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SAMUEL RUTHERFORD.

BY THE REV.

ANDREW THOMSON, D.D., F.R.S.E.,

EDINBURGH.

“ὢν οὐκ ἦν ἄξιός ὁ κοσμος.”

London :

HODDER AND STOUGHTON,

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PREFATORY NOTE.

THE earliest biographical notices of Samuel Rutherford were written by his secretary and assistant, Rev. R. Macward, and were attached to the first edition of his letters. Later biographies have appeared from the pens of Dr. Thomas Murray, Rev. C. Thomson, and Dr. Andrew Bonar. To all of these and to many other sources—not least to Rutherford's own letters—I am indebted for facts and impressions, and on all of them I have endeavoured to form and express an independent judgment. Dr. Bonar's short memoir of thirty-two pages is written in a style of quaint beauty, and in fine sympathy with the spirit of Rutherford.

On the subject of the Westminster Assembly, the authorities I have consulted have been very numerous. I mention especially the writings of the two McCries, elder and younger, Baillie's journal and letters, and the two elaborate volumes which Professor Mitchell, of St. Andrews, has contributed to Church history in his

“Introduction to the Minutes of the Westminster Assembly,” and his “Baird Lectures.” I have to acknowledge my obligations to my friend Dr. Blair, of Dunblane, for many useful hints while this little volume has been passing through the press.

A. T.

CHAPTER I.

TEVIOTDALE.—EARLY DAYS.

FEW persons will deny that Samuel Rutherford's name is pre-eminently one of those which are "worth remembering." It lives not only in local traditions, but in the civil and ecclesiastical history of his country at one of its most eventful periods ; it shines in Scotland's list of great preachers, apostolic pastors, and good confessors, and is treasured among the rich stores of our religious literature. It is embalmed in our Christian biography. No Pope's decree was needed for his canonization ; the Christian heart of many a land has long since done this. "They crowned him long ago." In some of our remotest colonies, where Scottish households sprung from old Puritan roots abound, it is no infrequent practice to designate one of their sons by his saintly name. Half a century after his death, the famous Halyburton left it behind him as his dying wish, that his dust might be buried beside that of Rutherford, there to wait till the resurrection's dawn. And down through more than two centuries, the thoughts of good men, as his image has risen before them, have done with him what

the old Masters did with their portraits of the early saints, as they looked from their canvas "with their calm, sweet faces," when they surrounded them with an aureola of holy light. His life has, of course, been frequently written, and sometimes well written, but it is needful that the story should at times be re-told, were it for no other ends than anew to enforce its lessons, and to restore freshness to its colours.

Some time in the year 1600, Samuel Rutherford was born in the parish of Nisbet, afterwards annexed to Crailing, in the district of Teviotdale, and county of Roxburgh, about four miles from the beautiful border town of Jedburgh. He long after wrote of it as "the place to which he owed his first breathing," and declared it to be "his soul's desire that it might blossom as the rose." His father appears to have been a respectable farmer in moderate circumstances, able to give to Samuel and two other sons such an education as the little district capital afforded. The school-house was in a part of the old abbey of Jedburgh, which on this account was known as "the Latiner's alley." In the same school the eminent Sir David Brewster got the rudiments of his education two centuries afterwards.

The great and statesmanlike scheme of national education which had been devised by Knox, and which Coleridge, with wise appreciation, has declared would have been worthy of Lycurgus, had only in part as yet been set up; but good schools, often presided over by a superior class of teachers, already existed in most of the

burghs of Scotland ; and we may therefore suppose that the boy, remaining under the parents' roof, would daily walk into the grammar school in the Latiner's alley. The quick discernment of the master soon discovered in the Crailing farmer's son the signs of remarkable natural abilities, and year after year confirmed him in his belief that he was dealing with a mind of no common order. On hinting this to his parents, who had probably begun to make the discovery for themselves, and become convinced that they were not mistaking mere mental precocity for power, they determined, at some sacrifice, like so many of their class at that time and, indeed, ever since, to give their son the benefit of a liberal education. The issue of it all was his entrance as a student at the University of Edinburgh in 1617.

The University was still young and struggling with difficulties, arising especially from inadequate funds ; and its system of education, though marked by some strong points, was not without serious imperfections, which could only be compensated by the rigour of its discipline and the enthusiasm and ability of its teachers. Instead of its professors, or regents, being restricted to one branch of instruction, each professor (with the exception, it is understood, of the Professor of Latin), had a certain number of youths assigned to his special care, and he was required to instruct them in all the branches of knowledge necessary to qualify for graduation. These included the classics, philosophy, and physics, and the student usually remained under the same professor during his four years' curriculum of study. One is apt

to think that, in almost every instance, such an arrangement must have entailed the consequence that more than one of the prescribed subjects would be imperfectly taught, and that the thoughtful, and sometimes omnivorous, student would frequently be sent away hungering, without any means of satisfying his mental appetite. But the length of the annual sessions extending over a period of ten months—the number of hours, not fewer than eight, in which the student was in the presence of his professor, either listening to his prelections in Latin, or engaged in disputations with his fellow-students, all of them also conducted in the same language—the searching examination to which the student was subjected on the lessons of the previous year before he was permitted to enter on a new session, and, not least, the ample opportunity which was given to the professor of grappling with each individual mind among his scholars, and largely conjoining mental discipline with the communication of knowledge, made the system more effective than more abundant resources would have done, when less energetically and earnestly wrought. We have no detailed or definite information respecting Rutherford's student life. But we know that at the close of his fourth session he graduated Master of Arts ; and that only two years afterwards, after a competitive examination in which he contested the honour with scholars who greatly exceeded him in years, and by whom it would have been no disgrace to have been defeated, at the recommendation of the entire body of regents bearing testimony to "his eminent ability of mind and virtuous disposition,"

“Maister Samuel Rutherford” was appointed Professor of the Latin language and literature in the university. This places beyond doubt the fact of his diligence during the priceless years of his student-life, and proves that the home estimate that had been formed of his gifts by the Jedburgh schoolmaster had not been exaggerated.

After he had discharged the work of his Latin professorship for about two years, Rutherford entered on the married state, and some indiscretion or irregularity connected with the formation of this union appears to have produced so much irritation and unpleasantness between himself and his colleagues, that from a sense of discomfort, or wounded feeling, or self-displeasure, he demitted his charge. That the offence, whatever it was, could not have been one of much gravity, or fitted to leave a permanent stain upon his character, seems beyond doubt, both from the testimony of continued confidence with which his demission was received, and yet more from the fact that, in the future conflicts of parties in which he afterwards intermingled, when scandals are so often raised from their graves to do the work of faction, no reference appears to have ever been made to this, by his most relentless adversaries.

There must, however, have been bitter hours associated with this passage in Rutherford's life; and it is far from unlikely that these may have led him into trains of thought and self-reflection which ended in his coming under the supreme power of the religion of Christ. There had, no doubt, been many seasons of conviction and partial and temporary impressions of religion before

this time ; but, from repeated statements in his letters at a later period, we are led to suppose that it could scarcely have been earlier than this that he passed into the "Valley of Decision." We find him, more than once, when exhorting young men to consecrate to God the morning of their days, lamenting that he had delayed this momentous step until it was "high noon." "Like a fool," says he, "as I was, I suffered my sun to be high in the heaven and near afternoon, before ever I took the gate by the end." And there are other passages in which he writes in even more sorrowful and self-accusing terms. But we should injuriously misapprehend the import of such language, when used of themselves by men like Rutherford, did we imagine them to make confession of having lived a life of profligate indulgence in "sins of the flesh" at any period previous to their conversion. This was long the popular belief in reference to Bunyan, although there are passages in his autobiography, written with all a pure woman's delicate choice of words, which contradict the calumny against the "wondrous dreamer." And the imagination would be as groundless, were it to be entertained against Rutherford. When we hear a regenerate man, in the presence of the infinitely holy One, confessing the sins of his youth in words of deep and contrite abasement, we must think of the standard by which he is meanwhile comparing himself, and not so misread his language as to find in it an acknowledgment that he had passed into the kingdom of God through the mire and filth of previous years of sensual living. Rutherford, in common with

Bunyan, could praise the restraining grace which had kept him from this, and saved him from those terrible memories which are too apt to arise in the souls of those who have so fallen, not only as accusing spectres, but as foul tempters to evil. But there are many things in his subsequent course which favour the impression that his repentance had been singularly thorough, and his consecration unqualified—a whole burnt offering which his glowing love laid on the Divine altar, and that he could have said in the words of the great Penitent, with a consciousness which is not doubtful, but certain and plenary: “O Lord! I love Thee. Thou hast transfixed my heart with the arrow of Thy Word, and I have loved Thee.”¹

In this temper of mind, Rutherford soon afterwards entered on the study of theology with his face steadfastly and willingly set to the office of the Christian ministry. As he was now dealing with congenial themes, which had become to him the matter of supreme interest, we may imagine the zest and relish with which he pursued his sacred studies; and his future and early eminence as a Christian polemic and his mastery of the Divine Word show how richly he had profited from his willing toils. We always succeed best when the heart goes along with the hand and the head. Moreover, care was taken that the aspirants to the Christian pastorate should not only be trained in the science of theology, but directed in the skilful interpretation of the Word of God, and that their religious life and habits should be quite as assiduously

¹ St. Augustine.

watched over as their instruction in sacred knowledge. This last-named part of the mental and moral regimen, while specially directed to the candidates for the ministry, was extended to all the students, and one record which we introduce, gives us an interesting glimpse of the Edinburgh University life of those times. On every Wednesday, at three o'clock, the Principal delivered a lecture on some theological subject to the whole of the students assembled in the public hall. On Sunday morning, at seven o'clock, they read the Scriptures in their several class-rooms before their regents, and afterwards, in company with them, went to church, from which they returned to college, and had to give an analysis of the sermon they had heard, and the portion of Scripture they had perused in the morning.

When, in 1627, Rutherford had finished his curriculum of theological studies, the religious and ecclesiastical condition of Scotland was greatly discouraging and saddening to a mind with his convictions and preferences. There had been a marked and growing departure from the reformed system which the genius and piety of Knox in the former century had set up. The innovations which had been begun by James I. had been continued and increased, in the face of his most solemn engagements to the contrary, by his son Charles I., or, as was quaintly said in those days, "the needle which the father had introduced, was used by the son to draw in the thread." Many of the doctrines of the Reformation were frowned upon and denounced by men in power; and those who continued faithfully to preach

them were cast into the cold shade of neglect. One ceremony after another, which the people regarded as either unauthorized or forbidden by Scripture, and many of which had a suspicious look Romeward, was insinuated into public worship by the king's authority, and by unscrupulous men who were ready to do his bidding. The General Assembly of the Church was prohibited from meeting, except by royal permission; and when it dared to meet on its own right, its decisions were declared to be null and void. The various districts of Scotland were placed under prelates, the nominees of Charles, who superseded the power of the presbyteries, and had the power of appointing and ordaining ministers to benefices, and of regulating emoluments. But those would strangely misjudge the facts and fail to appreciate their deep significance, who should suppose that it was a mere controversy about opposing forms of Church government that was now agitating and dividing Scotland. It was to a great extent a life conflict travailing with great issues, between living religion and formalism, between royal prerogative and the spiritual independence of the Church of Christ. While these changes upon the worship and polity of the Scottish Church, and checks upon the freedom of her ecclesiastical action, were for a time endured by the Scottish people, by the great majority of the nation they were never accepted. Its heart ever rose against them. And all over the land, there were pious ministers and others who either openly protested against the tyranny, or silently refused to comply with the obnoxious innovations. In no part of

the kingdom was the opposition more general or calmly resolute, than in the towns and rural districts of Kirkcudbrightshire, and it was in one of its parishes that Rutherford found a congenial sphere for the exercise of his eminent gifts. Under the advice of Gordon of Kenmure, who was afterwards ennobled as Viscount Kenmure, whose holy life and fearless avowal of his convictions made him respected even by his adversaries, and who had heard much of Rutherford's rare gifts and ardent piety, the inhabitants of the rural parish of Anwoth invited him to become their spiritual teacher; and, by the influence of the same nobleman, the Bishop of Galloway was induced to waive his prerogative, and to yield a tacit consent to his receiving ordination by the "laying on" of presbyterial hands. What a ministry of power and blessing did that act initiate! What a centre of influence in the cause of pure and earnest religion, and of "the crown rights of Christ," did that little Galloway hamlet, in its "calm retreat and silent shade," become when Rutherford and his young wife entered the old manse, circled and shaded with its holly trees. Rutherford and Anwoth! For more than two hundred years the name of the saintly man has made the place sacred. The man and the place are intertwined in the thoughts of the Church, just as we associate Boston with Ettrick, and Baxter with Kidderminster, and Philip Henry with Broad-Oak, and Leighton with Dunblane, and Doddridge with Northampton, and Newton and Cowper with Olney, and St. Columba with Iona.

CHAPTER II.

ANWOTH.—THE GOOD PASTOR.

STANDING in the centre of the little town of Gatehouse and looking northward, you see rising before you at no great distance a succession of mountains of moderate height, of varied shape, and green to the summit. These are separated from each other by grassy glens, which are watered by mountain streams, some of which on rainy days, like the impetuous Skyrburn, assume, in a few hours, the dimensions of a river. Those pastoral hills and valleys form the greater part of the parish of Anwoth—the southern and less mountainous portion of which is bounded by the beautiful Water of Fleet, which, soon after passing through Gatehouse, empties itself into Wigtown Bay.

Skirting round the base of the nearest eminence, for about a mile, you come suddenly upon the venerable ruins of the church in which Samuel Rutherford began his remarkable ministry some time in 1627. The old sanctuary, standing in a natural basin, is surrounded by trees, and overlooked by little wooded hills not far off. And while it is now roofless, its walls and belfry remain in good preservation, and are richly mantled, within and

without, with ivy,—the fern, the wild strawberry, and the wallflower peeping out at intervals and helping to cover and beautify the desolation. Outside and around is the ancient parish churchyard, in which many generations sleep, and which treasures the dust of many a martyr, whereon is laid the never-failing tombstone from whose rugged lines there often gleams a thought of quaint and holy beauty.

“Homely phrases, but each letter,
Full of hope and yet of heart-break,
Full of all the tender pathos
Of the here and the hereafter.”

When we visited the hallowed spot there was a sabbatic silence about it, only broken at intervals by a song-bird in the ash or the pine tree overhead.

As one stands inside the ivy-clad ruin, it is not difficult even now to fill in the main features of the picture, as they must have presented themselves to a worshipper two centuries and a half ago—the door by which Rutherford entered, the oaken pulpit with the spacious oval window behind it, shedding in streams of light upon his Bible; the spot in front of the pulpit where the pastor used to stand on high sacramental occasions surrounded by his elders, with the communion table before him covered with “fine linen, clean and white,” to dispense to his flock the symbols and pledges of redeeming love; the galleries at either extremity of the house, which were occupied by the titled families and principal proprietors of Anwoth, such as the Lennoxes of Cally, and the Gordons of Cardoness and Rusco; and lining every other

part of the sacred edifice, the densely packed seats of the farmers and peasants, who sat listening for hours to Rutherford's melting eloquence, and were often raised above themselves by the almost seraphic strains of his adoration and prayer.

Of Rutherford's manse of Bush-o-bield, not even a stone remains. But there are those still living who remember its site and its ruins. It was an old house even in his days, built in baronial style, having belonged to an Anwoth family of rank, and containing more space than the simple pastor needed. It stood on a gentle eminence, with a garden behind producing sufficient vegetables for culinary purposes, and abounding in the rose, the honeysuckle, the balm, and other flowers in which our forefathers delighted. The Anwoth people of the last generation used to tell of gigantic hollies which lined the front of the house, while a green field gradually sloped down to the level, along which a tiny burn found its way to the Fleet not far off. The church was so near that when the pastor heard the first sound of the bell from its little belfry, he had ample time to don his Geneva gown, and, passing calmly through an intervening copse, to be in his place at the appointed time, to read out the first words of praise.

Various circumstances were favourable to the young pastor, when he entered on his untried ministry at Anwoth. His predecessor in that district, though far inferior to him in natural gifts, had been a man of kindred spirit, and had "prepared his way." The influence of John Welsh, the son-in-law of Knox, who

had been minister of Kirkcudbright, only seven miles distant, twenty-five years before, had been very powerful on the side of the reformed faith and of godly living, in all that region; and memories of the man and his work still lingered like a sweet perfume, especially among the older people. And there were other faithful ministers scattered here and there over Galloway and South Ayrshire, who were in unison with Rutherford in his theological and ecclesiastical principles, and who held up high the banner of the Reformation with no faint heart or feeble hand. It is also a noteworthy circumstance that the higher families in Anwoth and the surrounding parishes were in general distinguished for their religious decision and godliness. There was more than "*one* who wore a coronet—and prayed." These occupying common ground with him greatly encouraged and supported him in his ministry, some of them, at a later period of the conflict which was then waging, suffering long imprisonments and even death for their principles. In addition to all this, up to the time of Rutherford's coming, the people of Anwoth had only been favoured with the public ordinances of religion once in every alternate week. "Our souls," they had often complained, "were under that miserable extreme famine of the word, that we had onlie the pair help of ane sermon everie second Sabbath." And now that they had obtained the exclusive ministrations of a pastor of their own hearts' choice, there were many who felt that they could not receive enough out of his well-stored treasury. The hungry soul relishes the abundant meal.

