fourteenth admired the eloquence of his preachers, just as Herod "heard John gladly," and, like him, "did many things" while under the influence of the preacher's stirring appeals; but, like the Tetrarch, whom he too much resembled, he was a persecutor of the saints, and "added this also" to his other crimes, that he cast them into prison. The royal auditor, who said, "Other preachers send me away admiring their eloquence, but Father Massilon dismissed me dissatisfied with myself," caused the revocation of the tolerant edict of Nantes, and thus banished many of his best subjects from his kingdom. Among, these fugitives was an eminent lawyer of Nismes, who fled with his family to Geneva, where he settled, and carefully trained up his four sons in learning and eloquence, for which they were so distinguished, that this great gift was said to be hereditary in the Saurin family. One of these sons James Saurin, was chosen of God to dedicate his distinguished talents to the sacred cause for which his family suffered expatriation, and with a success which places his name among those whom the church will ever delight to honor.

James Saurin was born at Nismes, in 1677, and though, after his exile with his father in Geneva, he had made considerable progress in learning, he abandoned his studies for a time to follow the military profession. In 1694, when he was but seventeen years old, he made a campaign as a cadet in Lord Galloway's company, and in the next year obtained a pair of colors from his commander; but on the restoration of peace between France and Savoy, he laid aside his carnal weapons, and prepared to enter that "*Sacramental host of God's elect," in* which he was to occupy the honourable post of a standard bearer.

When, at the age of nineteen, he resolved to devote his talents to the work of the Christian ministry, be found himself in circumstances most favorable for the prosecution of his theological studies, as Geneva was at that time the home of Francis Turretin, Tronchin, Pietet, Chouet, and other learned men, with whom that sanctuary of Protestantism was then crowded, many of them being refugees, driven in by storms of persecution in other lands. These men were the great lights of the age in which they lived; and while many for a reason rejoiced in the light which they gave out, the writings which they left after their decease proved treasures of sacred learning to their successors, who were our forefathers in the church. These great men lived after the stormy period of the Reformation had passed away, and their function in the history of the Reformed Church was to build it up by the accumulated stores of sacred learning which they were able to collect and set in order; and although since their day valuable additions have been made to theological literature, no one who is read in the history of the church will fail to respect the great and good men by whom Geneva was crowded in the period when James Saurin was pursuing his studies with a view to the Christian ministry.

At the age of twenty-three he visited England, where he began his labors as a preacher of the gospel among his exiled countrymen in London, who soon recognized his excellence, and greatly admired his interesting manner of proclaiming to them the truths of the gospel, his great desire being not to please men, but to save himself and them that heard him.

After remaining five years in England he went with his wife, an English lady, to Holland, which was to become the scene of his faithful ministrations for the rest of his life, a period of twenty-five years. Here his preaching was received with universal applause; but the pastoral offices being full, and having no immediate prospect of a settlement, he was about returning to England, when he was induced to fix his abode at the Hague. The Hague at that time was described as "the finest village in Europe, the residence of the States General, of ambassadors, and envoys from other courts, and of a great number of nobility and gentry, and French refugees." The Hague was then, as it is now, the residence of the court of Holland, and the chapel of the palace having been given to the French refugees for a place of worship, Saurin accepted the appointment of one of the pastors of the French Church.

This edifice being soon found too small for the congregation, was considerably enlarged, and became for a quarter of a century the consecrated scene of that sacred eloquence of which Saurin was now the acknowledged master.

We now behold him a devoted minister of Jesus Christ, distinguished by his love to God and the souls of men. In his manner grave, and yet affable; in his dress "at an equal distance from rusticity and foppery," while his voice was strong, clear and harmonious, and under admirable control. He enters the pulpit like a man who has his Lord's message to deliver, and has a deep feeling of its value and importance. The truth he has to proclaim is that for which his family has been expatriated, and for which his hearers also are exiles, and with that truth his mind is amply filled, and he knows that he is "set for the defence of the gospel." After the congregation has joined in the beautiful liturgy of the French Reformed Church, our preacher ascends the pulpit, and after a sublime prayer, uttered in a manner highly affecting begins his sermon in a low and modest tone, which is well heard by the audience, whose still and silent attention he never failed to receive. As he enters into the discussion of his subject, he addresses himself more to the understanding than to the emotions, and is plain, clear, and argumentative. At the close of each period he makes a slight pause, and observes the countenances of his hearers, to see whither they appear to be convinced by his reasonings; for though he well knows how to sway their passions, he would not mock their hunger and thirst by giving them the flowers of a vain eloquence to amuse their curiosity. His discourse, increases in interest as it proceeds, and now (to use the words of one who often heard him) it resembles a plentiful shower of dew, softly and imperceptibly insinuating itself into the minds of his numerous hearers, as the dew into the pores of plants, until the whole congregation is dissolved, and all are in tears. It will be remembered that this beautiful metaphor is employed by Moses, the man of God, when, directed by inspiration, he calls on the heavens to give ear, and on the earth to hear the words of his mouth. "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as showers upon the grass; because I will publish the name of the Lord."

There was another excellence in the preaching of Saurin that claims peculiar notice, and is urgently commended to all that seek to win

souls to Christ. We refer to his powerful appeals to the unconverted. In these appeals he sustained the dignity of his office as an ambassador from the blessed and only Potentate, the sonorous tones of his voice warning them against the dreadful consequences of their impenitence and unbelief; although oftener he was like a suppliant at the sinner's feet, beseeching him, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God. It would appear that on some occasions he did not manage his voice with sufficient skill, and exerted himself so much in his prayer, and the earlier parts of his discourse, that his voice grew feeble towards the end of his sermon. While we admire these proofs of his earnest zeal, we must look on them as faults to be avoided, as exceptions, and not characteristics. It was one wish of Augustine that he had seen Paul in the pulpit. Often have others felt that it would have been a sacred delight to hear Massilon in the gorgeous chapel of Versailles. If we could bring back one hour of the past, it, would be, perhaps, an hour in the palace chapel of The Hague, beneath the fervid eloquence of Saurin.