We see no reason to question the unanimous testimony of his own and the following age in reference to the high excellence and the great effect of Rutherford's preaching. He was remembered as a "little fair man." And while his contemporaries describe his elocution as somewhat defective, and his voice as tending at times to an unnatural shrillness, Wodrow speaks of him as "one of the most moving and affectionate preachers in his time, or perhaps in any age of the Church." His sermons were usually radiant with Christ, as incarnate, suffering, dying, risen, glorified, and reigning, and in all his various saving relations to His people. It is matter of tradition that much of his conversation glowed with this ever-welcome theme, that he sometimes fell asleep with the name of Jesus upon his lips, and that the subject often shed a heavenly light over his dreams. And when, in his pulpit, the unsearchable love of Christ in one of its many phases was the matter of his discourse, especially at the holy festival of a communion season, which drew the inhabitants of whole parishes to Anwoth, his animation not unfrequently grew to rapture, and it seemed as if he might almost have said of himself, "Whether in the body, or out of the body I cannot tell." But his power to arrest and enchain attention was not confined to those high themes of Christian doctrine, or to dealing with some of the aspects of religious experience. Though tenderness was one of his most characteristic qualities, we confess to our having been struck with his power in handling practical subjects, in denouncing the prevalent vices of the age, and in

tracing the more subtle sins to their hiding-place. We might refer, for instance, to his sermon on "The Christian Race," which, though posthumous in its publication, and mainly gathered from notes that had been taken and treasured by eager listeners, and though showing here and there a jagged and unfinished sentence, yet in its sudden home-thrusts, its picturesque flashes, its homely allusion to the living world around him, its short proverbial sayings, which, when once heard, could never be forgotten, and its perilous hardihood of reproof, reminds us not a little of the style of Latimer. No doubt, there is an excess of technical language, and an elaboration and minuteness of subdivision, so common to the age, in many of Rutherford's sermons, which are apt to offend and even to repel some modern readers. But still the vessel is of gold, although we may not always like the chasing. And if we are to estimate his power as a preacher, we must not merely judge of him as we sit and calmly read one of his sermons in our library, or at our fireside, but we must connect with this the living man as he spoke, and the ethereal countenance that illuminated the words, weighing well the remark that had long before been made of Bishop Andrewes, that "those who stole his sermons could never steal his preaching, which in its way was inimitable." There was an evident delight to Rutherford in the work of his pulpit; for constitutional, as well as higher and stronger reasons, it was his element; he rejoiced in preaching as the lark or the nightingale may be supposed to delight in its song.

But it was something far more than mere learning of

natural eloquence, that helped to make Samuel Rutherford's ministry what it was. The record of his devotional habits is profoundly interesting. He was accustomed to rise every morning at three o'clock, and the whole of the earlier hours of the day were spent by him in prayer, meditation, and study. And he came forth from his chamber, strong with a strength which was derived from heaven. He was one of those who believed that as the eagle cannot soar upon a single wing, so the ministry is unprofitable and joyless which stints devotion, and fails to keep up a constant intercourse with God. To secure for himself a more complete retirement and a greater security against interruption, there was a hallowed spot about mid-way between his manse and his church, to which it was his frequent practice to retire for prolonged devout thought and prayer, and which is well known to this hour as "Rutherford's Walk." Christian biography tells us of other eminent men of God who wrought and suffered nobly in their day, who loved such natural sanctuaries, as Jeremy Taylor's at Golden Grove in Wales, and holy Leighton's along the banks of the Allan and beneath the willows at Dunblane. The trees are now young which surround the place where our Anwoth pastor walked and mused. But it is easy to imagine tall and aged trees inclosing the spot in his days, their branches meeting overhead, with rays of sunlight piercing through the shady foliage, and forming a natural sanctuary, like that where Jacob wrestled of old with the angel by the margin of the little brook. It did not need the ladder with its bright angels to make the place where

he spent long hours with God, become to Rutherford "the gate of heaven." There are hints in his letters which assure us that his Anwoth parish was many a time, in that calm retreat, the burden of his prayers. "There I wrestled with the angel and prevailed. Woods, trees, meadows, and hills are my witnesses that I drew on a fair meeting betwixt Christ and Anwoth."

The latter portion of each day was devoted by our young minister to the miscellaneous duties of an earnest pastorate,—such as the visitation of the sick, the sorrowful, and the dying, catechizing, and the encouragement in godly living of the families of his congregation. He never dreamed that his work was done, when he had preached to as many as chose to gather around him at the sound of his church bell on "the first day of the week." He was sensitively alive to his position as one of Christ's under-shepherds, appointed to take the oversight of souls. He therefore endeavoured to know each individual member of his flock by personal intercourse, and so to place himself in sympathy with each, that if any were afflicted, he was afflicted; and if any rejoiced, he rejoiced also. By this means he was the better qualified to adapt his instructions to the spiritual condition of his people, and the way to their hearts became less difficult when every one of his parishioners was brought to regard him as a friend. And as his parish was extensive and mountainous, thinly peopled, and without a single village in it, we may imagine the devoted man wending his way among the ferns and the heather, far up on the hills amid the haunts of the curlew and the plover, crossing swollen

streams and dangerous mountain torrents, that he might carry Divine consolation to some new-made widow, and heaven's light to the lonely "shieling" of one who was ready to die. Few things have more impressed us in the repeated perusal of his letters, than the evidence which they afford of the intimate acquaintance which he sought to acquire with the spiritual condition of each household and individual in his charge, and the anxiety with which he followed up this spiritual diagnosis, by reproof, or warning, or encouragement, as the case might be. Indeed, as we have thought of his prolonged devotion in the closet, of his fervour in the pulpit, and his unflagging diligence in the details of his pastoral care, we have seemed to ourselves, to see realized in his one example, the "Reformed pastor" of Baxter, and the "Country parson" of George Herbert.

Those rural walks of Rutherford, favourably influenced his ministry in another form. The natural pictures and domestic customs which daily caught his notice reflected themselves, in a hundred ways, in his sermons, and yet more, perhaps, in those extraordinary letters which succeeding generations have not allowed to let die. One is often startled by the fine analogies drawn from the outer world, by which the earthly was made to minister to the heavenly, and the holy ingenuity by which everything was made to yield its tribute to the pulpit. On the same principle, men have noticed the frequent occurrence of military metaphors in those works of Jeremy Taylor which were written by him when he was chaplain to the royal army. The rapid flow of the Solway tides, the man

who had been walking and wandering in the mist suddenly passing into sunshine, the use of the winter frost in destroying weeds, the language of bargain-making, the local customs at fairs and markets, the current local proverbs, not to speak of the beautiful things of the earth and the glories of the sky—all are used to supply something of the substance and colouring to our preacher's lessons.

“ Love had he found in huts where poor men lie :
 His daily teachers had been woods and rills ;
 The silence that is in the starry sky ;
 The sleep that is among the lonely hills.”

It is remarkable that, even after the attendance on his ministry had become large, Rutherford continued, for a time, very slow to believe that his labours were crowned with the highest form of success in the conversion of men. We find him, a good while after his settlement in Anwoth, complaining of this, and longing to witness a Divine seal of his apostleship. One fact which may help to account for his unduly desponding impressions is that in general, when extensive religious good is about to descend on a district, the blessing first shows itself in the quickened religious life of those who are already the happy subjects of Divine grace, and that it is only after the living have been revived, that the dead are raised. This is the common order of the Divine procedure. Beyond this, it is not unlikely that part of the explanation, in the case of our anxious minister, was to be found in the characteristic shrinking of the natives of the northern part of our island, and not least in young converts, from speaking to others of their experience in the

new life. They are unwilling, at first, to tell their love except to the object of it. Gradually, however, unmistakable tokens appeared which made visible the seal of heaven upon his work, and assured him, by indications as certain as when the sprouting buds and the return of the song-birds tell of the advent of spring, that his labour had not been in vain. The interest spread and deepened. From many a parish far remote from Anwoth, that was without a faithful ministry, multitudes flocked to Rutherford hungering for the manna of heavenly truth. Wherever he went to preach, he had a similar experience. The words of his earliest biographer scarcely exceed the fact, when he declares that "the whole country were indeed to him, and accounted by themselves, as his particular flock." One outstanding feature in his Anwoth experiences was the great benefit that attended his ministry in the families of the nobility and gentry of the district, whose castles and mansions became nurseries of piety, and abounded in young disciples. Livingstone expressly mentions that the shower of blessing at length descended upon many of the poor and ignorant of the people whom he brought to the knowledge and practice of religion. But while the parish as a whole became a "Hephzibah," there were some among his parishioners whose fickleness and inconstancy grieved him much, and whom he compared to ice which, when melted, is easily frozen again; and there were a few who continued openly to resist and defy his every effort to bring them into subjection to the gentle yoke of Christ. Such open resistance, he met with equally open rebuke.

On a certain Sabbath, after public worship, when he was on his way across a mountain to visit at a death-bed, coming suddenly upon some young men who were profaning the Sabbath, he stood still and rebuked them with a terrible solemnity that suspended their sports for the day, after the manner of one of the ancient prophets, calling upon three stones half embedded in the earth that were near at hand, to bear witness to his rebuke and warning. Two of these stones remain, and are known to this day as "Rutherford's witnesses."

It will not surprise any one who has been accustomed to study the ways of Divine Providence, that an instrument whom God was employing for such eminent uses, should again and again have been tempered in the fires of affliction, or, to use Rutherford's own words, that the thorn should often be made to intertwine with the rose. This "Tentatio," or chastisement of trial, was Luther's third necessary thing for the education of a minister of Christ. Before he reached the fifth year of his pastorate, a quartan fever had laid him prostrate for thirteen weeks, leaving him in such a condition of debility that even his loved work was, for a time, a burden to him. Soon after this, his wife, of whom little is known, but of whom he speaks in his letters as "the desire of his eyes," was taken from him, after a protracted illness in which her mind as well as her body appears to have suffered, and under these "wrestlings of God" his "soul was filled with gall and wormwood." The children of their marriage had predeceased the young mother, and the same day that wrote him widowed,

saw him childless. Then his aged and widowed mother, who had come from her home in Roxburghshire to be with him in her own loneliness and in his bereavement, soon after sunk into such infirmity and helplessness as to become the occasion of constant anxiety and distress. But when his darkness seemed at the greatest, the only daughter of the Provost of Kirkcudbright, a young lady growing into womanhood, was cheerfully yielded up, and sent to minister to him, and like a sunbeam in the house, to light up his desolate home by her cheerful piety ; while all through his long season of sorrow, when God's billows were rolling over him, with some brief intervals of depression, his strong faith held up his head above the waters.

An incident is recorded as having taken place at a somewhat earlier period in his pastorate, the truth of which has been questioned by some, but which is at least not so very improbable as they have represented it, and which is so beautiful in itself, as to make us wish that it were true. The story, as it has been narrated by different writers, varies in some of its details, but it is substantially the same in all. We are told that the devout and learned Archbishop Usher was on his way from England to his diocese in Armagh, and that passing near Anwoth on a Saturday afternoon, anxious to listen to the preaching of one of whose piety and eloquence he had heard much, he assumed the disguise of a wayfaring man, or mendicant, and turning aside to Anwoth manse, asked lodging for the night. According to the custom and law of the good pastor's house, not to be "forgetful to entertain strangers," he

was readily received. It was the practice of Mrs. Rutherford, while her husband was engaged in finishing his preparations for the coming Lord's Day, to gather together her servants and the "strangers within her gate," for the purpose of catechizing them on some religious subject; and on this occasion the stranger in lowly garb readily joined the little circle of catechumens. Probably for the purpose of testing the knowledge of the wayfarer, Mrs. Rutherford asked him how many commandments there were? To which he answered, "Eleven." Regarding this as evidence of unusual ignorance, she expressed to her husband, at a later period in the evening, her fears that the stranger was very ill-instructed in religion, and mentioned as evidence of the fact that he did not even know the number of the commandments. Rising early on the Sabbath morning, and retiring for prolonged devotion to his sanctuary not far off among the trees, Rutherford was astonished to find that there was one there already engaged in solitary worship. It was the stranger who had been welcomed the night before to his hospitality. Listening, he was struck with the evidence which his words afforded of the religious knowledge and the depth of devotion of the suppliant; and as soon as the prayer was ended he accosted him, and told him that he was certain that he was not the mendicant that he appeared to be. Disguise was no longer necessary or possible, and Usher, not unwillingly, revealed himself. The scene ended in Rutherford's urging him to preach for him, to which Usher assented, not averse to conform for the day to the simpler forms of Presbyterian worship. He read out as

his text those words of the Master : "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another." This explained all. "There," whispered Rutherford to his wife, "is the eleventh commandment." Those who have denied the reality of this beautiful incident should remember that Archbishop Usher was pre-eminently a lover of all good men, that he never sympathized with that ecclesiastical assumption and exclusiveness which did so much to produce and embitter the controversies of the age, and that he was even the author of a scheme of comprehension by which he hoped that Episcopalians and Presbyterians would one day be included in one common pale. Let the further fact be added that the military road by which Usher must have passed from England to Portpatrick, on his way to Ireland, passed by the gate of the Anwoth manse, and that, within the memory of old men, the daily post to Ireland passed by the same gate ; and when facts like these are remembered, is not the unlikelihood greatly diminished ? What a Sabbath evening must that have been which was spent by the two men of God ! The points of ecclesiastical difference were no doubt, for the time, forgotten, in their conscious unity, produced by their common faith, and hope, and life. They ascended together in thought from the valley of conflict to the "delectable mountains," and obtained blessed glimpses and foretastes of the land of love.

Rutherford must now be supposed to have been nine years in Anwoth in the exercise of a ministry of prayer and power, which had raised higher the standard of

religious life, not only in his mountain parish, but more or less over the whole of Galloway. But ecclesiastical matters in Scotland had, meanwhile, been tending to the worse, especially in the form of innovations, both in doctrine and worship, and in a growing intolerance towards those who had the conscience and the courage to set their face steadfastly against them. It was almost certain that the Anwoth pastor, who had been unflinching and prominent in this resistance, would, sooner or later, be made to feel the iron hand of prelatic tyranny laid upon him. He had done not a little to provoke this treatment, though not to justify it. All along he had maintained a correspondence with ministers in Edinburgh who were opposed to the introduction of changes in the manner of Divine worship, that were the mere traditions of men, and who condemned divergence from the true doctrine of the Reformed Church. He had joined them in their public testimonies against these evils, and had done his utmost to foster the same spirit in others, especially in the two provinces of which Anwoth was the centre. To all this he had added another occasion of offence which, in the estimate of some, was the most difficult of any to forgive. In the midst of his absorbing pastoral duties, he had found time to write and publish a learned work against the peculiar tenets of Arminius, which awakened much attention and discussion both at home and in Holland.¹ The effect was to produce great indignation among the bishops, and not a few of the inferior clergy in both parts of the island, with

¹ “*Exercitationes Apologeticæ pro Divina Gratia.*”

many of whom those tenets had become fashionable. And their displeasure was aggravated by the fact that Rutherford had dealt many hard words and, as some thought, harder arguments against Dr. Jackson, the learned Bishop of Peterborough, who had deserted to Arminianism, and was at that time basking in the sunshine of royal favour.

Much of this would probably have been borne with by the bishops of earlier years, who were forbearing and moderate in their treatment of men who, like Rutherford, had never promised unqualified subjection to episcopal authority. But the younger occupants of vacant sees were, in general, high-handed and intolerant, and had determined not only to prevent the entrance of men of Rutherford's stamp into vacant parishes, but to strain every effort, as opportunity offered, to extrude those who refused to bend to their wishes. And, as, in later years, every bishop had received power to institute a High Commission Court in his diocese, composed of himself and a few clergymen and laymen, whom he had the exclusive right to nominate, and as this court had power to imprison all within their jurisdiction who resisted their authority, it is easy to see what a terrible instrument of oppression and wrong this put into the hands of unscrupulous ecclesiastics. Of this class was Sydserf, a man not without some arid learning, but constitutionally arrogant and overbearing, who looked with an evil eye upon those who, like Rutherford, feared their consciences more than the threats of men. He had recently been transferred from the

see of Brechin to that of Galloway, and he had not long been seated on his new episcopal throne, when this holy minister, who had done so much to turn his own and neighbouring parishes into a "garden of the Lord," was summoned to appear on a charge of nonconformity before the High Commission Court, across the neighbouring bay, at Wigtown, and was summarily deprived of his ministerial office. Not satisfied with this unrighteous deprivation, and desiring to have his sentence not merely confirmed, but made more sweeping and severe, Sydsenf next summoned him to appear before the central High Commission Court at Edinburgh, charging him, not only with nonconformity, but with treason, and what Rutherford regarded as the offence which had done much to intensify the enmity of the bishop and others against him—his having written a book against the Arminians. Three wearisome days were spent in his trial. Hour after hour he was teased with questions which had no connection with the charges against him, but by which they hoped to draw out answers that would entangle him in his speech. But the unworthy device failed in its aim, for he "answered them not a word." When he had spoken his defence, it became evident that some of the commissioners had been moved by his statements, and were disposed to acquit him. The young Lord of Lorne, that future Marquis of Argyle, who, many years after, was to be doubly ennobled by martyrdom, was present, and took part in his vindication, exposing the utterly frivolous and unfounded nature of the charges on which it was sought to condemn the man of God.

At the close of his speech, the scales seemed ready to turn on the side of justice ; but his relentless accuser perceiving this, and knowing the timid and time-serving character of many of the judges, declared, with an oath, that, if they refused to decide according to his wish, he would lay the whole matter before the king. This argument prevailed, and the majority "gave their vote against him." Rutherford was deposed from his pastoral office, forbidden, under pain of rebellion, to officiate as a minister in any part of Scotland, required to be in Aberdeen before the 20th day of the following month (August, 1636), and to be confined there during the king's pleasure. His first emotion on hearing the iniquitous sentence was one of holy joy that he was "counted worthy to suffer shame for Christ's name." "There is no quarrel," said he, "more honest or honourable than to suffer for truth. That honour my kind Lord hath now bestowed upon me, even to suffer for my royal and princely king, Jesus. I go to my king's palace at Aberdeen ; tongue, pen, and wit cannot express my joy !"

CHAPTER III.

ABERDEEN.—“THE LORD’S PRISONER.”

ON his way northward, Rutherford turned aside to visit David Dickson, at Irvine, a minister of congenial spirit and of high reputation for sacred learning and piety like himself, whose name is known to this day over Scotland as the reputed author of “O mother, dear, Jerusalem,” a hymn containing some lines of plaintive beauty, which even Bernard need not have disdained to own. What hours must those have been in which the two saintly men strengthened each other’s faith and courage; and in their communion with their Lord and wrestling supplication, their spirits rose above the earth, and they entered for a time into the glory-cloud!