Considering the effects produced by the speeches of Lord Bolingbroke, deep regret is often felt that not one of his famous orations is extant. Happily we have no such regret to express in reference to the sermons of Saurin, and we have the pleasure to illustrate our notice of this great preacher from one or two of those twelve volumes of sermons by which "he, being dead, yet speaketh."

We refer, in the first instance, to the close of an admirable discourse on John 8:26—"I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him"—in which he, First, endeavors to give a distinct idea of liberty; Secondly, proves that liberty is incompatible with sin, and that a sinner is a real slave; and, Thirdly, leads his audience to the great Redeemer of sinners, and proves the proposition contained in the text.

We extract some of the appeals with which this admirable sermon concludes: "Is a sinner free in his conduct, he who finds in an inflexibility of his organs, in an impetuosity of his humors, in an irregular flow of his spirits, obstacles sufficient to prevent him from following the decisions of his understanding, the resolutions of his will, the dictates of his conscience? Is he free in his conduct, who, like the fabulous, or perhaps the real Medea, groans under the arbitrary dominion of his senses, sees and approves of the best things, follows the worst? Is he free

in his conduct whose eyes sparkle, whose mouth foams at the sight of a man who, perhaps, may have offended him, but for whose offence the God of love demands a pardon? Is he free in his conduct, who, whenever he sees an object fatal to his innocence, not only loses a power of resistance, and a liberty of flying, but even ceases to think, has hardly courage to call in the aid of his own feeble virtue, forgets his resolution, his prayers, and his vows, and plunges into disorders, at which his reason blushes, even while he immerses himself in them? O how necessary to us is the reaction of Jesus Christ! How fit to rectify the irregularities of our nature! How needful the succors of his Holy Spirit to lead us into the genius of religion.

"If the Son make you free, your shall be free indeed" in your conduct; because, by the irresistible aid of his Spirit, He will give you dominion over those senses to which you have been a slave; because his Almighty Spirit will calm your humors, cool your blood, moderate the impetuosity of your spirits, restore to your soul its primitive superiority, subject your constitution entirely to your reason, render reason, by a supernatural power, lord of the whole man, make you love to live by its dictates, and teach you to say, while you yield to its force, "Lord, thou art stronger than I am, and hast prevailed." (Jeremiah 20: 7,11,)

In his solemn discourse on Revelation 19:11 "The smoke of their torment ascended up for ever and ever"—after showing how be endeavored to represent eternity to himself, he says: "My God! one night passed in a burning fever, or in struggling with waves of the sea, between life and death, appears an immense time! It seems to the sufferer as if the sun had forgot its course, and as if all the laws of nature itself were subverted. What, then, will be the state of those miserable victims to divine displeasure, who, after they shall passed through the ages which we have been describing, will be obliged to make this reflection, 'All this is only an atom of our misery!' What will be despair, when they shall be forced to say to themselves `Again we must resolve through these enormous periods—again we must suffer a privation of celestial happiness! devouring flames again! crimes and blasphemies over and over again! Forever! Forever! Ah! My brethren my brethren! how severe is this word even in this life! How great is a misfortune when it is incapable of relief! How insupportable when we are obliged to add "forever" to it! These irons forever! these pains forever! this prison forever! this universal contempt forever! this domestic trouble forever! Poor

mortals how shortsighted are you to call sorrows eternal, which end with your lives! What! this life this life which passeth with the rapidity of a weaver's shuttle!—this life which vanisheth like a sleep! Is this what you call I "forever"? Ah! absorbing periods of eternity, accumulated myriads of ages! these if I may be allowed to speak so these will be the FOREVER of the damned!"

Who will be surprised that the celebrated Abaddie, when he first heard this preacher asked, "Is it an angel or a man who speaks?"

—*The Evangelical Preacher*
1859

John Owen and John Bunyan

There came to me, during my visit to England in 1924, many impressive and memorable experiences. One of them takes complete possession of my mind today. It was a tranquil Sunday evening in July. I had been invited to preach, morning and evening, in John Wesley's old pulpit in City Road. In my dread of arriving late, I had reached the spot with half an hour to spare. I turned into the dreamy and historic old cemetery immediately opposite the church—the cemetery of Bunhill Fields. I had previously paid several pilgrimages to its honoured tombs, so that, on this occasion, wishing to be quiet and unhurried, I resolved to concentrate on *two.* Having stood for a few moments in reverent silence, first beside the grave of *John Bunyan* and then beside that of *John Owen,* I found a seat from which I could restfully contemplate them *both.* In the morning I had stood beside George Fox's grave, a few yards distant in the one direction, and beside John Wesley's, a few yards distant in the other. And, the day before, I had been at Westminster Abbey. To one who has spent most of his days down under such experiences are almost overpowering. I sat there, that quiet summer's evening, glancing first at the tomb of Bunyan and then at that of Owen; and I understood, as I had never done before, the story of the dead Moabite who returned to life as soon as his body touched the bones of Elisha.