Rutherford reached Aberdeen at the appointed time, accompanied by a deputation of his good people, who had travelled with him all the long way from Anwoth, and who “all wept sore” at their severance from such a pastor “so holie, learned, and modest.” This northern city was chosen as the place of his banishment, not only because of its great distance from his parish, but also because it was at that time the acknowledged stronghold of Arminian doctrine and Erastian polity, where,

it was calculated, he would have few to sympathize with him, and would be likely to do the least harm. It was an atmosphere in which such an ecclesiastic as Laud would have delighted to breathe. All the ministers of the city were against him, as well as the professors of theology. He described his reception by the people as “at the best, a dry kindness.” His heart was touched when he heard men speaking of him as he passed along the streets, as “the banished minister;” but the pain which this produced was momentary, for we find him speaking in many of his letters of this very name as “his garland,” and describing himself as “the Lord’s prisoner,” as if he had received Christ’s patent of nobility by his exile.

Not long after his arrival in Aberdeen the doctors and divines, probably counting on an easy victory, challenged the solitary stranger to a dispute on the Arminian points and innovations in worship. But had they taken due measure of the man they had to deal with, whether in his learning or his dialectic skill, they would not have been so ready to call him into the lists, even though they knew that the stream of popular sympathy was flowing more strongly in their favour than in any other place in Scotland, north or south of the Don and the Dee. A Dr. Barron, who was the ablest among the disputants, was set forth as the Goliath of his party. There were three discussions; but in the third encounter their champion received so many hard rubs and falls that they gave the “banished minister” a wide berth ever afterwards.

To estimate the severity of his punishment, it must be noticed that his sentence not only included in it banishment during the king's pleasure from Anwoth and from that flock for which he had prayed and laboured during nine years of a most earnest and fruitful ministry, and which he had loved as his own soul; but that he was absolutely prohibited from preaching in Aberdeen or elsewhere on pain, if he transgressed, of being punished as a rebel. How like in spirit was all this to the Conventicle and Five Mile Acts under which his Puritan fellow-sufferers groaned! It was this latter ingredient especially, that made his cup so full and bitter, and even appeared to cloud his trial with mystery. He could almost have written of himself in the words of his great contemporary, as—

“ Fallen on evil days,
In darkness, and with dangers compassed round
And solitude.”

Why should his lips have been permitted to be sealed from speaking on that subject of which his heart was so full, and of which men needed so much to hear? Why should his one gift be disowned of heaven and sent to be hidden in the earth? Questions like these arising in his mind, shaped themselves at times into rebellious thoughts against the Divine government which he found it difficult to repress. At other times, his circumstances led him to great heart-searchings, in which he accused himself of having diminished in ardour during the later years of his Anwoth ministry, and, imagining this, perhaps, to be God's reason for his deprivation, he pleaded,

much and long, for Divine forgiveness. How many a saint has travelled by such a path as this, through the darkness into light! At length, there came a spirit of unreserved submission, in which he was ready to wait God’s time for explanation and deliverance, and then the storm became a calm, and his peace was great. With little change of phrase he could have adopted, in his waiting, solitary hours, the words of a greater sufferer—

“A little bird I am,
 Shut from the fields of air,
 And in my cage I sit and sing
 To Him who placed me there,
 Well pleased a prisoner to be,
 Because, my God, it pleaseth Thee.

Nought else have I to do—
 I sing the whole day long,
 And He whom most I love to please
 Doth listen to my song :
 He caught and bound my wand’ring wing,
 But still He bends to hear me sing.”¹

Still, this did not prevent him from many a longing and loving thought about his “fair, fair Anwoth,” as he was wont to speak of it. The quiet sanctuary among the hills rose before his imagination, and night and day he was present with his people in spirit. And when the Sabbath returned, now a silent Sabbath to him, his inward ear seemed to hear the voice of psalms as the now shepherdless flock lifted up their hearts in “grave, sweet melody.” The true pastor’s heart reveals itself in many a passage in his letters, which must often have been

¹ Madame Guyon, Convent of St. Marie.

bedewed with tears; reminding us of Howe's weariness of spirit and heart-exile amid the bustle and splendour of Cromwell's court at Whitehall, as he yearned for permission to return to congenial work in his rural parish at Torrington. He thus writes in a letter to Baxter: "I have devoted myself to serve God in the work of the ministry, and how can I want the pleasure of hearing their cryings and complaints, who have come to me under convictions, &c. ? I shall beseech you to weigh my case again."

This is Rutherford's frequent testimony: "I am for the present thinking the sparrows and swallows that build their nests at Anwoth blessed birds." "Oh that Christ would come home to me and bring summer with Him; that I might preach His beauty and glory as once I did, before my clay-tent be removed to darkness; that my branches might be watered with the dew of God, and my joy in His work might grow green again, and bud, and send out a flower!" In another place he speaks more sadly of God, as "seeking to take down his sails, and to let his vessel lie on the coast, like an old broken ship that is no more for the sea." Again he complains, "I had but one eye, and they have put it out. My one joy, next to the flower of my joys, Christ, was to preach my sweetest, sweetest Master and the glory of His kingdom; and it seemed no cruelty to them to put out the poor man's one eye." And here is the very intensity of longing, "Oh, if I might but speak to three or four herdboys of my worthy Master, I would be satisfied to be the meanest and most obscure of all the pastors in this

land, and to live in any place, in any of Christ’s basest outhouses !”

But while “the banished minister” thus mourned over his enforced silence, he was the last man to allow his energies to rust and be consumed in unavailing regrets. In common with many others of the persecuted and silenced men of his times, he sought solace and usefulness in the preparation of books when the pulpit was closed against him. How many of the best books that enrich the theological and religious literature of our land were produced in troublous times, and, like Baxter’s “Saints’ Rest,” bear on them the marks of fire! It is understood that at this period Rutherford contemplated a work on Hosea, and that he actually made some progress in the preparation of a Commentary on Isaiah, though it never reached more than the dimensions of a fragment. One is apt to regret the fact that such a work by such a man remained unfinished, for there was much of the prophet’s sublimity and holy fire in Samuel Rutherford. There was even an Oriental tinge about his imagination which would have brought him into closer sympathy with that greatest of Hebrew prophets, whose hallowed lips were touched with heavenly fire. It has been the fate of more than one of those prophets of the olden time, the greater number of whom were poets, to have been interpreted by men who were of dry, prosaic minds; who were great in words, but who were wanting alike in that exalted devotion and creative fancy which were necessary to bring them into sympathy with the seer, and to penetrate into the inner soul of such men as Isaiah. A poet is

needed fully to interpret a poet. Who would select a mere mathematician to write illustrative notes on Milton? or who would ask a person to produce a dissertation on the solar spectrum who was himself colour-blind?

And, though strictly forbidden to exercise his public ministry in this place of his exile, Rutherford was not excluded from the more quiet ministry of conversation, and of that personal influence which emanated from such a man, unconsciously but surely, as fragrance from a flower. After the lapse of many months, in which he had enough to do to overcome prejudice, he began to discover that the scattered seeds which had been sown by him in visits to families, and in incidental interviews by the wayside, had not all been lost. And when the good man thus "saw the grace of God, he was glad." He writes in one of his letters, "There are some blossomings of Christ's kingdom in this town, and the smoke is rising and the ministers are raging; but I like a rumbling and roaring devil best." He read in these "little braidings of God's seed" some explanation of his banishment, and reward of his patient waiting. But when the fact came to be known by the ministers of the city and the dignitaries of the university, it filled them with new alarm. The efforts of one devoted earnest man fluttered the whole school of easy-going theologians, and kept them ill at ease. They "examined and threatened the people that haunted his company," and began to speak of procuring his banishment to Caithness, or to one of the Orkney Isles, or even outside the kingdom. Rutherford heard of all this, but he com-

forted himself with the thought that, wherever they might send him, they “could not banish him from his Master’s presence.”

In the midst of all his labours and exercises, Rutherford’s chief thoughts continued to be given to his bereaved flock at Anwoth. He felt himself to be still their shepherd. “Who was weak and he was not weak? Who was offended and he burned not?” Maintaining a steady correspondence with the elders and more intelligent members of his Church, he was kept acquainted with the incidents of his parish and the spiritual condition of his people, and was ever ready with words of comfort, or direction, or warning, or even of solemn rebuke, as the case might be. No tendency to defection or conformity to innovations and corruptions, in order, as he expressed it, “to keep a whole skin, or a peaceful tabernacle,” could elude his sharp remonstrance. No sorrowing heart was without a leaf of consolation. Many of these letters were treasured in the midst of choicest jewels, in halls and castles; others were circulated in farm-house and cottage, until they became stained with thumb-marks and tears. And these letters solved the mystery of Rutherford’s exile and enforced silence, at which even his strong faith had, for a time, stumbled; for in writing them, he was unconsciously doing a work not only for his little flock among the mountains of Galloway, but for the Church of Christ in his own and other lands, from which many a devout soul would receive impulse and quickening, and many a tried heart would drink consolation for centuries to come. It is probable that Paul only knew in part

how much his imprisonment in Rome, by giving him occasion and opportunity to write some of his greatest epistles, instead of proving a hindrance, "turned out rather for the furtherance of the gospel," and made him the apostle of all time. And when Bunyan, withdrawn from preaching to thirsting multitudes on the moors and commons of England, lay in his prison at Bedford, dreaming, and recording his glorious dream, he little imagined that he was preparing a world's book, the charm and power of which would be owned alike by the peasant at his plough, and by the uncrowned kings of science, philosophy, and song. It was the same, in its degree, with Samuel Rutherford. His Master sent him into exile to write letters. They were not gathered and published until after he had ascended to Immanuel's land. It never entered into his heart to imagine that they were among the things which men would not willingly let die—a bundle of myrrh whose ointment and perfume would revive and gladden the heart of many generations that would arise and call their author blessed. But they were a part of God's plan of his life. It has been scarcely too strongly said, that "when Rutherford was banished to Aberdeen and forbidden to preach, his writing-desk was perhaps the most effective and widely resounding pulpit then in old Christendom."

CHAPTER IV.

ABERDEEN: LETTERS.—“THE SON OF CONSOLATION.”

WE are not aware of any country, except France, that has exceeded our own, in the number and variety of eminent men and women, whose wit and wisdom, whose affections and dislikes, have sought expression in letters that have won for themselves a permanent place in the national literature. The rare gift of “talking on paper” has a fascination for multitudes, the sparkle and satire sometimes making amends for the absence of qualities of a higher nature.

And our religious literature has not been without its volumes of letters which have stood the test of time and of changing tastes and circumstances, some of them containing the rarest gems of epistolary correspondence. Out of many of these, three collections may especially be named.

The letters of John Newton, the pastor of Olney and the friend and companion of Cowper, though the growth of three generations back, still maintain a cherished place in the libraries and hearts of those who are Christians in something more than name. Written in an

easy style, they are distinguished by great natural shrewdness, which has been "sanctified by the word of God and prayer." Addressed to almost every class and condition of men, and dealing with many a phase of religious experience, they show a remarkable combination of spiritual diagnosis in detecting what is wrong, and of the physician's skill in knowing how to deal with it. Without much more than the average learning of a country parson of his time, Newton's deep personal piety and extraordinary personal experience supplied him with the best key to many a difficult text of Scripture on which his correspondents sought his explanation; and without any rare metaphysical acumen, his good sense helped him to the right solution of many a perplexing point in moral casuistry. To hundreds of distressed spirits groping their way to light, he proved a wise guide, helping them out of "Doubting Castle;" and to many a Rachel who "was weeping and refused to be comforted," his letters came as a fresh leaf plucked from the tree of life. In nothing did he show his wisdom and tenderness more, than in bearing with the errors and mistakes of young inquirers, not scolding and dragooning, when speaking kindly and even compassionately was far more needed, nor severely blaming them because they did not, all at once, stand in a position which it had taken him months, and even years, to reach. The Church owes him much for his rare wisdom and charity to Mr. Scott, the future commentator, when he was, almost unconsciously, struggling his way, through gloom and tempest, to the cross. We suppose his sermons are

now seldom read ; but his hymns, intertwined with those of Cowper, are preserved in amber in the hymnals of all the churches, and his letters belong to that class which a living church will not readily cast aside.

Our position is not likely to be questioned when we claim for Cowper's letters a supreme place, not only in epistolary literature, but in religious compositions. For while he does not profess to convey religious instruction, or to guide distressed consciences, yet, in all his letters he looks upon nature and providence, and upon man's wants and sins and sorrows, with the eye of one who has been taught in the school of Christ. On the library table of innumerable Christians, Cowper's letters rest to this day, in close proximity to their Bible. We can scarcely imagine any one to rise from their perusal, even for the twentieth time, without finding his heart bettered. In their moral and literary aspects there is the rarest mingling of qualities ; an almost childlike simplicity, with subtle thought and keen perception of character ; “ the affectionateness of a woman with the strong sense of a man ; ” a marvellous power of ridicule, with a benevolence that would shrink from wounding a worm. On one page, he seems shy and pensive as a recluse ; on the next, he has become playful as one of his own hares. Yet all is so natural and unaffected that no one can doubt that his letters are the very mirror of his heart. We never suspect him, as Pope has been suspected, of thinking more, when writing, of the public than of his correspondent. His satire plays upon you like a sunbeam, instead of piercing and rankling like an arrow, and it has been

well described as "the satire of pleasantry rather than the scorn of indignation." And all is written in a style so felicitous that the best word seems always to have been chosen to express his meaning, and to have been commanded into its place as with a magician's wand. One feels that he owes a personal debt of gratitude to Cowper's cousin, Lady Hesketh, and to the family of Unwins, whose affectionate and sunny pleasantry won him forth from the shades of melancholy, and "stirred up the gift that was in him." Cowper's letters will last as long as his poems, and these can only perish with the English tongue.

But the letters of Samuel Rutherford occupy a place in our religious literature distinct from either of those which we have named. In many respects they stand unique among this class of compositions. In all, they are 365 in number; the earliest having been written from his beloved Anwoth, in 1627, and one of the latest to James Guthrie, of Stirling, one of Scotland's greatest martyrs, only three weeks before his own death, and when he was himself expecting to be called to wear the martyr's crown. But of these, no fewer than 220 were written during his exile and imprisonment in Aberdeen, and were often dated by him, especially in his happier moods, "from my king's palace." The postal system was very imperfect in those days—it was not always safe to be taken advantage of by a man in Rutherford's circumstances—and we may well suppose that, in not a few instances, the letter had no address or inscription on the outside; but, as in the case of the old Roman "tabel-

larius,” it was committed to the hands of a private letter-carrier, who was made acquainted with the name of the person to whom it was to be conveyed. A large proportion of these compositions were addressed to Lady Kenmure and Marion Macnaught, holy women who had “laboured much with him in the Lord” when at Anwoth, and whose gentle and heroic spirits were in fullest sympathy with him in his convictions and in his exile. Other letters were drawn out by the sorrows and bereavements that befel his parishioners during his absence; while others were sent to rebuke backsliders, to arrest young men who had entered on evil courses, and to warn those who were showing tendencies to defection, and seemed ready to violate conscience and to make unprincipled concessions, “thinking,” as he expressed it, “to steal to heaven with a whole skin.” The simple fact that, after two centuries and a half, these letters are still read and relished by myriads, and relished the most by persons who have risen to the higher type of the Christian life, is sufficient to prove that the “asbestos” element is present in them; and when we look at their distinguishing qualities, there does not seem any reason to doubt that they shall be as extensively read and delighted in, as rich in angels’ food and fragrant with heavenly spices, for a millennium to come. We express this judgment in full recognition of the fact that Rutherford’s letters were not collected and published until some time after his death, and that they had not the benefit of his selection and revision; that, as the unavoidable consequence of this, and of their having

been written at different times and to so many different persons, there is an occasional repetition of the same thought, sometimes even in the same setting of words; and further that there is an intermingling of Scotticisms, and of obsolete English words which many have mistaken for Scotticisms, which, though adding in many instances to their effect at the time, here and there require an explanatory note, or a glossary, for a modern reader. It only indicates the more, the presence of "the vital spark of heavenly flame," that their acceptance, even in our fastidious days, has not been seriously hindered by these imperfections and blemishes.

It is impossible for any man of average intelligence to have read many pages of these wonderful epistles without discerning the powerful influence upon the writer's mind of "The Song of Solomon." This is traceable not only in the Oriental glow and gorgeousness of much of his imagery, but yet more in the pervading presence in his mind of the resemblance between the virtuous mutual love between the husband and the wife, and that between Christ, the heavenly Bridegroom, and His people, which was almost universally believed in his days, and which many continue to believe in our own, to have been the key-note of the Canticles as well as of the Forty-fifth Psalm. And the influence of the Old Testament prophets appears in many of his letters. Especially when exposing national sins and defections, and proclaiming the coming retribution, there is not only the terrible solemnity of the old Hebrew bards, who seem, at times, to have trembled under the burden of their message,

but something even of their rhythm and cadence, as they stood like Elijah with uplifted hand upon Carmel, or wailed like Jeremiah amid the ruins of Jerusalem.

We have many a time been struck with his rare skill in laying open the subtle self-deceptions of the human heart in its unchanged depravity, and not less, with his wisdom as a spiritual guide in dealing with the varied experiences and strange phases of character, which show themselves at times in those who belong to the kingdom of God. There is scarcely a letter in which you do not meet with some original thought that seems to have come fresh from the mint of his brain, sometimes compacted into a proverb, or shaped into an epigram that would not have been unworthy of a place in the “*Imitatio Christi*,” and at other times in the form of some striking analogy drawn from the outer world, expanding like a summer flower into a passage of exquisite beauty over which you like to linger and wonder. It would not, indeed, be difficult to trace in many of his sententious sayings and suggestive analogies, the germ-thought of hymns that have become the common property of all the Churches.

He possessed a tremendous power of rebuke, particularly when exposing wickedness in high places, or condemning cowardly compromise for the sake of some worldly advantage, or desertion in those hours of conflict which try men’s spirits as gold is tried by the refiner’s fire. This fearless fidelity arose from the fact that he had himself counted the cost of being faithful at all hazards, and made himself familiar not only with the

prospect of suffering, but even of a martyr's death, for Christ's sake. Some of the grandest passages in his letters were evidently written, when the image of the scaffold and the headsman's axe had risen before his spirit. But if his power of rebuke was great, his power in consolation was greater. Few men knew as he did how to interpret Providence by the Word, and the Word by Providence, which he sometimes described as marginal readings placed alongside of the inspired page. How many a sorrowful countenance did he light up with a strange joy! Some of the most beautiful passages in his letters, or indeed in religious literature, were written to mothers at Anwoth when they had been bereaved of an only son.

One effect of many of his letters is to raise his readers for the time above the earth and earthly things, and to enable them to realize, as with the eye of sense, the things that are unseen and eternal. And this was because he himself so distinctly realized "the powers of the world to come." We are not aware of any book that may be compared with his letters in this excellence, unless it be Baxter's "Saints' Rest." We stand, as it were, beside him on some lofty mountain far away from the din, and whirl, and gaudy pageantry of the world, and, looking into the great infinitude above us, think how little we are, and how great is God. We think of him, at times, sitting in his lonely chamber at Aberdeen in the consciousness that he is "Christ's prisoner," and—

"With looks commercing with the skies,
His rapt soul sitting in his eyes,"

meditating on the invisible and eternal, and then committing his thoughts to his half-written page. But the noblest passages of all, inspired at once by poetry and devotion, are those in which his spirit kindles into adoring thoughts of the love of Christ, and ever soaring, like the lark, as he sings, his language becomes so glowing, so rapturous, so sublime, and pure that you seem to hear in them the faint echoes of heaven's high worship and praise.

We shall enrich our chapter with some extracts from the letters which, although severed from their connection and setting, will be recognized as little wedges of genuine gold, fragrant and pungent bundles of myrrh, fully justifying the estimate we have expressed regarding the letters as a whole.

How heavenly-mindedness helps us to endure the troubles of life: “Go up beforehand and see your lodging. Look through your Father's rooms in heaven; in your Father's house are many dwelling-places. Men take a sight of lands ere they buy them. I know that Christ hath made the bargain already; but be kind to the house ye are going to, and see it often.”

“Oh, thrice fools are we who, like new-born princes weeping in the cradle, know not that there is a kingdom before them.”

Our safety does not depend on frames: “Believe Christ's love more than your own feeling. Your Rock doth not ebb and flow, though your sea doth.”

Benefit of intercourse among Christians: “As night

watchers, keep one another waking by speaking one to another."

You have been saved, seek to save others: "Take as many to heaven with you as ye are able to draw. The more ye draw with you, ye will be the welcomer yourself. Be no niggard, or sparing churl of the grace of God."

The saint's refuge: "I creep under my Lord's wings in the great shower, and the water cannot reach me."

On making a gain of godliness: "Woe is me that the holy profession of Christ is made a stage garment by many, to bring home a vain fame!"

Proverbial sayings: "While it is fair weather, mend the sails of the ship." "He who loveth his chains, deserveth chains." "They are not worthy of Jesus, who will not take a blow for their Master's sake." "It becometh not Christ to hold any man's stirrup." "The distance between us and Christ is death." "The worst of Christ, even His chaff, is better than the world's coin." "Dry wells send us to the fountain." "To suffer for Christ is the garland and flower of all crosses." "Losses for Christ are but our goods given out in bank in Christ's hand."

To a mother on the death of her infant daughter: "Ye have lost a child; nay, she is not lost to you who is found to Christ. She is not sent away, but only sent before, like unto a star which, going out of our sight, doth not die and vanish, but shineth in another hemisphere. Ye see her not, but she doth shine in another country."¹

¹ There is a beautiful echo of these words in the following lines of

Fruit on the tree of affliction: “The thorn is one of the most cursed, and angry, and crabbed weeds that the earth yieldeth; and yet out of it springeth the rose, one of the sweetest smelled flowers, and most delightful to the eye, that the world hath. If ye knew what is before you, ye would rejoice in your tribulations. Think ye it a small honour to stand before the throne of God and the Lamb? and to be clothed in white, and to be called to the marriage supper of the Lamb? and to be led to the fountain of living waters, and to come to the well-head, even God Himself, and to get your fill of the clear, cold, sweet, refreshing water of life—the King’s own well? and to put up your own sinful hand to the tree of life, and take down and eat the sweetest apple in all God’s heavenly paradise, Jesus Christ, your Life and your Lord? Up your heart! Shout for joy! Your King is coming to fetch you to His Father’s house!”

Earnests: “I find that it is possible to find young glory and a young green paradise of joy even here.”

More than conquerors: “Our fair morning is at hand; the day-star is near the rising, and we are not many miles from home. What matter then if ill be the entertainment in the smoky rooms of this world! We are not to stay here, and we shall be dearly welcome to Him

James Montgomery, which Tom Moore declared he repeated to himself every day of his life—

“The dead are like the stars by day,
Unseen by mortal eye,
But not extinct, they hold their way
In glory through the sky.”

to whom we are going." "Glad may their souls be, that are over the frith, Christ having paid the fraught. Happy are they who have passed their hard and wearisome time of apprenticeship, and are now freemen and citizens in that joyful high city, the New Jerusalem."

To a mother on the death of her child: "Believe that he is not gone away, but sent before; and that the change of the country should make you think that he is not lost to you who is found to Christ, and that he is now before you, and that the dead in Christ shall be raised again. A going down star is not annihilated, but shall appear again. If he hath casten his bloom and flower, the bloom is fallen in heaven into Christ's lap. And as he was lent a little while to time, so he is given now to eternity, which will take yourself. The difference of your shipping and his to heaven and Christ's shore, the land of life, is only in some few years which weareth every day shorter, and some short and soon reckoned summers will give you a meeting with him. But what? With him? Nay, but with a better company; with the Chief and Leader of the heavenly troops that are riding on white horses, that are triumphing in glory."

God is His own interpreter: "We see not presently the after-birth of God's decree, namely, His blessed end, and the good that He bringeth out of the womb of His holy and spotless counsel. We see His working and we sorrow; the end of His counsel and working lieth hidden and underneath the ground, and therefore we cannot believe. Even amongst men we see hewn stones, timber, and an hundred scattered parcels and pieces of houses

all under-tools, hammers, and axes, and saws, yet the house, the beauty and the use of so many lodgings and ease-rooms, we neither see nor understand for the present; these are but in the mind and head of the builder as yet. We see red earth, unbroken clods, furrows, and stones; but we see not summer-lilies and roses, the beauty of a garden.”

Pray on: “I shall rather spill (spoil) twenty prayers than not pray at all. Let my broken words go up to heaven; when they come into the great Angel’s golden censer, that compassionate Advocate will put together my broken prayers and perfume them.”

How to mortify sin: “I recommend to you the mending of a hole and reforming of a failing, one or other, every week; and put off a sin, or a piece of it, as anger, wrath, lust, intemperance, every day, that ye more easily master the remnant of your corruption.”¹

The Church of God immortal: “The bush hath been burning these 5,000 years, and we never yet saw the ashes of this fire.”

The Word and the way: “The book of holy providence is good marginal notes in His revealed will in His Word, and speaks much to us, could we read and understand what He writes, both in the one and the other.”

“It is the art and the skill of faith to read what the Lord

¹ It is interesting to notice the coincidence of thought between the Covenanter and the Churchman. “When in clearing your field or your garden,” says Dr. Pusey, “you pluck thoroughly some one weed whose roots lie deep and spread widely, you have often seen how much more and far more widely you have uprooted, than you thought beforehand to be possible.”

writeth upon the cross, and to spell and construe rightly His sense."

Death not the bar, but the bridge to glory: "O happy and blessed death, that golden bridge laid over by Christ, my Lord, between time's clay banks and heaven's shore."

Attractions of heaven: "Travelling to heaven is a well-spent journey, though seven deaths lay between." "Oh, but heaven casteth a sweet smell afar off to those that have spiritual smelling. God hath made many flowers, but the fairest of them all is heaven, and the flower of all flowers is Christ."

"O how sweet to be wholly Christ's, and to be wholly in Christ; to dwell in Immanuel's high and blessed land, and live in the sweetest air where no wind bloweth but the breathings of the Holy Ghost, no sea nor floods flow but the pure water of life that floweth from under the throne and from the Lamb; no planting but the tree of life that yieldeth twelve manner of fruits every month. What do we here but sin and suffer? O when shall the night be gone, the shadows flee away, and the morning of the long, long day, without cloud or night, dawn! The Spirit and the Bride say, Come! O when shall the Lamb's wife be ready and the Bridegroom say, Come!"

It will be well if this little basketful of apples, which we have gathered from Rutherford's letters, send our readers to the laden tree. That Richard Cecil was often regaled by its fruit is evident from his own words: "Rutherford is one of my classics; he is a real original. There are in his letters some inexpressibly forcible and

arresting remonstrances with unconverted men.” Baxter, rising above all the prejudices that might be supposed to have been awakened by controversy, speaks yet more strongly: “Hold off the Bible; such a book the world never saw.” Dr. Hill Burton in his “History of Scotland” calls him “the popular favourite, the luxuriant Rutherford.” And the great missionary, Dr. Duff, who had much of the Oriental fancy which we find in Rutherford, writes of him with fervent admiration: “He seemed to breathe a spirit of such devotion as if he had been an angel incarnate, and filled with such joyous transport as if he had been caught up into the third heaven, and his heart yet throbbled with the un-earthly sensation.”¹

¹ We reserve our more full and abundant extracts from the letters to a later part of the volume.

CHAPTER V.

EDINBURGH.—THE CHURCH REFORMER.

RUTHERFORD returned from Aberdeen to his Anwoth, "dearly beloved and longed-for," some time in February, 1638, "six quarters of ane year," that is, eighteen months from the time of his banishment. During that wearisome interval his flock had been "as sheep without a shepherd," and though there were, no doubt, occasional ministrations, the swallows had built their nests almost undisturbed in the sacred edifice. Repeated attempts had been made by the ecclesiastical authorities who had banished Rutherford, to force a new minister upon the bereaved people; but the nominees of the bishop were not men according to their taste; moreover, the people maintained that Rutherford was still their minister, of whom they had been unrighteously deprived, and that, until every reasonable hope of his restoration was extinguished, the charge should be kept open for his return. That return carried gladness alike into the nobleman's hall and the shepherd's mountain cottage, and Rutherford was received not only with the affection due to one of Scotland's best and greatest ministers, but with the veneration that belonged to a

confessor of Christ. What a memorable day must that have been to those dwellers among the hills, when "God's banished one" was restored, when the often silent Sabbath-bell once more rung out its notes to the worshippers, and the walls of Anwoth church echoed the sounds of that voice which was associated, in the minds of thousands, with memories of holy days which had been "as the days of heaven upon earth"!

Rutherford was not released from his banishment by the authority that had sent him into exile; and it is now necessary that we should narrate the circumstances which led him to return to Anwoth on his own responsibility. For thirty years, as we have seen, attempts had been made by those in power to undo the work of the Reformation, and to force upon the people practices and ceremonies which not only wounded their susceptibilities, but were honestly regarded by them as unscriptural, and conformity to which would, therefore, have done violence to their consciences. James I. had begun this course of dictation and domination in matters of religious observance and ecclesiastical rule; and Charles, his son, had followed, with less scruple and more persistence and perfidy, in his footsteps. He had inherited from his father the highest notions of royal prerogative, seeking to rule in the State without parliaments, and in the Church without General Assemblies, and, by his kingly authority, to bring the modes of worship among his northern subjects into conformity with an elaborate ritualism which they abhorred.

About the period when Rutherford had been banished

to Aberdeen, measures were in process for intruding new observances upon the Scottish Church, which exceeded, in reckless disregard of the people's convictions and feelings, everything else that had previously been attempted. Guided by the fatal counsels of Archbishop Laud, who was the king's evil genius, Charles sought to bind on the neck of the Reformed Church new canons, which aimed at mingling superstitious observances with the two Christian sacraments, and looked favourably on the practice of auricular confession to a priest. Moreover, a new Book of Common Prayer, which had been compiled by inspiration of Laud, was to be forced on the nation, which in many parts bore a suspicious resemblance to the Popish Missal, many of the most significant expressions in its form of Communion service, being borrowed word for word from the Roman Mass Book. Without having seen this precious composition, every minister was required to consent to it blindfold and without question, and to provide himself with two copies for use in his congregation; and orders were sent down by the king and council that, on a certain day, it should begin to be read in all the churches. Flattered and deceived by Laud and other advisers of a kindred spirit, Charles counted on a general submission which would realize one of his fondest dreams, and lay the stubborn Scottish Church in fetters at his feet. It was the very event which was to shiver the arm of royal prerogative, to shake off the bonds and gathered corruptions of thirty years, and to give back to the long-suffering people, their spiritual independence and simplicity of worship.

The eventful day came, July 23, 1637, when Laud's liturgy was to be introduced into the High Church, St. Giles, Edinburgh. The spacious house where Knox had so often thundered, and which clustered with recollections of the Reformation, was crowded with an excited audience, in which persons of every rank mingled, from the pauper to the peer. Scarcely had the dean, arrayed in his new robes, begun to read the new prayer-book when a simple woman, a green-grocer, accustomed to sell her wares in the street outside, enraged at the innovation, seized the stool on which she had been sitting, and with angry words, not remarkable for reverence, flung it at the dean's head, only narrowly missing her mark. This act became the signal for a general tumult, and a rush towards the obnoxious ecclesiastic, who only escaped by flight from a rough and perilous handling, in which it is probable something more than his robes would have suffered. And thus was the new mass-book strangled in its birth. Many have spoken of this act as an accident and a vulgar tumult, and have made the most of its grotesque features. But this is not to study history or providence aright. The unpremeditated act of that poor woman struck a sensitive chord in the heart of Scotland; and it was this which made it important. The match is nothing without the combustible material on which it falls. The rent in the barrier is only of consequence when there is a flood behind it. But thus it was that the folding-stool did more work than a hundred thunderbolts. The woman's shrill cry in her rough Doric, "Rascal, wilt thou say mass at my lug?"

was mighty, because it reflected what multitudes were thinking and feeling over all the land. Similar attempts to introduce the Romanized prayer-book in other places, were met with similar resolute and humiliating resistance. Moderate men, who had been accustomed to weigh well what they spoke, began to utter ominous words.

It became necessary, however, that the rising tide of public feeling should at once be guided into a right channel and restrained within its banks. With this view the Scottish Privy Council, sympathizing with the popular enthusiasm, sanctioned the appointment of an extraordinary Commission called "The Tables," which should consist of representatives from four different classes—nobles, gentles, ministers of religion, and inhabitants of burghs, who were prepared to unite in asserting the rights and vindicating the privileges of the Church, and who should devise and carry into effect such measures as might be deemed necessary for this end. It was at this juncture that Rutherford returned to Anwoth, and began to watch with absorbing interest from his mountain home, the movements of the awakened life of Scotland. Still there was a lingering hope that the obnoxious measures might prove more due to the action of Laud than to the deliberate intention of the king; and petitions in great numbers began to be addressed to him, entreating him to annul the canons, and to countermand the imposition of the service-book. The only answer to this was a renewal of the proclamation which had imposed the new liturgy, accompanied with threat-

enings against all who should dare to resist the regal mandate. This last action made it evident that further supplication or negotiation was only a waste of time, and led to a decided and momentous step which was productive of great immediate advantages, and which, in its remoter consequences, has left its indelible and beneficent marks on the religious and political history of the land. This was the renewal of the National Covenant of Scotland, in which the people should bind themselves to adhere to and defend the true religion, and, forbearing the practice of all innovations already introduced into the worship of God, to labour by all lawful means to recover the purity and liberty of the gospel, as it had been professed and established before the "aforesaid" innovations. In another part of this great historic document, the people pledge themselves to loyalty to the king's majesty, and to mutual defence and united action. And it grandly closes with these words: "We engage for ourselves, our followers, and all others under us, both in public, and in our particular families and personal carriage, to endeavour to keep ourselves within the bounds of Christian liberty, and to be good examples to others of all godliness, soberness, and righteousness, and of any duty we owe to God or man."

It must be evident that the meeting which was summoned to subscribe this remarkable document, was not a mere political gathering, or ecclesiastical conclave. It was to be a great religious assemblage of the people, who should come to pledge themselves to each other and to the great God, that they would even hazard their

liberty and their lives in recovering the purity and the independence of their church—"building up its broken walls"—that, while loyal to their earthly king within his own sphere, they would stand firm and true to the authority and honour of the King of kings; and that they would assist and defend each other in seeking these mighty issues. And all this they were to promise with the solemnity of an oath, and with their hand uplifted to heaven. The great heart of Scotland was to speak that day. The nation's patriotism and the Church's zeal were to be embodied in an oath to God. If we should look for a historic parallel to the sublime transaction, it must be in Old Testament story, and in the pledge of fidelity taken by the twelve tribes in the valley between Gerizim and Ebal.

On March 1, 1638, at early dawn, thousands were already streaming through the streets of Edinburgh to meet within the ancient walls of Old Greyfriars Church, where the solemn event was to take place. The Earl of Loudon, wise in counsel, eloquent in speech, and fired with Christian courage which kept him firm when others feared, spoke to the great multitude in heart-melting words, of the degeneracy and defection of the nation which had provoked the Divine chastisement, until many bent their heads and wept. Then Alexander Henderson, whom many regarded as second only to Knox in the qualities which make a great reformer, gave utterance to the people's contrition and renewed consecration, in a prayer, which, in its solemnity, and power, and Luther-like faith, rose to the greatness of the

occasion, and made the people feel as if they were indeed in the awful Presence.

When the prayer was ended, Johnstone of Warriston, a future martyr for Christ, stood forth, and, "with voice clear and slow," read the words of the covenant from a great parchment roll, a sudden sunburst, it is said, falling upon the place as if it had been the approving smile of heaven.

The old Earl of Sutherland, "brave and true," was the first to "subscribe with his hand unto the Lord." Then followed many of the flower and chivalry of Scotland's nobles, Loudon and Rothes, and Cassilis, and Hay, and Home, and others from far-off castle and hall. Ministers who were renowned for their eloquence and saintly names, such as Henderson and Guthrie, followed quickly in the footsteps of the nobles; and no one was astonished when he saw Samuel Rutherford, Christ's "restored prisoner," who had travelled all the way from Anwoth to be present on this "great and notable day," step forward "with look inspired, as if his Master spoke," to subscribe the covenant.