Again it is midsummer, and a Sunday. But I am in Australia, far from the tombs of the prophets. Yet, as I lounged this afternoon upon my sunlit lawn, a strange thing happened. I closed my eyes, and once more found myself on the seat in Bunhill Fields. And lo, as I sat there, John Bunyan came across the grass from the one direction and John Owen from the other, and they both sat down beside me. They knew each other well. In the old days one was a travelling tinker, whilst the other was vice-chancellor of Oxford University. But what of that? They were of one heart and one mind, these two. Owen would walk for miles in the rain to hear Bunyan preach in a barn, and more than once stood

for hours in the bleak wind of a winter's day listening to the words of grace that fell from the lips of the dreamer. The King rebuked him for his vulgar taste. 'I am astonished that you, the most scholarly man in the realm, should go to hear, a tinker prate,' said Charles. 'May it please your Majesty,' Owen replied, 'I, would cheerfully relinquish all my learning if I could acquire the tinker's ability for preaching!'

And it was as a result of Owen's earnest and persistent interposition that the hardships of Bunyan's imprisonment were mitigated and its period shortened.

And here they were, sitting together on the far end of my seat! With Bunyan's appearance we are all familiar. For that reason, it may be, it was the figure of Owen that enchained my attention. A gentle old man, of faultless attire and courtly bearing; a soft, melodious voice that gave a subtle impression of natural refinement and high culture; a face of singular gravity and sweetness, set off by a fine shock of long white hair—such was John Bunyan's companion. In his time he had been tall, stately, and majestic, but the years had reduced his stature, and much study had brought a stoop to the shoulders. His whole demeanour suggested a soul of rare delicacy and beauty. I fell in love with him at once.

It was Bunyan, however, who spoke first. 'It was on a summer's evening like this,' he said, that one of my darkest distresses fell upon me. I had been under a great gloom for some days, but that evening it waxed and waxed worse and all hope seemed gone I turned to the Scriptures, and, even as I opened the book, it was as if the clouds parted. And, as I was thus musing, I suddenly came upon the words: "*There is forgiveness with Thee that Thou mayest be feared.*" Those were good words to me that night. "*There is forgiveness!*" I said to myself. "*There is forgiveness!*" There is forgiveness with the Lord '*that He may be feared!*' That is, as I then understood it, that He may be loved and had in reverence. For the words seemed to me to show that the great God did set so high an esteem upon the love of His poor creatures that, rather than He would go without their love, He would pardon all their transgressions. Thus was my soul set at liberty.'

When I opened my eyes I found *Grace Abounding* lying on the lawn beside me and in it were these very words. But, with my eyes closed, they seemed to fall from the immortal dreamer's very lips. And, as he uttered them, the vice-chancellor sprang to his feet in delighted surprise, his fine eyes flashing with interest and sympathy.

'Why! He exclaimed, with remarkable animation and intense fervour, 'it was by means of those very words that *my* dark soul was illumined. "*There is forgiveness with Thee that Thou mayest be feared*"—that sentence was the key that opened to me the gate of life. I was in depths inexpressible, and saw no way or means of deliverance; but God, by those words, was graciously pleased to reveal Himself unto me as a God pardoning iniquity, and I learned to rest in His sovereign grace and plenteous redemption.'

When I opened my eyes, I found *The Works of John Owen* spread out on the other side of my chair; and there, in the sixth of these big black volumes, I found these very words! But, with my eyes closed, they seemed to fall from the lips of the great Puritan with that vigour, persuasiveness and charm that enabled him to sway the hearts and probe the consciences of his seventeenth-century congregations.

'There is forgiveness with Thee that Thou mayest be feared.' That, most certainly, was *John Owen's* text. It captivated his heart; it dominated his ministry; it animated his life. We must look into the matter a little more closely.

In the spiritual pilgrimage of John Owen there are two profound and pivotal experiences. Whilst still a student at Oxford he became the victim of the most gloomy apprehensions. Life and death seemed equally intolerable to him. In the course of a visit to London he was told that Dr. Edmund Calamy, at Aldermanbury Chapel, was attracting multitudes by his eloquence. The troubled young student resolved at any cost to hear him. He went, and, sitting in the pew he eagerly awaited the popular doctor's appearance. But he was doomed to disappointment. The vestry door opened, and a strange minister from a country parish entered the pulpit. Owen's companion suggested that they should leave the building and hurry away to hear some other popular preacher. But, after his long walk to Aldermanbury, Owen was too tired for a further trudge. Instead, he bowed his head and prayed that it might please God, by the mouth of this unexpected preacher, to speak to his distressed condition. His prayer was heard; the preacher stated and answered the very doubts that had long perplexed his mind; and, by the time that the sermon was ended, he had begun to enjoy his first real experience of hope and peace. Strangely enough, although he afterwards exhausted every possible means of discovering the identity of the minister who, as he said, was *'the angel of God'* to him that morning, he never succeeded in doing so.

The *second* experience came to him after he entered the ministry. The Rev. Richard Davis, who eventually became the honoured minister of a church at Rowel, Northamptonshire tells this story. When Mr. Davis was a young man he found himself under deep religious conviction. He felt that he ought to approach the Throne of Grace and throw himself on the divine mercy. But, before doing so, he sought an interview with Dr. Owen. In the course of conversation, the doctor startled him by asking an abrupt but pertinent question. 'Young *man,'* said the doctor, 'in what manner, may I ask, do you propose to go to God?' 'Through the Mediator, sir,' replied Mr. Davis. 'That is easily said,' answered the doctor, 'but I assure you that it is another thing to go to God through the Mediator than many, who lightly use that expression; are aware of I myself was a preacher for some years, yet I had very little, if any, experimental acquaintance with access to God through Christ. Then, in His mercy, the Lord was pleased to visit me with sore affliction, whereby I was brought to the mouth of the grave, and under which my soul was oppressed with horror and darkness. But God graciously relieved my spirit, by a powerful application of those precious words: "*There is forgiveness with Thee that Thou mayest be feared."* From that text I derived such encouragement, such peace, and such comfort, in drawing near to God through the Mediator, that the words have continued with me all through my ministry, and I have repeatedly preached from them with great delight.' It was thus that John Owen became a new creature in Christ Jesus.