When all within the ancient pile had signed the sacred contract, it was borne forth to be subscribed by the thousands who crowded the spacious churchyard, and were eager to add their names to the growing register of the "covenanted host." The vast roll was spread upon a tombstone that had been raised over a martyr's dust, and some even subscribed with their blood, or wrote after their names—"until death." Persons sitting on the far-off Arthur's Seat, caught the sound of

the multitude as that of a mighty sea. The expressions of emotion were various. Some were scarcely able to believe their own eyes and ears, and were "as men that dreamed;" others wept for joy; often hand was grasped in hand; and at times, dying saints upon their beds heard a distant shout cleaving the sky, and, knowing what it meant, blessed God. It was one of those days upon earth which make one understand the early Pentecost. It was, in fact, a Pentecost, in which the Spirit of God was dealing wondrously with men's hearts and raising them above themselves. Events like these always leave immortal fruits behind them. It was to be a landmark in Scottish history, for then was "Knox's buried work unsepulchred again."¹ "This was the day of the Lord's power," wrote one who was present, "in which multitudes offered themselves most willingly, like the dewdrops of the morning. This was indeed the great day of Israel wherein the arm of the Lord was revealed—the day of the Redeemer's strength, on which the princes and the people assembled to swear their allegiance to the King of kings."

The enthusiasm spread from Edinburgh like a prairie fire. A historian, not given to exaggeration, describes the covenant as "sounding like an alarm through Scotland, and the people as aroused and agitated by a zeal unfelt since the first Reformation." Rutherford appears to have been retained for a time from Anwoth, in order to help on the movement by his character and eloquence. We find him, by solicitation of the inhabi-

¹ "Lays of the Kirk and Covenant."

tants of Glasgow, preaching in their High Church, as preparatory to the subscribing of the covenant by the people. And Baillie, that "pleasantest of letter gossips," who was often one of his hearers, represents him as, during a fast in June, "preaching to congregations exceeding great, among whom were many of the nobility," and, after his own style of quaint and graphic brevity, reporting regarding these ministrations: "Mr. Rutherford has an excellent gift both of preaching and prayer, and which helps all to the people's mind, fells the fourteen bishops, and houghs the ceremonies." The armour which he had used with so much effect against Dr. Barron and the other university men at Aberdeen, had not had time to become rusty, and it now stood him in good stead for new conflicts. In a few months, the action reached the dimensions of a national movement, as it had been prosecuted with all the fervour and energy of a religious revival. To represent Scotland as at this time divided into two contending parties which were nearly equally balanced, is to pervert history to the purposes of faction. On the one side was the king with many of his courtiers and dependents. The bishops, to a man, were on his side, though not the inferior clergy generally. A considerable number of the professors in the universities, living in cushioned ease, and brought into comparatively little contact with the people, took the side of royalty and prelatie dominion. Aberdeen was the only city, and the district around it the only region of importance, that refused the Covenant. On the other side was Scotland. All the counties to

the north of the Moray Firth, those which look forth from north and south upon the noble Grampians, and those which were bounded or watered by the silver Tweed or girded by the Solway Firth and the Irish Sea, were in living sympathy with what men were already fond to call "The Second Reformation."¹

It is astonishing how much ignorance prevails, even at the present day, as to what the men who originated and subscribed the National Covenant pledged themselves, and the nature and magnitude of the movement which it initiated. To suppose that it was mainly a conflict between two forms of Church government, as to which of them should shape the administration of the Scottish Church, is greatly to misunderstand its character and to narrow its aims. No doubt, the question of Church government was involved in the agitation, and this was far from insignificant, but a far deeper and wider subject was now stirring men's souls and concentrating their energies. To understand one of its ruling aims, we must read it in the light of those claims to royal supremacy in ecclesiastical matters, which Charles and his father had persistently arrogated to themselves, which the leading adherents of prelacy in those days almost universally asserted, and which even the masculine intellect of South debased itself to defend. Against this abject doctrine, the National Covenant was Scotland's solemn protest, a plea for the spiritual independence of the Church and its right to freedom in its government and worship, and a mutual engagement on the part of those

¹ McCrie.

who subscribed it, to resist every effort to deprive them of it, to recover it, in so far as it had been lost, and by all these means to preserve intact the "Crown rights" of their heavenly King. There was no disloyal feeling towards the reigning monarch. In spite of much that was fitted to alienate affection, there was a warm place in the Scottish heart, and a lingering and chivalrous attachment to the race of their ancient kings. But when the king sought to overrule its assemblies, and to interfere by authority in its worship, there was resolute resistance, because he was invading the province of another and a greater King. "Sire," said Lord Loudon to King Charles, "the people of Scotland will obey you in everything with the utmost cheerfulness, provided you do not touch their religion and conscience." The right of the people to have limits set around the throne, as well as barriers against the intrusion of royal authority in the Church, was soon afterwards a subject to be taken up by the Puritans in the south. Are we mistaken in regarding the National Covenant of 1638 as sowing the seeds of wider movements and marking a new stage in that struggle which, through alternate victory and defeat for the next fifty years, was at length to issue and culminate in the bloodless revolution of 1688, when constitutional government and liberty of conscience and worship were to be secured and guarded by benignant law?

And now, when the mighty force of public opinion was united and concentrated, the time had come to enter on the work of reformation in right earnest. For thirty

years there had not been a meeting of a free Assembly of the Church. During all this period, corruptions had been gathering and strengthening, and new fetters bound upon the people's liberties; and the first thing to be done was to call a free General Assembly, and with fearless energy, to "lay the axe to the root of the tree." At first the king temporized and hesitated, but when he saw the determined spirit and the serried front of the people and their chiefs, and learned, moreover, that the Church rulers were prepared to call a General Assembly in the exercise of their own inherent right, he bent before the rising storm, and summoned an Assembly to inquire into the evils that afflicted the land. His hope was that, by the presence of his commissioner in the person of the Duke of Hamilton, he would either divide, and therefore defeat their counsels, or that any measures which his commissioner declared would provoke the royal displeasure, would not be passed.

He was doomed to be disappointed in either expectation. Those earnest men, fired with the spirit produced by the recent revival, and by the remembrance of their solemn vows to God, set themselves to restore the Church to the state in which it had been originally settled at the Reformation. Had the Reformer himself returned to life, he could not have done more vigorous battle against abuses and corruptions. The Assembly commenced its sittings in November, 1638, and in one short month the whole face of things was changed. The besom of reform swept everywhere and spared nothing. It was not long ere the king's commissioner, weary of remon-

strating and protesting, sought to dissolve the Assembly in the king's name, declared their continued sitting to be rebellious and treasonable, and departed. The Assembly, asserting their inherent right to meet and deliberate, proceeded calmly in their work. The six "unfree" Assemblies which had met during the preceding forty years, were declared to have been illegal, and their decisions pronounced to be null and void. The canon law was rejected. The enforced and Romanized liturgy was condemned. The High Commission Court, which had been the tyrannical instrument of the prelates, was abolished. The fourteen bishops who had disobeyed the summons to be present, were tried in their absence on the charge of grave offences moral or ecclesiastical, and either deposed or deprived of their office. The prelatie innovations that had cumbered and superseded the simpler order and administration of Knox, were supplanted by the system of sessions, presbyteries, synods, and assemblies, which was dear to the people's hearts, and commended itself to their notions of the law of Christ. More than this, the ministers were enjoined to reside in their respective parishes, to encourage the erection of schools, and to give attention to those already established, and to the erection of colleges. "Thus," says the historian Spottiswoode, with a sigh, "was the work of thirty years undone." But the heart of Scotland rejoiced. Meanwhile, Charles sulked, and dissembled, and plotted, and thought of invasion and war.

But Anwoth was not to be allowed long to retain her pastor, who had so recently returned among them

with the halo around him of a faithful confessor of Christ. It was natural that the General Assembly, before the close of its sessions, should direct the Commission appointed to act for it until its next meeting, to look out for persons of tried character and eminent gifts in the Church, who might be labouring in places of comparative obscurity and circumscribed influence, and to endeavour to obtain their transference to great centres where they would be likely to do more good. Rutherford was one of the first among the ministers to whom the eye of the Commission and the Church was turned. Edinburgh sought him for one of her most important charges. St. Andrews urged the Commission to appoint him to the vacant chair of theology in St. Mary's College; and the suit of the more ancient University was preferred.

Anwoth heard the intelligence with dismay, not only the parish, but the whole of Galloway uniting in petitions to have the appointment revoked. And Rutherford himself was not less eager to remain with his people, than they were to hinder his departure. He knew how much persecution they had suffered for his sake during his eighteen months of absence and exile, and how they had refused to accept another shepherd in his place, and could he consent to have the bond severed which had been so recently united, and to leave his little church among the mountains as it were to a second widowhood? "Never," said he, "did I so much long for death. The Lord help and hold up sad clay." It was represented that the learning which he had acquired in Anwoth would be comparatively lost to the

Church in that obscure region, and that the attention which he had given to the controversies that then agitated the Protestant Churches, eminently qualified him for informing the minds of the rising ministry. But nothing could conquer his reluctance, and it was only when the choice of the Commission was sustained by the vote of the Assembly at its next meeting, that he bent his will to their authority. Even in yielding, however, he coupled his consent with one characteristic condition, that he should not be condemned to "silent Sabbaths," but, being joined as colleague to a minister in one of the churches, should have the right of preaching that gospel which was the very music and sunshine of his life.

Rutherford removed to the scene of his new duties, and was installed in the chair which had already been made illustrious by the great name of Andrew Melville, in October, 1639, and some time in the same month he obtained his heart's desire, by being inducted as co-pastor with the Rev. Mr. Blair. An English merchant who had been on a visit to St. Andrews gives us an interesting glimpse of the two ministers: "I went to St. Andrews, where I heard a sweet, majestic-looking man (R. Blair), and he showed me the majesty of God. After him I heard a little, fair man (Rutherford), and he showed me *the loveliness of Christ.*"

Scarcely any records have been preserved of Rutherford's prelections in his professor's chair. It is known that, in addition to lecturing on Systematic Theology, a part of his work was to instruct his students in the Hebrew language and ecclesiastical history. A loving

student has transmitted a few condensed summaries of his teaching, on the nature, necessity, and object of a Divine revelation, and on what forms the canon of inspired truth ; and these, which were spoken in Latin, present a favourable combination of simplicity with ripe learning. But we should form a most inadequate estimate of his influence and value as a theological teacher, did we judge of it merely by the amount of knowledge which he succeeded in transferring from his own mind to those of his pupils. We must add to this the intellectual stimulus which he gave to his scholars—not only imparting knowledge, but training them to think, the elevating power of his own character, and the manner in which a man like Rutherford would succeed in bringing minds into active sympathy with his own spirit, such, for instance, as was done by Arnold among teachers, and by Chalmers among professors. And thus it is that, while we have scarcely any means of judging of Rutherford by obtaining samples of his teaching, we have ample means of estimating it by its fruits. The theological school in the University of St. Andrews had been the stronghold of the system against which the indignant voice of the people had recently spoken in its might. An eye-witness describes it, in colours sufficiently dark, as “the very nursery of all superstition in worship and error in doctrine, and the sink of all profanity in conversation among the students.” It surely required a man “coming in the spirit and power of Elias” to cleanse such a school of the prophets. And in a few years Rutherford’s burning zeal had wrought wonders. It is the testimony of one of his admiring

pupils, - that "God did so singularly second his indefatigable pains, both in teaching and in preaching, that the University forthwith became a Lebanon, out of which were taken cedars for building the house of the Lord through the whole land."

And where had the saintly man his solitary walks now, when he was so far away from the natural sanctuary made by the interwoven trees at Anwoth? We can imagine him often passing by the scenes of earlier martyrdoms, where Hamilton and Wishart ascended in their chariot of fire to receive their heavenly crown, or entering the venerable churchyard that looks down upon the sea, standing beside the ruins of the Cathedral, and gazing on St. Regulus' tower, the relic and memorial of the simple Culdee worship; or in the evening walking on the lofty headlands, musing on the German Ocean in its changeful moods of calm and tempest, or standing still at times and gazing up devoutly into the wilderness of stars, and singing in spirit those words of the psalm, "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained; What is man that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that Thou visitest him?"

About five months after his settlement in St. Andrews, Rutherford married a second time. He had been a widower for nearly ten years. His second wife survived himself, and the hints that may be gathered from his letters and from other sources, seem to warrant an earlier biographer in speaking of her as "a person of great worth and piety, worthy of such a husband."

CHAPTER VI.

WESTMINSTER.—THE LEARNED DIVINE.

SAMUEL RUTHERFORD was far too sagacious a man to anticipate that he would long be allowed to enjoy at St. Andrews, the calm dignity and learned ease which we sometimes associate with a professor's chair. Those were troublous times in which he was called, along with other master-builders, "to repair the waste places," and it would have been foolish to underestimate the number of the enemies and the formidable nature of the difficulties with which the work was threatened. Every stone must be laid with a sword in hand. Somewhat more than three years intervened between his settlement in the ancient University and the calling of the Westminster Assembly of Divines with which his name was to be so honourably associated; and it is necessary to the purposes of our biography that we take a rapid glance at the leading incidents by which this intervening period was chequered, in so far, at least, as these contributed to bring about the gathering of the great historic council.

While the famous Glasgow Assembly had, in the

exercise of what it regarded as its inalienable right of independent action, shaken off the accumulated corruptions and shackles of more than thirty years, it was, on every account, desirable that its decisions should receive the royal sanction; and commissioners were accordingly sent to London to entreat the king to confirm the deeds of the Assembly, and to bring himself into accord with the earnestly expressed wish of the Scottish Church and people. Not only was the petition rejected, but the commissioners soon after learned that forces were already on their way to Scotland, to chastise the disobedient nation, and to enforce the royal pleasure. But when Charles heard of a rapidly assembled Scottish army on Duns Law, which had come out to meet him, and knew that it was no "rabble rout," but composed of yeomen and burghers whose determination was intensified and purified by strong religious feeling, whose camp resounded morning and evening with the voice of prayer, his spirit sank within him, and a skirmish soon afterwards, in the neighbourhood of Berwick, was sufficient to drive his army into confusion and ignominious retreat. Ever ready with promises in order to gain time, and probably hoping that more favourable circumstances would speedily arise to make it possible for him to disregard whatever pledges he might now give, the king engaged to call a General Assembly, and immediately afterwards to summon a Parliament, to whose decision every matter of dispute between him and his Scottish subjects should be referred. It is certain that he never had intended to abide by the decision either of the

supreme ecclesiastical court, or of his Parliament, unless it proved to be in his favour; and when both had the courage to declare themselves on the side of reformation principles and of spiritual independence, the enraged and mortified monarch once more had recourse to arms.

It is well known that the Covenanters—who had all along doubted the sincerity of Charles, had never disbanded their forces, but had meanwhile improved their discipline and increased their material of war—hastened a second time to repel his entrance with an army into Scotland. And they accomplished this with yet greater effect than even on the first occasion of resistance—first routing his army of royalists at Newburn on the Tyne, the next day taking possession of Newcastle, and soon after making themselves masters of the northern counties, and rendering the discomfited king more desirous than ever to negotiate terms of reconciliation. Ripon was first named as the scene of a Conference, but for purposes of policy or convenience, the Scottish commissioners were directed to repair to London. This was a movement which Charles ever lamented, but the consequences of which he was never able to retrieve. Among the commissioners from Scotland were a number of the military leaders in the recent conflict, and several of the most eminent and eloquent Scottish preachers, among whom were Henderson, Gillespie, and Rutherford. These brave and gifted men were not slow to make known their principles, and to explain and vindicate the grounds on which they and their countrymen had resisted the king's mandate. Their holy character and admirable preaching,

to which the people flocked with constantly increasing eagerness, did much to deepen and extend the interest. Then, in addition to the excellence and attractiveness of their pulpit gifts, they were looked upon as men who had suffered in their persons and liberties for a righteous and sacred cause. They had successfully contended for the independence of their Church against royal dictation and intrusion, and had done much to purify it from error, and from superstitious practices and traditions of men. It was not surprising that those with whom they were in frequent intercourse, should begin to look with favour on the ecclesiastical system with which their brethren from the northern kingdom were identified, and that there should arise a growing desire to accomplish a similar and yet more necessary reformation in England; moreover, that men who had been contending for the rights of parliaments should be in sympathy with those who had struggled successfully for the independence of their Christian assemblies. The Covenanters and the Puritans were in this way drawn to each other, and the representatives of both kingdoms began to feel that they were embarked in the same vessel, and that they must sink or swim together.

Accordingly, when Charles was at length constrained by the necessities of his position to summon what afterwards came to be known as "the Long Parliament," the state of feeling which we have described at once began to reveal itself. Within three days a Grand Committee on religion was appointed, with instructions to meet from week to week for serious business. Petitions began

to flow into both Houses, urging the necessity of extensive reformation in the Church, in terms of unmistakable decision and earnestness. Lists of proved abuses were tabulated and printed, frequent conferences were held with learned divines, the effect of which was to bring out with more distinctness and certainty the fact that there was much that was evil, both in doctrine and polity, to abandon, and something also that would be good to restore. Even the king, beholding the rising tide which might soon become irresistible, intimated in "a gracious message" that, "observing the great and different troubles that had arisen in the hearts of his people regarding the government and liturgy of the Church, his Majesty was willing to refer the consideration of the whole to the wisdom of his Parliament, which he desired them to enter into speedily." This appeared not only to open the way to action, but to favour and enjoin it. All seemed to acknowledge the clamant need of an extensive reformation ; and the opinion was becoming general that the end sought would probably be gained by summoning a council or assembly of grave and learned divines, with whom a certain number of competent laymen should be associated, who should deliberate and advise on the whole matter.

But now the king once more vacillated and stopped the way. One Bill after another embodying this proposal passed both Houses, and was presented to the king for his approval. But nothing could prevail on him to give it the seal of his royal sanction. At length, in its extremity and exhausted patience, the Parliament

had recourse to an expedient which had not been unknown at other crises in the nation's history. It prepared an "Ordinance" for the calling of an Assembly of Divines, which, after due revision and amendment, was finally issued by the authority of both Houses on June 12, 1643. This remarkable document, after declaring that the present Church government was evil, and a great impediment to reformation and growth of religion, and *enacting that the same should be taken away*, proceeded to call an Assembly of learned and godly divines, and others whose names were given in a later part of it, "to be consulted with by the Parliament, for the vindicating and clearing of the doctrine of the Church from all false calumnies and aspersions, and for settling such a government in the Church as might be most agreeable to God's holy Word, and most apt to procure and preserve the peace of the Church at home, and nearer agreement with the Church of Scotland and other Reformed Churches abroad." Out of these circumstances and arrangements originated the famous Westminster Assembly of Divines.

It would be a mistake to speak of this Assembly as possessing the character or functions of a synod or Church convocation. Its work was neither legislative nor administrative. It is rather to be classed with those great ecclesiastical councils which have been summoned at periods of great emergency and peril, when the Church has been weakened and deformed by prevailing and obstinate abuses, or rent and shaken by mighty controversies; and divines, and others eminent for their wisdom and piety, have been asked to consider and

advise as to the best manner of dealing with the existing corruptions, of making the storm a calm, and furnishing a basis of union on which the friends of truth shall combine their forces against the common enemy. And whether we consider the character, learning, and diversified intellectual gifts of the men who constituted the Westminster Assembly, its powerful religious and political influence on its own age, and on religious thought ever since, or the fact that the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms which it produced, form to this day the subordinate standards of all the great Presbyterian communities of Christendom, we need not hesitate in regarding it as equalling in importance the alliance of Schmalkald, at which the banner of Protestantism was first unfurled, or the Synod of Dort which did such valiant battle with the old Arminianism.

The list of names in the Ordinance calling the Assembly amounted to 151, consisting of 10 peers, 20 commoners, and 121 divines, the last of these, among whom there were four bishops, representing every important shade of opinion in the matter of Church government, whether Episcopal, Presbyterian, or Independent. An English deputation, which had been sent to Scotland, carried with it a request to its General Assembly, to send up such a number of "godly and learned divines" to Westminster as might be thought expedient. And with lively satisfaction, five clergymen and three elders were nominated to swell the roll of honoured names, with this cautious provision, that they should deliberate and advise without voting. Of these selected divines Rutherford was one.

On the first day of July, at nine o'clock in the morning, the Westminster Assembly began its sittings in Henry VII.'s chapel, in the place of convocation; "but when the weather grew cold," as the graphic and genial Baillie informs us, "they did go to Jerusalem Chamber, a fair room in the Abbey of Westminster. The house," he adds, "is all well hung with tapestry, and has a good fire, which is some dainties in London." Sixty-nine persons "entered an appearance" on that first day. It was not, however, until some time after the Assembly had entered on its anxious and learned labours, intermingled with frequent days of fasting and prayer, that the Scottish contingent appeared. Let the same pleasant chronicler tell us of their voyage to London, and their reception by the grave and reverend fathers. They were "conveyed to London in a strong ship," and evidently with a wholesome sense of danger, "for the weather is uncertain, the way dangerous, pirates and shoals not scant; yet, trusting in God, we must not stand on any hazard to serve God and our country." In due time they arrive safely in London, and are introduced to the Assembly, taking their seats not as constituent members, but as commissioners from the Church of Scotland. "When we were brought in, Dr. Twisse had a long harangue for our welcome, after so long and hazardous a voyage by sea and land, in so unseasonable a time of the year. When he ended we sat down in our places, which since we have kepted."

To one who has stood in that Jerusalem Chamber and listened, as we have done, along with many others, to the narrative and description of the late accomplished Dean

of Westminster, it needs no great effort of imagination to call up the picture of this remarkable Assembly. On entering the tapestried chamber we behold at its further extremity, "seated on a chair about a foot above the ground," the Prolocutor or President, Dr. Twisse, "the very learned and illustrious Twisse," as Dr. Owen loved to call him. He has been described as "a venerable man verging on seventy years of age, with a long, pale countenance, an imposing beard, lofty brow, and meditative eye, the whole contour indicating a life spent in severe and painful study. Holy in his converse, quiet and unassuming in his manners, he has gained the admiration of his contemporaries, and friends and foes speak of him with profoundest respect."¹ No one could have given greater dignity or grace to the chair; but he makes no attempt to guide the deliberations of the Assembly; and when its discussions at times threaten to become boisterous, he looks uneasy, and probably wishes that he were back among his manuscripts and in his quiet rectory at Newbury.

Before Mr. Prolocutor sit his two assessors—Dr. Cornelius Burges, a man of great activity and outspoken manliness, and Mr. John White, the minister of Dorchester, whom Fuller describes as "a grave man who would yet willingly contribute his shot of facetiousness on any just occasion," and who, like Baxter at Kidderminster, left the visible impress and Divine seal of his ministry upon his people, in their devout temper and godly living. Immediately in front of these, seated at a table, are the two scribes or clerks of Assembly, Mr.

¹ McCrie, jun.

Adoniram Byfield and Mr. Henry Roborough, exact and anxious men, well skilled in the rules which ought to regulate the procedure of deliberative bodies.

And there, seated on benches that stretch beyond and on either side of the Prolocutor's chair, are groups of men who have risen to eminence and influence—princes in Israel and pillars in the State; masters of colleges and professors in the universities; great preachers, such as Reynolds and Stephen Marshall and Edmund Calamy, and others, whose pulpits are their thrones; profound theologians and exegetical scholars, such as Goodwin, and Caryl, and Case, and Manton, whose writings, along with those of the later commonwealth divines, have descended as a more than golden legacy to the churches. And there are Coleman and Lightfoot and Selden, "walking libraries," as they have been fitly styled, unapproached among the scholars of their age in their wealth of Oriental and Rabbinical literature. And others still, to whom the Assembly is often called to listen, such as Seaman and Vines and Philip Nye, sharp-witted and eagle-eyed disputants, lovers of truth, yet not disliking the mental conflict for its own sake as they scent the battle from afar. "The Lords of the Parliament," says Baillie, "use to sit on chairs in that void about the fire."

And yonder, on the right side of the Prolocutor, on the lowest of the four ranks of benches, sit Rutherford and his five fellow-commissioners from Scotland. The first in order is Alexander Henderson, a man with a statesman's sagacity and breadth of view, incapable of

trickery or self-seeking, great alike in counsel and in action, whom many of his contemporaries regard as "the fairest ornament of his church since Knox has passed away." The deputy that usually sits nearest to him is Samuel Rutherford, with rare stores of learning, not huddled and confused in his mind, but so well arranged and marshalled as to come forth at his bidding, ready and eloquent in debate, and with such a saintly character as makes all listen to him with veneration and confidence. George Gillespie is the youngest minister among the Scottish commissioners. "He is an excellent youth," says Baillie. In that young intellect there is the wisdom of a hoary head. The time is near when he will measure arms with the most astute disputants, and wrest the victory from their grasp. Robert Baillie, the next in order, assures us that "he was ever silent in their debates." But he is a most shrewd and keen observer of what others say and do, and everything of importance is, at the first opportunity, transferred to his diary, or his letters, and told with such quaint simplicity and with such graphic touches as make him the most pleasant and entertaining of chroniclers. One felicitous word or clause often gives you a portrait. With all the minuteness of Boswell, he is without adulation or satire, and writes with kindly appreciation even of those whom he dislikes. Of the two elders, the elegant Lord Maitland is to become "a fallen star," and under the name of the Duke of Lauderdale is, in a latter day, to let loose the dogs of persecution in Scotland; while Johnstone, of Warriston, who

sits beside him, is already sealed by heaven for a martyr's crown. "The like of that Assembly," says Baillie, "I did never see; and, as we hear say, the like was never in England, nor anywhere is shortly like to be." And those who have made themselves acquainted with the *dramatis personæ* will be the most ready to subscribe the fond eulogy. Baxter is equally favourable in his estimate: "So far as I am able to judge by the information of all history, the Christian world, since the days of the apostles, had never a synod of more excellent divines." "They were perhaps equal," says Hallam, "in learning, good sense, and other merits, to any Lower House of Convocation that ever made a figure in England." "Whether," says Dr. Schaff, "we look at the extent or the ability of its labours, it stands first among Protestant councils."

In conformity with the provisions of the Ordinance which had called it into existence, the Westminster Assembly had proceeded some length in the revision of the Thirty-nine Articles, when a remarkable incident occurred which considerably widened the sphere of its deliberations, and was to leave its broad mark upon the page of ecclesiastical history. Before Henderson and Rutherford had yet gone up to join in the deliberations at Westminster, commissioners had appeared from the English Parliament, and had held confidential intercourse with many of the civil and ecclesiastical leaders, strongly urging the formation of a civil league between the two kingdoms, which should pledge them to mutual assistance at the present perilous juncture. The struggle

between the king and his English Parliament was increasing in intensity, and it was a contest between arbitrary power and popular rights. The Lords and Commons of England were now fighting the battle of civil freedom, just as Scotland had so recently struggled and conquered in her conflicts for spiritual independence. But parties were so nearly divided in numbers and resources that, were the Scottish people to withhold their help, the issue would be doubtful. Let them rally now around their English brethren, and the balance would almost surely fall on the side of the people. The heart of Scotland speaking in her representatives, was moved by this appeal. It was like a brother pleading with a brother. She might indeed have stood selfishly aloof in the possession of her own hard-won liberty, but she showed a true chivalry in her readiness to make common cause with England. It was, however, strongly urged by her ecclesiastical leaders that, as the cause of religious as well as of civil liberty, and through this of religion itself, was included in the struggle, it was necessary, in order to meet the real exigencies of the two kingdoms, that its preservation and defence should be included in the bond. The English representatives looked favourably on this stipulation; and in these circumstances originated the ever memorable Solemn League and Covenant.

Rutherford was prominent and active in all these negotiations. A draft of the proposed treaty, prepared and submitted by Alexander Henderson, was first formally sanctioned by the Convention of Estates and the

General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. Having then been sent up to the Parliament of England, it was passed by both Houses with singular unanimity. The principal objects of this extraordinary treaty have been thus briefly summed up by Dr. McCrie: "In this covenant our fathers bound themselves and their posterity — first, to endeavour the preservation of the reformed religion in the Church of Scotland, the reformation of religion in England and Ireland according to the Word of God and the example of the best Reformed Churches, and the bringing of the three Churches to the nearest conjunction and uniformity in religion ; secondly, to the extirpation of popery and prelacy ; thirdly, to the preservation of the rights of Parliament, of the liberties of the kingdoms, and of his Majesty's person and authority ; and lastly, they pledge themselves to personal reformation and a holy life."

We are no blind eulogists of "the Solemn League and Covenant" as if it were a document almost too sacred to be touched or handled, and yet, while alive to its imperfections, and especially to the intolerance which sounds as a jarring note in some of its phrases, we concur with those who, looking at it in connection with the time and circumstances in which it was produced, regard it as one of the grandest documents that ever emanated from the representatives of a people. We surely behold one of the highest forms of moral sublimity in the civil and ecclesiastical representatives of two kingdoms owning their obligations to the love and practice of personal religion, and pledging themselves to each other

and to God that they shall endeavour to preserve and extend the true religion in the land, and to defend and promote the cause of spiritual independence and of civil freedom. And although the framers of this extraordinary treaty aimed at a measure of uniformity in religion which was impracticable, and which many would now regard as a fond dream, it should be remembered that uniformity was valued by them as the outward expression of union, and that the desire for this had grown, with many of the best men of that age, into a passion, when they saw everywhere around them the weakening effects of division and distraction. Excess in this direction is unspeakably to be preferred, and the spirit which leads to it more to be honoured, than that easy indifference and unfaithful conciliation by which, as has been said with righteous severity, "every line of distinction is to be erased, every corner rounded off, every colour shaded into every other,"¹ until there is no backbone in our religion, and scarcely anything is left for which it is worth while to be a martyr.

Then there was a party in the nation which had long been the supporters and flatterers, and often the instruments, of arbitrary power, and whose enmity against the doctrines and spirit of the Reformation, though curbed, was not quenched. This party, which was mainly composed of the adherents of Romanism and the votaries of the Laudean policy, was still formidable in numbers and influence, and it was only by compacted union that it could be restrained and conquered. Moreover, such leaders as Henderson and Rutherford in the northern kingdom,

¹ Dr. Vaughan.

and Calamy and Goodwin, with their Puritan followers in the south, were well aware that the powerful states on the Continent which had never cast off the domination of Rome, had for some time past, at the instance of Pope Urban VII., been consulting together and gathering their forces to crush the risen Protestantism, and that spirit of liberty which is the natural outcome and ally of the Protestant faith. In France, Cardinal Mazarin was working out the schemes for the extinction of the Reformation which had been shaped by the more powerful intellect of Richelieu. While Spain, under the guidance of Olivarez, was uniting its strength in the hope that superstition and intolerance would yet prevail over light and liberty.¹ And one principal design of this Solemn League and Covenant was to unite the divided forces of all the true friends of the Reformed faith in the three kingdoms against those adversaries, and to present before them on our island shores, a phalanx of brave and resolute men, ready to defend their nation's true life, which was bound up with its religion and freedom. The tremendous tragedy of the massacre of 40,000 Protestants in Ireland, in a planned insurrection by the Roman Catholic population, which, as many in those days believed, was regarded with favour in high places in England, deepened the anxiety and nerved the determination of those true-hearted and patriotic men.

The very manner in which the Parliament and the Assembly of Divines signified their adherence, shows how great importance they attached to the act, and their desire

¹ Hetherington's "History of the Westminster Assembly."

that the sound of it should ring throughout the land and be heard across the sea, wherever there was a Protestant Church to encourage, or a papal compact to defy. On Monday, September 25th, the Members of the House of Commons and of the Assembly met for this purpose in St. Margaret's Church, Westminster, beneath the shadow of the venerable Abbey. "After a psalm," says Lightfoot, "given by Mr. Wilson, picking several verses to suit the present occasion out of several psalms, Mr. White prayed near upon an hour. Then he came down out of the pulpit, and Mr. Nye went up and made an exhortation of another hour long. After he had done, Mr. Henderson, out of the seat where he sat, did the like, all tending to forward the Covenant. Then Mr. Nye, being in the pulpit still, read the Covenant, and at every clause of it, the House of Commons and we of the Assembly held up our hands and gave our consent thereby to it, and then all went into the chancel and subscribed our hands." Two hundred and twenty-eight members of the House of Commons on that day lifted up their hands to heaven, worshipping the great name of God, and promising to be faithful in His covenant. In this list of signatories was the name of Oliver Cromwell. On October 15th following, the peers also with solemn forms "took the Covenant."

It is evident that by the provisions of "the Solemn League and Covenant" the sphere of the Assembly's work was greatly extended. A message came down almost immediately from the Parliament, requesting them to cease from going any further with the revision of the "Articles," and to proceed at once to consider the press-

ing subject of Church government and discipline. Prelatic rule had been abolished: what was the ecclesiastical polity and order which these grave divines and learned men, with the Word of God in their hands, would advise should be substituted in its stead? Episcopacy, at least in its prelatical and lordly form, might be said to have been "put out" of court by the recent "ordinance," all the more that the bishops who had been invited to be present, terrified by the proclamation of the king which declared the Assembly to be illegal, and those who attended it to be rebellious, from the first withheld their presence; and while many members of the Assembly were not unfriendly to a modified Episcopacy, the discussion practically lay between the advocates of the Presbyterian and Independent forms of Church government.

It is not our province to give a detailed account regarding the discussions which followed the mandate of the Lords and Commons, and which were to make the walls of the Jerusalem Chamber often ring with the voices of those word-warriors for the next eighteen months. Probably the subject of ecclesiastical order and administration never formed the matter of so thorough and prolonged a discussion, before or since; and up to this day, the combatants on either side gather not a little of the material of war from the old armour of those "men of renown." The Presbyterians formed the majority among the Westminster divines from the first; their number was increased, during the protracted debates, by not a few who had been alienated from prelatic rule by its enormous abuses and lordly assump-

tions. The advocates of Independency never numbered more than eleven. These stoutly contended for the distinguishing points of their system inch by inch, and with no lack of learning or ability. And in the galaxy of controversialists they found no more qualified or formidable antagonists than Rutherford and his young associate Gillespie. In Lightfoot's Journal their achievements in debate are frequently noticed with admiration. And Baillie writes of them with the complacent satisfaction of a fellow-countryman. "Mr. Samuel, for the great parts God has given him, and special acquaintance with the question, is very necessary here." "Mr. Henderson, Mr. Rutherford, and Mr. Gillespie—all these spoke exceedingly well, and with arguments unanswerable." It is pleasing to notice the manly appreciation with which Rutherford wrote of men with whom he was brought into such frequent conflict. The image of Christ seen in any of His disciples won His love. He speaks of them as "gracious men," and declares that, "of all that differ from us, the Independents come nearest to walking with God."

And though the complaint was shared by many, in reference to what Baillie styled the "longsomeness of the controversy," there were times of high debate in which two men would almost seem to have been singled out to maintain the contest, in which their gifts were strained to the utmost, and the rest of the Assembly looked on and listened, as in the days of the old chivalry, when the bravest and fairest of the land gathered to a tournament. This we know was the case in some

of the discussions in which the Presbyterians and Independents held common cause in their conflicts with the Erastian members of the Assembly, whose distinguishing tenet struck at the very principle of Church government itself. Their doctrine was that all government in the Church ought to be in the hands of civil rulers, and, as the logical application of this doctrine, they contended that the power of excommunication, or of excluding persons who were living scandalous lives from the Lord's Supper, ought to lie, at least in the last instance, with parliaments rather than with presbyteries or congregations. The advocates of this doctrine in the Assembly were not more than three—Lightfoot, Coleman, and Selden. But they possessed an influence and authority which far exceeded their mere numerical strength. This arose in part from their great and acknowledged learning, but yet more from the fact that they were known to represent the opinions of many in both Houses of Parliament. But it was in direct opposition to the fundamental doctrine, held by nearly all in that august synod, that the Lord Jesus Christ has appointed in His Church a government, in the hands of Church officers, distinct from that of the civil magistrate, in the exercise of which, in its own proper sphere, they were amenable to no supervision or authority but that of Christ.

It was to the honour of those divines that they would not give place to the Erastian dogma, "no, not for an hour." Meeting almost side by side with the Houses of Parliament, in both of which there was much of this leaven, they would neither be overawed nor persuaded.