In the days that followed, onerous responsibilities fell upon him. At the age of thirty he preached before Parliament; the thanks of the House were conveyed to him by the Speaker, and the sermon was ordered to be printed. It was the first of many such experiences. By special command he preached the official sermon in connexion with the execution of Charles the First. His handsome figure, his noble delivery and his earnest style captivated the eye of Cromwell

'Sir?' said the Protector, approaching him respectfully, 'you are a person whose friendship I much covet,' and, leading him into the garden, he begged the preacher to become his private chaplain.

Owen's lot was cast in difficult times. He lived under each of the Stuarts; he held office under the Commonwealth; he passed: through the fiery ordeal of the Civil War; he witnessed the Golden Age of Puritanism and sorrowfully watched its tragic collapse; he saw the Restora-

tion; he saw London decimated by the Plague and destroyed by the Fire; and he saw the city rebuilt. Amidst these vast and dramatic changes I catch glimpses of him; now in earnest conversation with Cromwell at Whitehall; now discharging the important duties of his exalted office at Oxford; with youths like Christopher Wren, John Locke, and William Penn among his students; now discussing the perplexities of the times with Thomas Goodwin or Richard Baxter; and now strolling among the flowerbeds of St. James's or along the Pantiles at Tunbridge Wells with Charles the Second and his brother, afterwards King James. But whether he is engrossed in private conversation, or in official correspondence, or in ministering to his people at Fordham or Coggeshall, or in preaching before Parliament, or if addressing his students, or in penning those cogent and powerful volumes that form his noblest monument, he never proceeds very far without making some reference to those golden words that, in the crisis of his spiritual experience, unlocked his prison door. *"There is forgiveness with Thee that Thou mayest be feared!"*

In one of these big black tomes lying on my lawn I find no fewer than two hundred and thirty pages dealing with this one text. Like an eager prospector crumbling every fragment of earth upon his claim in the expectation of seeing the glitter of gold, John Owen fondly examines the dotting of every *i* and the crossing of every *t*, lest some rich morsel of spiritual significance should escape him. He picks up each separate syllable, inspecting it from every conceivable viewpoint and in every possible light, as if it were a priceless gem having a hundred facets. Two hundred and thirty pages devoted to the elucidation of a single phrase! Is there any other book whose sentences could be submitted by a vice-chancellor of Oxford to so searching and exhaustive a scrutiny?

Strictly speaking, however, that monumental treatise of John Owen's on his text is not so much commentary as autobiography. 'It stands,' as the Rev. Andrew Thomson observes, in his *Life of Dr. Owen,* 'it stands intimately connected with the secret history of Owen's inner life; it conducts us through the turnings and windings along which he himself had wandered in the season of his spiritual distresses; and it shows us the way in which he at length found peace. *'He lays open his very heart and gives us a book which is instinct with the living experience of one who spake what he knew, and testified what he had seen*.' In the 'Introductory Note' at the beginning of these two hundred and thirty pages, and

again at the very end, the doctor himself tells us as much. He has written this great work to show how God revealed Himself to his soul as a God pardoning iniquity, and how he came to rest in his Saviour's plenteous redemption.

There is the throb of genuine emotion in every paragraph. He seems to get excited as he opens up his text. Christie Murray used to poke fun at Charles Reade for hurling his sensations at his readers in capital letters. Reade seems to think that the tremendous thrill of those conspicuous sentences will take your breath away. Our vice-chancellor resorts to the same expedient. Where is forgiveness to be found, he asks? Nature knows nothing of it; Conscience is equally ignorant; the Law reveals no hint of it; in Natural Religion the student finds no clue. But (and or; Owen prints the words in glorious capitals that seem like the expression of his ardour) *'THERE IS FORGIVENESS WITH THEE!'* With Thee! *With Thee! WITH THEE!'*

'There is forgiveness with Thee that Thou mayest be feared.' We have already seen how Bunyan understood the words; John Owen interprets them very similarly. The two men may have talked the passage over; it is more, than likely. '*There is forgiveness with Thee that thou mayest be feared!'*

Feared! the doctor exclaims. What does the Psalmist mean by fear? He means a great *awe* the doctor says on one page. He means a great *wonder,* he tells us on another. He means a great *admiration,* he explains, on a third. He means a great *love,* he assures us later. And so on through two hundred and thirty pages. The fear that is produced by the divine forgiveness is the fear that casts out every other fear.

In an age of civil strife, of violent upheavals, and of swift transitions, it was inevitable that the life of John Owen should be a checkered one. Like all the heroes of that tumultuous time, he had his highs and his lows, his promotions and his degradations. But they came to an end at last. He was sixty-seven. He hid retired from public life and sheltered himself in a quiet village which soothed his mind with a detachment and a peace which, he said, were almost as perfect as those that the grave would accord. On August 24, 1683, he was told that his work *On the Glory of Christ* had been published. 'I am glad to hear it,' he exclaimed, 'but oh, the long wished for day is come at last—the day on which l shall actually behold the glory of my Lord as I have never done before!'

And so, with eyes and hands exultantly uplifted, the most cultured of the Puritans shook the dust of earth from off him. His body was buried with reverence and great honour amidst the dreamy solitude of Bunhill Fields. And five years later, John Bunyan came up from Bedford and lay down to rest beside him.