They felt that concession here would not only be unjustifiable compromise, but treachery to their King in heaven. It would not be yielding an outpost for the sake of some counterbalancing advantage, but giving up the keys of the citadel. They might not succeed in inducing the Parliament to accept their principle, but no parliament could force them to deny or to betray it. It was in a debate on this matter that one of those hand-to-hand conflicts occurred to which we have referred. Selden, the very Goliath of Erastianism, had made a great speech in its defence, bringing out his opulence of learning and marshalling his arguments with singular ingenuity and skill, and when he sat down, no one seemed ready to take up the challenge, which he had thrown out with more than his wonted confidence. At length Gillespie, the youngest of the Scottish commissioners, who had been observed to note a few words on a small slip of paper while the great scholar was speaking, arose and asked to be heard. All held their breath to hear how the young wrestler would acquit himself, when, one by one, he demolished the arguments of the veteran lawyer, and he was acknowledged by common consent to remain master of the field. Selden himself is said to have owned that "that young man had undone the work of eight years." When the little slip of paper which Gillespie had held in his hand was examined, it was found to contain only these three words, *Da lucem, Domine*—"Give light, O Lord."

When the Assembly of Divines passed at length from questions regarding the constitution of the Church, with

its government and order, and from the framing of its singularly judicious "Directory for the Public Worship of God," to the preparation of the Confession of Faith and Catechisms, which were designed to be an authoritative statement and exposition of the creed of the Church, its members must have felt that they were entering on a work which carried with it a much graver responsibility. They had hitherto been dealing with the framework of the Church; they were now called to undertake the statement of its faith. It was said by Mr. Herle, the successor of Dr. Twisse as Prolocutor of the Assembly, in reference to the points of dispute between the Presbyterians and the Independents as compared with "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints": "The difference between us is not so great; at most it doth but ruffle a little the fringe, not any way rend the garment, of Christ." But now they were conscious of passing from the outer court into the temple itself. And they did not fail to remind themselves of the "canon," in accordance with which they had given pledge that all their deliberations were to be conducted, that nothing was to be received and stated by them as obligatory upon themselves or others which could not be proved from Holy Scripture—the fundamental principle of Protestantism.

And it is a noteworthy and suggestive fact that in the preparation of those great doctrinal "Articles" there was scarcely any of that keen, and sometimes heated, discussion which had occasionally marked the earlier deliberations on matters that were far less momentous. With the exception, perhaps of the thorny questions

regarding the mutual relations of Church and State, those watchmen in Zion, Presbyterian, Independent, and Erastian, usually saw eye to eye. When there was discussion at all, it was generally in respect to the adjusting of the language rather than to the substance of the Article. The custom was to distribute heads or topics of doctrine among different committees, who should draft a statement that was afterwards submitted to the whole Assembly, and it was not uncommon for these drafts, after passing through the ordeal of sifting but friendly criticism, to be adopted almost unanimously. Rutherford and his fellow-commissioners from Scotland had a right to be present in all the committees as well as in the open Assembly—a right of which they were not slow to avail themselves. It is an interesting fact, which has only recently been brought to light by the learned labours of Professor Mitchell of St. Andrews—and it shows the spirit in which those divines of Westminster did their work—that in various parts of the Confession there may be distinctly traced the influence, both in form and language, of the Articles of the Irish Church, which, at a considerably earlier date, had come from the hands of the supremely learned and saintly Archbishop Usher.

The Confession of Faith has now been in existence for two hundred and thirty-one years, and, looked at as the confession of an Evangelical and Calvinistic Church, it is remarkable how few are the imperfections that have been proved against it. One could have wished that the compassionate love of God to the world, which is indeed

taught both in the Confession and the Catechisms, had held something like an equal place of prominence in those masterly summaries as it holds in the Scriptures, where it shines with the light of seven suns. It is also felt by a growing number of candid men, who hold the Confession in high estimation, that its teachings on the province of the civil magistrate in respect to religion and the Church are neither reconcilable with itself, nor with the fully developed principles of religious liberty. And there are individual phrases which those great men who compiled this elaborate testimony, did they live now, would probably be not unwilling to tone down and modify. But these admissions having been made, its general excellence is such as to warrant men in placing it in favourable comparison with all the similar creeds and decrees of councils that have preceded it. It was only a few weeks before his death that the late genial Dean of Westminster gave it as his spontaneous judgment that the "definition of God" as contained in the Confession of the Westminster divines, surpassed in fulness and beauty that of all the creeds of earlier or later times. There is good ground for the assertion that its statements on the subject of the Trinity, and especially on the constitution of our Lord's Person, keep more reverently within the limits of revelation, and are, at the same time, more full and clear in the presentation of whatever is revealed, than the statements on the same transcendent matters in the records of the first four General Councils. Indeed it would not be difficult to show that all the errors and heresies which those great ecclesiastical conclaves sought

to expose and condemn, were before the Westminster divines when they prepared this part of the Confession, and these have been confuted by them in a few well-chosen passages, which bear in every part of them the distinct marks of controversial fire. In respect to precision and fulness, the teachings of the same divines on Luther's great article of a standing or falling church—"Justification by Faith"—are greatly preferable to those of the Synod of Dort. And certainly not the least valuable service done by them to the Church is the force and earnestness with which they represent holiness as the ripe fruit and crown of salvation. Their emphatic testimonies on this subject were, no doubt, in part drawn out by the appearance in many parts of the land of the Antinomian heresy, the most hideous of all forms of Antichrist, coming forth like some foul and unshapely monster from the mud of the Nile.

The Assembly of Divines having completed their great work of preparing the Confession, nothing now remained to be done but the compilation of a Catechism which should make instruction in the doctrines taught in the Confession more efficient and easy. But when they had proceeded a little way in this new labour, it became apparent that two Catechisms were necessary in order to the completeness of the catechetical system of the Church. And the reason was explained in a letter to the Commission of the General Assembly in Scotland, which bears the characteristic marks of Rutherford's pen. He says, "The Assembly of Divines, having found it very difficult to satisfy themselves or the world

with one form of Catechism, *or to dress up milk and meat both in one dish*, have, after second thoughts, re-committed the work, that two forms of Catechism may be prepared—one more exact and comprehensive, another more easie and short, for new beginners.”

The former of these, the Larger Catechism, was intended for more advanced scholars, and in some of its answers reveals the hand of Rutherford. It does not seem to have ever passed into very extensive use. But the other catechetical manual, so well known as “The Shorter Catechism,” acquired from the first, and has retained through the centuries, an extraordinary acceptance and usefulness, though, in the opinion of many, some of the milk provided in it partakes a good deal of the quality of strong meat. Omit its questions, and read its answers alone, and you have a complete system of theology, unmatched in its compactness and clearness, a finely concatenated chain, each new truth linked into the other and leading to it. It is the theology of St. Augustine, of the Covenanters and of the Puritans, Conformist and Nonconformist, epitomized. As is fit in a manual for the young, it does not contain a word about Church government or order, when greater lessons need to be taught and mastered first. It has been described by some as from beginning to end a string of dogmas; while a third part, at least, of the whole manual is occupied with a beautiful exposition of the moral law as it has been summed up in the Ten Commandments. Many of its definitions of the great doctrines of our religion are so perfect that nothing can

be added, or removed, or altered, without injury. We might refer for instances to the questions on justification, on prayer, and on the state of believers immediately after death, and at the resurrection—the answers to the two last of which are most beautiful, alike in thought and language. It is not too much to affirm that the Shorter Catechism has had much to do in moulding the character at least of one nation. Hugh Miller owed its beneficent influence both on his intellect and on his religious thought and life. “The older I grow,” said Carlyle, “and I now stand on the brink of eternity, the more comes back to me the first answer in the Catechism which I learned when a child, and the fuller and deeper its meaning becomes. What is the chief end of man? To glorify God and enjoy Him for ever.”

No one who knows a true pastor's heart will be astonished to learn that, during these important discussions, Rutherford's thoughts often turned to his students and his flock at St. Andrews, and that, more than once, he implored the consent of the General Assembly to his return. “We are so weary,” he said, “with our exceeding long absence from our particular charges, that we humbly entreat from you a permission to return so soon as you think fit.” But who could be found to supply his place in that council with its so difficult work, demanding unflinching courage, quite as much as rare and varied mental gifts? His brethren in Scotland were deaf to his appeals. Mr. Baillie wrote home a second time that “for the great parts God had given him, Mr. Samuel's presence was very necessary.”

But if his heart was thus bowed down by his protracted and wearisome detention of more than four years from his work in Scotland, he was called to suffer even greater sorrows under family bereavements. Before leaving St. Andrews he had lost two of his children, and during his attendance at Westminster he was called to lay in the grave the dust of his two remaining little ones, and himself and his wife were written childless. Even Samuel Rutherford needed to pass more than once through the refining fires. We may learn what were the consolations with which he was comforted, by knowing what those were with which he comforted others. He thus wrote to a lady who had been similarly bereaved, after his own double sorrow :—

“I had two children,” he says, “and both are dead, since I came hither. The supreme and absolute Father of all things giveth not an account of any of His matters. The good husbandman may pluck his roses, and gather his lilies at midsummer, and, for aught I dare say, in the beginning of the first summer months. And he may transplant young trees out of the lower ground to the higher, where they may have more of the sun and a more free air, at any season of the year. What is that to you or to me? The Creator of time and winds did a merciful injury (if I may borrow the words) to nature, in landing the passenger so early. I persuade myself, if we could prize Christ, nothing would be better to us.”

Rutherford's work in the Assembly of Divines was ended, and he hastened, with their consent, to return at

length to Scotland. It may be safely affirmed that, of all the Scottish commissioners, he left the deepest mark on the deliberations of that great ecclesiastical council. Henderson had died in the middle of its conferences, wearied and worn out with care and toil, and glad, as has been said, like the schoolboy at the end of his week, to pass into sunlight, peace, and rest. The other commissioners had repeatedly visited Scotland, and been absent for periods of some length; but for four and a half years, with the exception of a brief visit to Epsom on account of impaired health, Rutherford had never been absent from his post. The high estimate in which his character and labours were held by the Westminster divines was expressed in a letter to the Commission of the Scottish General Assembly, of which Rutherford was the bearer, and of which the following is an extract:—

“And now this reverend and learned professor of divinity, Mr. Samuel Rutherford, signifying to us that he is presently to return to his particular station and employment among you, we cannot but restore him with ample testimony of his learning, godliness, faithfulness, and diligence; and we humbly pray the Father of spirits to increase the number of such burning and shining lights among you, and to return all the labour of love which you have shown to this afflicted Church and kingdom, a thousandfold into your bosoms.” His fellow-commissioners gave a similar glowing testimony. Baillie described him as his “sweet colleague.” “Thanks be to God,” he says, in another letter, “never colleagues had a greater harmony. For to this hour, not the least

difference, the smallest eyelid betwixt any of us in any thing, either public or private, makes our fellowship much the sweeter." The Houses of Parliament had previously shown their high estimate of his gifts and veneration for his character, by inviting him, on two occasions, to preach before them, and by even voting a sum of money that should be spent in providing a valuable piece of silver plate that should be presented in their name to the eminent ecclesiastic and preacher.

Rutherford returned to Scotland in November, 1647, entering on a childless home. We may imagine the saintly man gladly resuming his meditative walks along those bold headlands at St. Andrews which look out upon the German Ocean, pausing at times to watch the course of some storm-tossed ship far out in the angry bay, seeing in it an emblem of his toiling and suffering Church, and bidding away despondency and fear as Luther's favourite psalm rose to his lips, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea."

The Scottish Church adopted the Westminster Standards as her Confession. They were approved by the English Parliament with the exception of those chapters which referred to the civil magistrate; and though its full sanction was refused to the Presbyterian order and discipline, Presbyterianism became, in a measure and for a brief period, the established polity of the three kingdoms.

From the time when the preparation of the Catechisms was finished, and the Commissioners from Scotland returned to their homes, the Westminster Assembly gradually diminished in numbers and influence, being principally occupied with the examination of candidates for sequestered livings. At length in March, 1652, when Cromwell had risen to the ascendant, it broke up without any "legal form of dissolution." Dean Stanley, whose taste for ecclesiastical discussions was not strong, thus notes the fact: "For five years, six months and twenty-two days, through one thousand one hundred and sixty-three sessions, the Chapel of Henry VII. and the Jerusalem Chamber witnessed their weary labours." ¹

¹ "History of Westminster Abbey."

CHAPTER VII.

ST. ANDREWS.—THE GOOD CONFESSOR.

DURING the four and a half years of his attendance on the Westminster Assembly, Rutherford had been remarkably prolific as an author. It has been calculated that his published writings during this period would have filled four quarto volumes of goodly size. This fact alone testifies to the extraordinary force and exuberant fertility of his mind, at least when the quality of his works is included in our estimate. To some of these Westminster treatises we have already had occasion to refer, and we have now to add to the thronging list, his "Due Right of Presbyteries," which, as its title indicates, was an argument for his favourite form of Church polity. It was replied to by able controversialists both at home and in New England, the venerable Cotton Mather being among the number.

Two of his most popular doctrinal and devotional works were given to the world during the same fruitful years. These were "Christ Dying and Drawing Sinners to Himself," and "The Trial and Triumph of Faith,"—the latter being founded on the exquisitely beautiful narra-

tive of our Lord's interview with the Syro-Phœnician woman. Both are distinguished by that exhaustive treatment in which every word is made to yield up its wealth, though, it must be owned, the rich grape-clusters sometimes continue to be pressed after all the juice is out of them. Both are also marred by minute subdivisions and verbal distinctions, as well as by the undue obtrusion of logical forms, which appear, like some of his own Scotch thistles, raising their heads in the midst of the abundant grain. But both also abound in passages of fervid eloquence, in homely illustrations, which must have told with electric power upon the audiences to whom they were originally addressed, and may be read with appreciating enjoyment even in our own days; while at every short interval you come upon little compacted sentences that are weighted with golden thoughts.

It is not possible to speak with the same complacency of the next work of Rutherford's which we have to name, his "Free Disputation against Pretended Liberty of Conscience." On the great question of the rights of human conscience, this book gives abundant evidence that this acute thinker and devout man was not in advance of the still prevailing intolerance of his age. Had he merely contended, as he also does in this treatise, for the responsibility of man for his belief in matters of religion, or for the inherent right, and even the binding obligation of churches, to exclude from their fellowship those who have abandoned the faith, or who are dishonouring their profession by leading scandalous lives, he would have been serving the interests of truth

and holiness; but the fundamental error which runs through the whole of this "Free Disputation" and vitiates it, is that heresy is a crime against the State, and, especially at the instance of the Church, ought to be visited with civil pains and penalties. One is apt to wonder how a sanctified intellect like Rutherford's could overlook the fact that Christ had so distinctly forbidden the use of carnal weapons in any circumstances for the advancement of His kingdom, and how any attempt to force men's convictions at the point of the sword was far more likely to harden their resistance, than to win them to the loving reception of the truth; to make hypocrites rather than believers. One thing that has impressed us from an examination of the book is, that he was misled, in common with many other good men, by applying the supposed analogy of the Jewish theocracy to the case of a mere human government. The time had come, however, when men, in great numbers, were thinking out the whole subject of liberty of belief and worship, and intolerance was beginning to lose its disciples and defenders. A few years after Rutherford had published his "Free Disputation," Dr. Owen presented to the Parliament a discourse on Toleration, the leading design of which was to vindicate the principle that errors in religion are not punishable by the civil magistrate, with the exception of such as in their own nature, not in men's apprehensions, disturb the order of society. The Presbyterian Church of Holland had already avowed the doctrine and embodied it in its authoritative documents. And on the hospitable shores

of that country, and in the bosom of her Church, English fugitives were learning the true principles of religious toleration, and were in due time to bear them back as a precious leaven to their own land. The public mind was passing into a state of fusion and impressibility, and Jeremy Taylor, and Milton, and Vane, and Locke, along with Owen and a host of the Puritan leaders, casting abroad their thoughts like living seeds on the prepared soil of the English commonwealth, were becoming its preceptors on the rights of conscience. It is accordingly interesting to notice with what firmness of conviction and clearness of statement the Nonconformists, who were the natural descendants of the Covenanters and the Puritans, not quite three-quarters of a century after, expressed themselves on the folly of persecution in the matter of religious belief and worship. The gentle Dr. Doddridge, in a sermon preached by him a little more than seventy years after Rutherford had published his "Free Disputation," expressed himself thus in the following admirable sentences :

"True religion must be founded in the inward conviction of the mind, or it is impossible it should be what it must, a reasonable service. And pray, let it be considered what violence and persecution can do towards producing an inward conviction. It cannot, to be sure, do it immediately by its own power, because it is a demonstration that will at the same moment suit both the parts of a contradiction. But it is certain a man might as reasonably expect to bind an immaterial spirit with a cord, or to beat down a wall by an argument, as

to convince the understanding by threats or by tortures. They may, indeed, make a man mad ; but it is the hardest thing in the world to imagine how they should ever make him wise. . . .

“I confess I cannot see how a man is the more likely to judge of an argument because he hears it on the rack, or because he sees the lash, or perhaps the sword over his head, and trembles lest he should not believe it. Far from opening the mind to fair conviction, methinks it should rather prejudice a man against it ; as it would give some aversion even to a draught otherwise agreeable, to have it forced down by such methods as a drench is given to a horse. There is, if you will pardon the expression, a kind of elasticity in the human mind ; and the more violently it is pressed down and bent, the more forcibly does it endeavour to expand itself again. But if this were to be put out of the question, we may depend upon it that none will ever have the better opinion of any religion, because it makes its professors very bad men ; and so they will undoubtedly think their persecutors to be.”

Such words prove that the education of providence, as well as of reason and Scripture, had not been lost upon the churches and the nation during the intervening seventy years, for they are not the sayings of a man in advance of his age, they represent what had become the general thought of educated and religious men in England.

There seems good reason for thinking that the “Free Disputation,” in part at least, provoked Milton to write

his scathing "irregular sonnet," "On the New Forcers of Conscience under the Long Parliament," in which the following well-known lines occur :

"Dare ye for this abjure the civil sword
To force our consciences that Christ set free,
And ride us with a classic hierarchy
Taught ye by mere A. S. and Rutherford?

But we do hope to find out all your tricks,
Your plots and packing worse than those of Trent,
That so the parliament
May, with their wholesome and preventive shears,
Clip your phylacteries, though bauk your ears,
And succour our just fears,
When they shall read this clearly in your charge—
New Presbyter is but Old Priest writ large."