John Bunyan and Dr. John Owen
—Dr. F.W. Boreham
1933

The Alexander Whyte's Four Preachers

Knowledge, then, is a minister; but every congregation has not such a minister set over it as Knowledge is. All our college bred and ordained men are not ministers like Knowledge. This excellent minister takes his excellent name from his great talents and his great attainments. And while all his great talents are his Master's gift to him, his great attainments are all his own to lay out in his Master's service. To begin with, his Master had given His highly favored servant a good understanding and a good memory and many good and suitable opportunities. Now, a good understanding is a grand endowment for a minister, and his ministerial office will all his days afford him opportunity for the best understanding he can bring to it. The Christian ministry, first and last, has had a noble roll of men of a strong understanding. The author of the book now open before us was a man of a strong understanding. John Bunyan had a fine imagination, with great gifts of eloquent, tender, and most heart-winning utterance, but in his case also all that was bottomed in a strong English understanding. Then, again, a good memory is indispensable to a minister of knowledge. You must be content to take a second, a third, or even a lower place still if your Master has withheld from you a good memory. Dr. Goodwin has a passage on this point that I have often turned up when I had again forgotten it. "Thou mayest have a weak memory, perhaps, yet if it can and doth remember good things as well and better than other things, then it is a sanctified memory, and the defilement of thy memory is healed though the imperfection of it is not; and, though thou art to be humbled for it as a misery, yet thou art not to be discouraged; for God doth not hate thee for it, but pities thee; and the like holds good and may be said as to the want of other like gifts."

Experience

Now, my brethren, to plunge at once out of the parable and into the interpretation, I observe, in the first place, that pastors who are indeed

to be pastors after God's own heart have all to pass into their pastorate through the school of experience. Preaching after God's own heart, and pastoral work of the same divine pattern, cannot be taught in any other school than the school of experience. Poets may be born and made, but not pastors nor preachers. Nay, do not all our best poets first learn in their sufferings what afterwards they teach us in their songs? At any rate, that is certainly the case with preachers and pastors. As my own old minister once said to me in a conversation on this very subject, "Even God Himself cannot inspire an experience." No. For if He could He would surely have done so in the case of His own Son, to Whom in the gift of the Holy Ghost He gave all that He could give and all that His Son could receive. But an experience cannot in the very nature of things be either bestowed on the one hand or received and appropriated on the other. An experience in the unalterable nature of the thing itself must be undergone. The Holy Ghost Himself after He has been bestowed and received has to be experimented upon, and taken into this and that need, trial, cross, and care of life. He is not sent to spare us our experiences, but to carry us through them. And thus it is (in sight of the highest illustration we have of this law of experience), that the apostle has it in his Epistle to the Hebrews that though Christ Himself were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things that He suffered. And being by experience made perfect He then went on to do such and such things for us. Why do you think was our Lord able to speak with such extraordinary point, impressiveness, and assurance about prayer; about the absolute necessity and certainty of secret, importunate, persevering prayer. Why when sooner or later, in one shape or other, and in the best possible shape, its answer? Why but because of His own experience? Why but because His own closet, hilltop, all-night, and up-before-the-day prayers had all been at last heard and better heard than He had been able to ask? We can quite well read between the lines in all our Lord's parables and in all the passages of His sermons about prayer. The unmistakable traces of otherwise untold enterprises and successes, agonies and victories of prayer are to be seen in every such sermon of His. And so, in like manner in all that He says to His disciples about the sweetness of submission, resignation, and self-denial, as also about the nourishment for His—soul that He got out of every hard act of obedience, and so on. There is running through all our Lord's doctrinal and homiletical teaching that note of reality and of

certitude that can only come to any teaching out of the long and deep and intense experience of the teacher. And as the Master was, so are all His ministers.

Watchful

But, shepherd or no shepherd, minister or no minister, look to yourself. Look to yourself when you lie down and when you rise up; when you go out and when you come in; when you are in the society of men and when you are alone with your own heart. Look to yourself when men praise you, and look to yourself when men blame you. Look to yourself when you sit down to eat and drink, and still more when you sit and speak about your absent brother. Look to yourself when you lie down and when you rise up; when you go out and when you come in; when you are in the society of men and when you are alone with your own heart. Look to yourself when men praise you, and look to yourself when men blame you. Look to yourself when you sit down and drink, and still more when you sit and speak about your absent brother. And more than that so it is with some men not far from you who never told you how much you have made them watch. Did you never know all that till now? Were you never told that every Christian man, I do not mean every communicant, but every truly and sincerely and genuinely Christian man watches himself in that way? For as the one essential and distinguishing mark of a New Testament minister is not that he is an able man, or a studious man, or an eloquent man, but that he is a pastor and watches for souls. So it is the chiefest and the best mark, and to himself the only safe and infallible mark, that any man is a sincere and true Christian man, that he watches himself always and in all things looks first and last to himself.

Sincere

A man who does not understand what it is you are saying to him will just make the same bow to these awful words that he makes to all your other conventional questions. But the older he grows in his ministry, and the more he comes to discover the incurable plague of his own heart, and with that the whole meaning and full weight of your overwhelming words, the more will he shrink back from having such questions addressed to him. Fools will rush in where Moses and Isaiah and

Jeremiah and Peter and Paul feared to set their foot. Paul was to be satisfied if only he was permitted to do the work of a minister all his days and then was not at the end made a castaway. And yet, writing to the same church, Paul says that his sincerity among them had been such that he could hold up his ministerial life like spotless linen between the eye of his conscience and the sun. But all that was written and is to be read and understood as Paul's ideal that he had honestly labored after, rather than as an actual attainment he had arrived at. Great as Paul's attainments were in humility, in purity of intention, and in simplicity and sincerity of heart, yet the mind of Christ was not so given even to His most gifted apostle, that he could seriously say that he had attained to such utter ingenuity, simplicity, disengagement from himself and surrender to Christ as to be able to face the sun with a spotless ministry. All he ever says at his boldest and best on that great matter is to be read in the light of his universal law of personal and apostolic imperfection "Not that I have attained, either am already perfect; but I follow after." And blessed be God that this is all that He looks for in any of His ministers, that they follow all their days after a more and more godly sincerity. It was the apostle's love of absolute sincerity, and, especially, it was his bitter hatred of all the remaining dregs of insincerity that he from time to time detected in his own heart that gave him his good conscience before a God of pity and compassion, truth and grace. And with something of the same love of perfect sincerity, accompanied with something of the same hatred of insincerity and of ourselves on account of it, we, too, toward this same God of pity and compassion, will hold up a conscience that would fain be a good conscience. And till it is a good conscience we shall hold up with it a broken heart. And that genuine love of all sincerity, and that equally genuine hatred of all remaining insincerity, will make all our ministerial work, as it made all Paul's apostolic work, not only acceptable, but will also make its very defects and defeats both acceptable and fruitful in the estimation and result of God.

Bunyan's Characters
—Alexander Whyte. D.D.
Fourth Series, 1895

The Secret of Murray McCheyne

As I approach my task this morning I find, on the left-hand side of my desk a well worn book that I greatly prize, and, on the right-hand side, a pair of photographs of almost equal value. The book is the *Memoir of the Rev. Robert Murray McCheyne,* by his intimate friend, Dr. Andrew Bonar I bought it and read it in the early days of my Mosgiel ministry I have read it many times since; and, in view of the fact that the world is just now celebrating the centenary of McCheyne, I have read it once again during the past few days. There are very few books that will bear frequent perusal; but, in this case, each reading has proved more stimulating and more profitable than any of its predecessors.

The greatest tribute ever paid to the book is recorded by Dr. James Stalker. Dr. Stalker says that he was once chatting with a survivor of that select group of Scottish ministers to which McCheyne belonged. They were discussing the circumstance, that McCheyne died at twenty-nine. 'Ah!' exclaimed Dr. Stalker's companion, who had known both McCheyne and Bonar, 'but it was far better for McCheyne to die young, and to be embalmed in the glowing pages of Bonar's biography, than to have lived out the full span of human existence and to have missed that privilege!' So much for the book on my left: now for the photographs! Many years ago, after preaching at Aberdeen, Scotland overnight, I left in the morning for Dundee. We arrived at midday. As the train drew into the station, two or three gentlemen stepped forward to welcome us.

'You are to preach this afternoon,' they explained, 'and again this evening, with a tea and a reception in between; and then your train for the South leaves early tomorrow morning; so that, if there's anything in Dundee that you particularly wish to see, your only chance is to go straight away!'

'My dear sir,' I replied, 'I would far rather go without my meals whilst I'm here than miss the chance of visiting St. Peter's! I want to see

Mr. McCheyne's church and his vestry and his pulpit and his tomb and anything that still exists that is in any way related to him!'

'Good!' my new friends replied; 'then we'll go now!' And off we went. I have paid many such pilgrimages in my time, but I have seldom been as deeply moved as by that one. Next morning, one of the gentlemen who had met us at the station, and accompanied us to St. Peter's, again rushed on to the railway platform just as our train was leaving.

'Seeing your interest in Mr. McCheyne and St. Peter's,' he explained, 'I tried yesterday afternoon to get you some picture postcards: but I could not satisfy myself; so I had these photographs taken. It has been a little difficult to get them finished in time; but here they are!' And he very kindly presented me with these portraits of the church and the tomb that lie at this moment on my desk.

I believe in the immortality of the soul! How can I doubt it when, in books like this, I actually hold palpitating fellowship with the man whose body was committed to the grave a hundred years ago? To read the *Life of Francis Xavier* is to be infected by his missionary passion; to read the *Journal* of Mr. Wesley is to be caught in the hot flame of his evangelistic fervour: whilst to read the *Memoir of Robert Murray McCheyne* is to share the heavenly glow of his radiant and beautiful soul.

His personality is a gem of many glittering facets. Notwithstanding a certain physical frailty, he was an athlete: his death was hastened by the snapping of his vaulting-pole in a jumping contest. He was a scholar, qualified to speak with authority on matters of geology and natural history; his Hebrew served him in good stead when conversing with learned European Jews; he appreciated the finer points of Greek translation; and, when he wished to secure the entries in his diary from curious eyes, he dropped into Latin and made his notes in that ancient tongue with perfect facility and ease.

He was a musician, too, skilled in the use of several instruments and possessed a rich and pleasing singing voice. As a poet, he poured his choicest inspirations and most poignant emotions into tuneful stanzas, some of which, like "*When this passing world is done"* have found a permanent place in the hymnals of all the Churches. He was an artist, clever at sketching every interesting object or picturesque scene that enchanted his wide-open eyes. A preacher of culture, persuasiveness and passion, he was the valued companion of men like Thomas Guthrie,

James Hamilton, Alexander Somerville, Robert Macdonald, Moody Stuart, and Andrew and Horatius Bonar.

And, although he himself never for a moment suspected it, he was, in the best sense of the word, a saint. One historian has said that it is the unique distinction of Robert Murray McCheyne that he has been canonized, not by any papal mandate or ecclesiastical court, but by popular acclaim. Those who were privileged to luxuriate in his perfect friendship, and those of a later generation who have breathed the fragrance of his life in the pages of his biography, have alike felt the magnetism and charm of his sheer, downright goodness. 'If ever there was a saint,' you say to yourself, 'Murray McCheyne was one!' *Yet he wist not that the skin of his face did shine.*

How it all began, nobody knows. McCheyne himself did not know. He could never fix any particular date as the date of his conversion or recall the exact circumstances that precipitated the spiritual crisis. When Robert was eighteen, his brother David, eight years older than himself, suddenly died. David was Robert's hero, his beau ideal of perfect manhood. The melancholy event left an indelible impression on the delicate mind of the susceptible youth. It took place on July 8, 1831, and, to the end of his life, Robert kept that day as sacred. Each year, in his journal, he refers to it in terms of fond recollection and renewed consecration. In 1842, for example, he remarks that 'this day, eleven years ago, I lost my holy and loving brother and began to seek the Saviour.'

Shortly after his brother's death, I find him debating with himself as to whether or not he should take the Lord's Supper. In terms as terrible as any used by Bunyan or Newton, he describes the hideous depravity of his own heart. He decides at length to approach the sacred table, not *in spite* of his sins, but *because* of them. It is his sins that drive him to the Saviour whose body was broken and whose blood was shed for the likes of him. 'Much peace!' he records, on the evening of that Communion feast; and, a few days later, he is wondering if it will be possible for him to go as a missionary to India, or some other land.

It was shortly after this, and as a record of this, that he wrote his first hymn—Jehovah Tsidkenu, the Lord our Righteousness:

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.

When free grace awoke me with 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.

His dream of becoming a foreign missionary haunted him to the end; though, in his heart of hearts, he knew perfectly well that the hardships of such a life, and the ravages of a tropical climate, would overtax his slender powers of physical endurance. In this dilemma, he consulted Dr. Chalmers, who had just created a profound sensation by relinquishing his glorious public ministry in order, within the cloister like seclusion of a university, to fire the imagination of divinity students with the vision of the world's tremendous need. Chalmers advised him, whilst yet a student, to seek missionary experience among the slums of Edinburgh. He adopted the suggestion with characteristic zest; visited among the poorest of the poor; and, to his dying day, kept in touch with some of the unpromising characters with whom he was then brought into contact.

After a short but memorable period of service as assistant to Rev. John Bonar, in the parish of Larbert and Dunipace, near Stirling, he was called, at the age of twenty-three, to St. Peter's, Dundee, and commenced that brief but famous ministry which, in a land of noble ministries, is still regarded as a model and an inspiration.

Strangely enough, the outstanding event of Mr. McCheyne's historic ministry at Dundee was his long absence from his charge in 1839. From 1836 until 1839 he had laboured among his people at St. Peter's with exemplary fidelity, with intense devotion, but with no sensational success. He drew congregations of about a thousand people: he visited his parishioners with the utmost diligence and solicitude: he laid great stress on meetings for prayer and on systematic Bible study; and, however busy or however tired, he was always available to anybody seeking guidance or comfort or help. He was exceedingly happy in his work: he made everybody very fond of him: he was encouraged by a fair number of conversions: the Communion seasons at St. Peter's were times of

wonderful grace and refreshment: and many larger and wealthier churches tried in vain to allure the young minister to other fields. But that was as far as it went.

In 1839, however, McCheyne being then twenty-six and in the third year of his ministry at Dundee, his health began to cause his friends much anxiety. One day when he was in Princes Street, Edinburgh he happened to meet Dr. Candlish. The doctor was shocked at the young minister's emaciated appearance. A sudden idea flashed into his mind. The Church had recently resolved to send a Commission, consisting of a little band of carefully selected ministers, to the Jews in Palestine and Eastern Europe. Mr. McCheyne would be the very man! He possessed all the essential qualities of heart and mind; and the voyage might reestablish his health into the bargain!

He went, and reveled in the experience. It gave him at least a taste of that foreign missionary adventure for which he had always hungered. Luxuriating in his contact with the Jewish people in many lands, he earnestly sought to learn all that they had to teach and to impart all that he could persuade them to receive. Competent authorities have declared that the printed report of the Commission is one of the best books on the Holy Land ever written, because, together with its vivid descriptions of the country illustrated by McCheyne's own sketches, it is saturated in the spirit of the sublime happenings that lend a sacred lustre to every landscape.

The Mission stimulated or inspired much of the evangelistic work that has subsequently been undertaken among the Jews. Incidentally, it was the means of the conversion of Dr. Adolph Saphir and Dr. Alfred Edersheim. And, according to Dr. Stalker, it fastened upon the Scottish mind an entirely new conception of the Hebrew people, 'For whereas', he says, 'the Jew is regarded in all other countries as a Shylock, oppressed and oppressing, hateful and hating, the Jew of the Scottish imagination is an ideal being, surrounded with affection and reverence, a child of that race to which pertain the adoption and the glory and the covenants.'

But what of St. Peter's during this long absence? St. Peter's was on fire! A revival had broken out there that moved the whole of Scotland. Mr. McCheyne had entrusted his pulpit to the Rev. W. C. Burns, afterwards the apostle to the Chinese people. Even then, as a very young man, he was consumed by a passionate longing for the salvation of his fellow men. Almost as soon as Mr. McCheyne's back was turned, the

wonderful work began. On weekdays and on Sundays, people of all ages and of all classes, some from the immediate vicinity and some from the surrounding countryside, flocked to the church; and hundreds of men and women, under deep emotion, sought and found the Saviour. Every sermon was punctuated by the groans and sobs and tears of the crowded congregations.

Mr. McCheyne heard of all this with profound gratitude and yearned to be back in Dundee to share the joy of the abundant harvest and his people longed to have him back. He arrived on a Thursday; went down to St. Peter's in the evening to meet anybody who might be there; and, to his astonishment, found that so many people had come to the church on the chance of seeing him that the building was crowded to its utmost capacity. Aisles and stairways were packed. Mr. McCheyne went to the pulpit and poured out his heart, not concerning his travels, but concerning the work of God among his people at Dundee. For more than an hour he preached Christ with all his old intensity and charm. It was a night that the people never forgot. After the meeting was over, he could scarcely force his way through the throng that pressed upon him to welcome him home and tell of their delight.

The revival continued during the three years that remained to him. The novelty wore off and the excitement subsided; but the reaping continued and a steady stream of penitents passed through Mr. McCheyne's vestry. Then, early in 1843, typhus broke out in Dundee. The young minister's entire time and strength were devoted to visiting the dying and burying the dead. The inevitable happened. He himself contracted the dread scourge, and, after a brief struggle, passed triumphantly away. When his friend, Andrew Bonar, heard the news a few hours later, he hurried across to St. Peter's. Slipping into the church, he found hundreds of people there, weeping as though their hearts would break; and, early in the following week, the entire city gave itself up to lamentation on the occasion of his burial. A massive monument marks the tomb, which is visited by tourists, whilst the sweetness and chivalry of his character have woven themselves into the most cherished traditions of the North.

It would be pleasant, if space permitted, to say a few words concerning Mr. McCheyne's part in the Disruption. He died a few weeks before that memorable event took place. Yet, in a sense, he was one of the leaders and walked out side by side with Chalmers. He had no taste for controversy; yet, when a matter of public debate stirred his con-

science, he did not hesitate to speak his mind, quietly, persuasively, and convincingly. The very fact that Mr. McCheyne was in sympathy with Chalmers drew to the cause all those who had felt the gracious influence of the revival. It secured the allegiance of thousands of the most devout, the most godly, and the most spiritually minded folk in Scotland; and it imparted to the Disruption movement an indefinable aroma that sweetened the atmosphere and reduced to a minimum the bitterness of the fray.

What was his secret? It was simply this: he walked with God. He knew from the first that his course would be a brief one. His earliest letters bear the seal *The Night Cometh!* He felt that, in order to make the most of his meager span of years, he must dwell in the secret place and abide under the shadow. God was always closer to him than breathing, nearer than hands or feet. I find him, in the course of his Jewish mission, in a crowded foreign city. 'How real God is!' he says to himself. 'He is the only person I can talk to!' On the very next page, I find him, by way of contrast, in the solitudes of the desert, not a soul in sight. 'How near God seems!' he remarks. He used to say that, even in days of sickness and depression, he could never really doubt, for God had given him such overwhelming manifestations of His presence when in the pulpit that he could live on the memory of those rapturous experiences in dreamer and darker days

His life was hid with Christ in God. It was in rapt communion with the unseen that he became infected by his Master's insatiable hunger for the souls of men. He wept over Dundee as Jesus wept over Jerusalem. A few years after his death, a young English minister visited St. Peter's to discover, as he explained, the secret of Mr. McCheyne's amazing influence. The sexton who had served under Mr. McCheyne, took the youthful inquirer into the vestry, and pointed to some of McCheyne's books still lying on the table. 'Sit down here,' said the canny old sexton, leading his visitor to the chair in which McCheyne used to sit. 'Now put your elbows on the tablet.' The visitor obeyed. 'Now put your face in your hands!' The visitor did so. 'Now let *the tears flow!* That was the way Mr. McCheyne used to do!' The sexton led his guest to the pulpit; and gave him a fresh series of instructions. 'Put your elbows down into the pulpit!' He put his elbows down. 'Now put your face in your hands!' He did so. 'Now *let the tears flow!* That was the way Mr. McCheyne used to do!'

Yes, *that* was the way; and it is not an easy way. It is an art that can only be acquired at the feet of the Divine Master from whom Mr. McCheyne learned it.

All his converts agree that it was not so much what he said as the spirit in which he said it, that lured them into the kingdom. In his biography of Mr. McCheyne, Dr. Andrew Bonar tells how Mrs. Bonar, before her marriage, was affected by Mr. McCheyne's presence. It was at a meeting at St. Andrew's Church, Edinburgh, a few months before Mr. McCheyne's death. 'It was neither his matter nor his manner that struck me,' she says, 'it was the impression of his likeness to Christ—a picture so lovely that I felt that I would have given all the world to be as he was!' One of Dr. Bonar's own parishioners was talking to him about Mr. McCheyne. 'Before he so much as opened his lips', this man said, 'there was something about him that sorely affected me.' And Dr. Bonar tells of many of Mr. McCheyne's converts who testified that it was not his words that broke them down; but the fact that he appeared to them to be standing in the immediate presence of the Most High, whilst, when he prayed, he seemed to be looking into the very eyes of God and talking with Him face to face.

'When he spoke of my being alienated from God by my sins,' one woman declared, 'it seemed so terrible that I felt that hell itself would be some relief from the horror of it!' 'When, in his prayer, I heard him say, '*O Lord, Thou knowest that we love Thee!*' I felt that I would gladly give all that I ever hoped to possess to be able to say *that* to the Saviour!' another woman exclaimed.

Thus, literally, he was a living epistle. As men interpret, in a letter, the mind of the writer, so men read in him the very mind of Christ. And, as a letter need not be a long letter in order to be a love-letter, so, within the compass of his brief span of existence, he communicated to the hearts of all whom he met the sense of his Lord's everlasting love and pity and grace. It was said of Keats that he 'ensphered himself in thirty perfect years and died, not young.' The lovely tribute is even more fitting in the case of Robert Murray McCheyne.

The Secret of Murray McCheyne
—Dr. F.W. Boreham
1949