Our great epic poet had the advantage of Rutherford in this matter, though he too ran into excess. "His haughty temper," as Warton long ago remarked, "brookd no human control." He seems to have contended only for "that individual or personal religion, by which any man is to be his own priest." The case presents us with a striking instance of the way in which good men often misjudge each other when they only meet in controversy. We are not likely to estimate a man aright when all we know of him is that he once jostled us in a crowd. There were sides of Rutherford's nature which, had Milton only known them, would have drawn out his spontaneous love and veneration.

We have yet to mention, as belonging to the same period in Rutherford's life, the publication of his "Lex Rex, or the Law and the Prince : a Dispute for the Just

Prerogative of King and People." Milton should have rewarded him with a complimentary sonnet for this treatise. Belonging more to the province of political science than of theology, this is by far his greatest work, both in respect to argumentative power and rich and varied learning; and it is justly regarded, even at the present day, as one of the ablest defences of constitutional government that have ever been written. What gave immediate occasion to its being written was the publication of a book by John Maxwell, ex-Bishop of Ross, in which the right of kings to rule independently of parliaments and people, and the consequent duty of passive obedience on the part of their subjects, was asserted in the most absolute and unqualified terms. "Our Assemblies and Parliaments," says Baillie, "he lays absolutely under the feet of a king's mere pleasure, were he the greatest tyrant that ever was." The irritating effect of the book, produced by its unreasonable and degrading principles, was not diminished by the acrid and abusive temper in which it was written by a learned but turbulent ecclesiastic, who was altogether out of sympathy with the spirit of the times. Moreover, the ex-prelate intended his doctrine to have an immediate and very practical bearing upon Rutherford and his friends, by concluding against them as rebels, who had not long since resisted with arms the attempt of Charles to make assemblies and parliaments bend to his arbitrary will.

Rutherford gathered up all his strength and marshalled all his resources in the production of his "Lex Rex," which

was published in less than twelve months after the appearance of Maxwell's mischievous tractate. He declared that arbitrary power was a "fit garland only for the Infinite Majesty." Avowing his preference for a monarchy, he strongly stated that where kings exercised their prerogative aright, it was one of the highest duties of their subjects to yield them a loyal and devoted obedience. But he argued further that people had their rights as well as kings, the million as well as the unit; that the king was appointed for the good of the people, and that while individual acts of tyranny did not constitute the ruler a tyrant, yet, in cases where the oppression was gross and persistent, and that which had been given as an ordinance of God for good was perverted into a general curse, it became the duty of parliaments to restrain the sovereign, and, in extreme cases, the people would be warranted in resuming the power which they had committed to his hands. It is true that it was only in extreme cases and as a last resource, that this action was justifiable; but history could produce many instances in which this ultimate step had been taken, with the best results to the nation and to the world. It is easy to imagine the profound interest with which a book elaborating and defending such principles would be read by the members of the Long Parliament, coming upon them, as it did, when they were contending with the king for parliamentary liberties, and constitutional guards and limits around royal prerogative.

The excitement awakened by it in the Scottish General Assembly was intense. "Lex Rex" was on every lip.

“Every member,” says Bishop Guthrie, “had in his hand that book lately published by Mr. Samuel Rutherford, which was so idolized that whereas Buchanan’s treatise, ‘De jure regnî apud Scotos,’ was looked upon as an oracle, this coming forth, it was slighted as not anti-monarchical enough, and Rutherford’s ‘Lex Rex’ only thought authentic.” The king is said to have expressed his belief that “it was not likely to be answered in his day;” though the truth never dawned on the royal mind that “the firmest bulwark of royal authority, is the judicious advocate of the subject’s rights.”¹ It was one of the most valuable contributions to political science, a help to human progress, supplying more than one stone for that noble fabric of constitutional monarchy which was to rise and be consummated in another age. The bringing over of William of Orange was the living embodiment of the principle of “Lex Rex.” It has therefore been justly said that “the principles of this book, however obnoxious they may be to the devotees of arbitrary power and passive obedience, are substantially the principles on which all government is founded, and without which the civil magistrate would become a curse rather than a blessing to a country. They are the very principles which lie at the basis of the British Constitution, and by whose tenure the House of Brunswick does at this moment hold possession of the throne of these realms.”

As we cull a few sentences from this great political text-book of the Covenanters, we feel that in boldness

¹ Whately.

of thought and distinctness of statement they could scarcely have been exceeded by a constitutional writer in the nineteenth century.

“The power of creating a man a king is from the people.”

“A community transplanted to India, or any place of the world not before inhabited, have a perfect liberty to choose either a monarchy, or a democracy, or an aristocracy.”

“If the king have not the consent of the people, he is an usurper, for we know no external lawful calling that kings have now, or their family, to the crown, but only the call of the people.”

“The law is not the king’s own, but given him in trust.”

“It is true the king is the head of the kingdom, but the states of the kingdom are as the temples of the head, and so as essentially parts of the head as the king is the crown of the head.”

“Power is not an immediate inheritance from heaven, but a birthright of the people borrowed from them; they may let it out for their good, and resume it when a man is drunk with it.”

“If it be natural to one man to defend himself against the personal invasion of a prince, then it is natural and warrantable to ten thousand, and to a whole kingdom; and what reason to defraud a kingdom of the benefit of self-defence more than one man.”

“A limited and mixed monarchy such as is in Scotland and England, seems to me the best government, when

parliaments, with the king, have the good of all the three. This government hath glory, order, unity from a monarch ; from the government of the best and wisest, it hath safety of counsel, stability, and strength ; from the influence of the Commons, it hath liberty, privileges, promptitude of obedience.”

New honours began to gather around Rutherford, because of his extending fame and eminent services. His native University of Edinburgh sought to obtain him for her chair of theology ; but in vain. In 1647 he was elevated to the Principalship of the New College in St. Andrews, and not long after, he was chosen Rector of the same University. Now, indeed, that Alexander Henderson had passed away, he stood pre-eminent in the Scottish Church, and probably also among the professors in its Universities. Nothing, therefore, was more natural than that Holland, “coveting earnestly the best gifts,” should have looked to him with longing eyes, and sought to induce him to come over and swell the ranks of her learned men. He was known to be in sympathy with the Dutch divines on the greater number of those ecclesiastical and theological questions which were agitating men’s minds at that period ; and his controversial writings on Arminianism and kindred topics were well known among them, and had powerfully influenced theological thought in the Netherlands. Accordingly, in 1648, he was invited to occupy the chair of divinity and Hebrew in the University of Harderwyck ; but the effort to remove him was without success. Twice in 1651 the magistrates of Utrecht besought him,

with much urgency, to fill the chair of theology in their honoured University, which had been rendered vacant by the death of the famous Demetius. In reference to this one appointment Rutherford hesitated, and for six months delayed his final answer. But at length the disturbed condition of the Church in Scotland turned the balance in favour of home. He could not bear the thought of abandoning the ship when it was steering its way in the midst of perilous shoals and contending with storms. He could have said, like the brave-souled and self-forgetting Nehemiah, "Should such an one as I flee?" Writing to a friend, he said, "I had rather be in Scotland with angry Jesus Christ than in any Eden or garden in the earth."

But the danger to the cause which was so dear to the heart of Rutherford was not more owing to the devices of enemies, than to disputes and divisions which at length broke out among the Covenanters themselves. One of the most serious of these differences arose from the proposed admission to power and to offices of trust in the State, of persons who had been actively hostile to the Covenant, and who had given no satisfactory evidence of being reconciled to the new order of things. The General Assembly had given its sanction to the removal of the existing restrictions upon this class of persons; it had even censured those who had protested against the measure. And among these protestors was Rutherford, with not a few others of the best and wisest men in the Church. Controversy on this subject extended on every side, becoming impassioned and embittered as it became more protracted, one party charging

the other with the sacrifice of principle to unrighteous compromise, and with putting weapons into the hands of unreconciled adversaries, which they might one day use to destroy their covenanted reformation; and the other retorting with the charge of undue obstinacy, when conciliation might have turned a friend into a foe. Even between Rutherford and more than one of his colleagues in the University there were division and alienation, and those who had once loved as brethren no longer recognized each other in the streets. It is easy to understand and appreciate the position taken by Rutherford in this unhappy agitation, and to believe in his conscientiousness; but it is impossible to acquit him of an occasional violence of speech and a bitterness of spirit which did not "work the righteousness of God." And yet there are passages in his letters which afford us glimpses of the workings of his heart at this very time, and show how his brotherly love and charity had not forsaken him. "For the divisions of Reuben, there were great searchings of heart." Can any words written at such a time be more seemly and touching than the following?—"I am broken and wasted by the wrath that is upon this land. It is hard when saints rejoice in the sufferings of saints, and redeemed ones' hurt, and go nigh to hate redeemed ones; for contempt of communion of saints we need newborn crosses scarce ever heard of before. Our star-light hideth us from ourselves, and hideth us from one another, and Christ from us all. A doubt it is if we shall have fully one heart till we enjoy one heaven."

It is pleasing to note what the chroniclers of the period are not slow to mention, that even when these controversies were at their greatest heat, the regular work of the Church was not allowed to stand still. On the contrary, earnest preaching abounded, schools were founded in previously neglected places, increased efficiency was sought to be given to the higher training in the Universities, especially in the preparing of candidates for the sacred office, and Church discipline was faithfully administered. While there was a sword in the one hand, the trowel was not cast away from the other.

The events of the next twelve years belong rather to general history, and do not fall to be related in a biography of Rutherford. In no period in the national life of the two kingdoms were the events more important, more rapid in their succession, or more startling in their changing colour and contrasts. Within little more than a single decade there seemed to be crowded the events of half a century; and those incidents which appeared to many at the time to end in failure, left seeds behind them that have borne priceless fruits ever since. In some of these Rutherford, along with the other ecclesiastical leaders, bore an active part; in respect to others he was an interested onlooker. We simply mention, as among the salient facts and features of those eventful years, the gradual waning of the Presbyterian interest and influence in England, and the growing popularity of the Independents; the extraordinary power attained by Cromwell, especially through the friendship of the Independents and the attachment of the army; the dissolution

of the Long Parliament, and the removal by this means of the last check upon Cromwell's rising ambition; the national tragedy of the trial and execution of Charles; the abolition of the monarchy, and the setting up of a republican government under the presidency of Cromwell as Lord Protector; the flight of Prince Charles to Scotland and his coronation as its king by the Scottish parliament and nobles, with his solemn promise to respect and defend its ecclesiastical government and worship; the invasion of Scotland by Cromwell to enforce its subjection and chastise its spirit of independence; the adventurous escape of Charles to Breda; the death of Cromwell after a protectorate of nine years, during which he had taught the nations of Europe to respect England, and, in the midst of many arbitrary acts, had inculcated and exemplified religious toleration, and his mailed hand had often fallen beneficently on the commonwealth; the abdication of the protectorate within the following twelvemonth by his feeble son Richard; the return of Charles, and his restoration as Charles II. to the sovereignty of the three kingdoms.

Passing these great and strangely varied events with this simple enumeration, let us imagine ourselves to return to Scotland in the beginning of 1661, and inquire in what manner the second Charles is meanwhile dealing with the Church and people of his northern kingdom. It is but a few years since Scotland had chivalrously sheltered and defended him with her army, and since, on the day of his coronation in the ancient palace at Scone, and in the presence of its highest nobles and

statesmen and ecclesiastical chiefs, he had lifted up his hand to heaven and sworn that he would be true to its ecclesiastical order and worship, and faithful to its covenant. His first act to Scotland was to trample under foot his every sworn pledge.

On the first day of January, 1661, the Scottish parliament sadly deteriorated in character, controlled and instigated by the king, invested him with arbitrary power, recalled the covenants, and abolished Presbytery. By one sweeping measure all the Acts of Parliament that had been passed since 1638 were declared to be illegal and revoked. The moors and glens of Scotland were soon to become a hunting-ground on which those who refused to worship God according to forms which they believed to be unscriptural and sinful, were to be persecuted and slaughtered, and thousands of whom the world was not worthy were to have their lands confiscated, to be driven into exile, to be tortured by the iron boots and the thumb-screw, or hanged or beheaded on the scaffold.

It was to be expected that Rutherford, who had been one of the most faithful and fearless opponents of arbitrary power, alike in sacred and civil matters, should have been one of the first selected victims of royal displeasure. In a proclamation by the Committee of Estates, it was declared that every person retaining in his possession a copy of his "Lex Rex" would be regarded and treated as an enemy of the king. The same masterly work, which naturally made the defenders of irresponsible government angry and uneasy, was commanded to be publicly burned by the common hangman at Edinburgh,

and a week afterwards it was subjected to the same ignominious treatment at the Cross of St. Andrews.[†] It was no doubt more easy to burn the book than to answer it. It has been shrewdly remarked that "Galileo would probably have escaped persecution if his discoveries could have been disproved, and his reasonings refuted." But this was only the first stroke by which the men in power sought to satiate their resentment. Rutherford was next denuded of all his dignities and offices in the University, and deprived of his pastoral charge. His various emoluments were confiscated, and he was required to be confined within his own house. And all this dishonour, deprivation, poverty, and imprisonment was not enough. The climax came when the man of God was summoned to appear before the ensuing parliament on a charge of high treason.

But the state of his health was now such as to convey unmistakable "warnings of removal," and to indicate that his departure was not far distant. We find him complaining in one of his letters of "a daily menacing disease." And one of his "inner friends" represents the state of the Church of Scotland as "lying so heavily on his heart as to sink him into his grave, as not able to outlive the departing of that glory which was already in a great measure departed." The consequence was that when the messengers came with their summons to St. Andrews, they were obliged to deliver it to him in his bedchamber. Shall we believe with one writer that when those officers of justice entered to do their unwilling work, Rutherford

[†] Minutes of St. Andrews Town Council.

was asleep and dreaming—dreaming, perchance, of Anwoth's blessed birds, his kirk, his home, his wild wood-walk, with all their memories? Or perhaps it had passed into a dream of heaven. But as the strange sounds in the bedchamber awoke him to consciousness, and he received into his thin, pale hand the document and read it, some of his old fire kindled in his eye, and he gave back his answer to the summons with a saintly majesty, "Tell them," he said, "that I have got a summons already from a superior judge and judicatory, and I behove to answer my first summons, and ere your day arrives, I will be where few kings and great folks come." When the messengers returned and reported that he was dying, the Council voted with impotent spite that he should not be allowed to die within the college. One brave heart answered well. Lord Burleigh rose and said, "Ye have voted that honest man out of his college, but ye cannot vote him out of heaven."

Early in the months of 1661 Rutherford had finally arranged his family affairs, and, faithful to his unchanged convictions, while conscious that he was on the borders of the eternal world, had published "A Testimony to the Reformation in Great Britain and Ireland." Having done this, he appears to have gathered up his mind into a waiting posture for the voice that was soon to call him upward to his "Father's house of many mansions." Often in his letters he had expressed his earnest longings for this hour of release and reward, and his wish that he might "die with love-thoughts of Christ." "Oh for the long day, and the high sun, and the fair garden, and the

King's great City up above those visible heavens!" And his desire was now to be accomplished. His exercises during the closing weeks of his life appear to have had all the qualities of a triumph. How little there was of death in that dying! The powers of evil were held back and not allowed to come near him. Hád he written some of his letters now, he might have fitly dated them from the land of Beulah, or from the Delectable Mountains. His dying sayings, treasured in the memories of those who were admitted to the sanctuary of his death-chamber, are like "Sabeian odours, wafted from the spicy shores of Araby the blessed." Addressing one of his colleagues in the ministry, he said, "I feed on manna: I have angels' food. My eyes shall see my Redeemer. I know that He shall stand on earth at the latter day, and I shall be caught up in the clouds to meet Him in the air." On another occasion: "I shall shine, I shall see Him as He is. I shall see Him reign and all His fair company with Him, and I shall have my share." When some spoke admiringly of his ministry, he was quick to interrupt them, as this manner of speech was displeasing to him: "I disclaim all that God ever made me will or do, and I look upon it as defiled and imperfect as coming from *me*. But Christ is to me wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." And on a later occasion, "I disclaim all. The port I would be in at is redemption and salvation through His blood." To four of his brethren in the ministry, who had come to visit him, he said, "My Lord and Master is chief of ten thousand of thousands. None is comparable to Him in

heaven or in earth. Dear brethren, do all for Him. Pray for Christ. Preach for Christ. Do all for Christ. Beware of men-pleasing." As his eye rested on his little daughter of eleven years standing by his bedside, he called to mind his transaction with heaven in her behalf and said, "I have left her upon the Lord." On repeated occasions he cried aloud, "Oh for a well-tuned harp!" as if he already heard the sound of the radiant worshippers, and yearned with a holy impatience to join them in their "heavenly symphonies and sweet societies."¹ One of his latest sayings reminds us of Milton's words, "Whose spirit doth attain to something like prophetic strain," and it is not the only instance in which poets have shown themselves to be the best philosophers. On the afternoon of the day before his death he said, "This night will close the door and fasten my anchor within the vail, and I shall go away in a sleep by five in the morning." And so it happened. His saintly spirit took its upward flight at that very hour, and God hid him in His pavilion from man's contumely and from the strife of tongues. His last words were, "Glory, glory dwelleth in Immanuel's land," as if, says one of his biographers, "he had caught a glimpse of its mountain-tops."

Rutherford died at St. Andrews on March 29, 1661,

¹ We are reminded of the touching scene, when holy Herbert was dying, and when calling for his lute and sweeping its strings with his pale and feeble hand, he sang—

"My God, my God,
My music shall find Thee,
And every string
Shall have his attribute to sing."

at the age of 61, and all the godly in the land mourned for him as Israel mourned for her best and greatest judge. All of him that was mortal was buried in the churchyard of the chapel of Saint Regulus. The dust of the holy Halyburton was, at his own dying request, at a later age laid at his side.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONCLUSION.

IT is natural that at the close of our narrative, we should look back from the wondrously sublime scene of Rutherford's death-bed, through the many intervening and eventful years, to the moment when he comes before us as the Teviotdale farmer's little son, setting off in the early morning on his nimble walk of four miles to the grammar school in Jedburgh, and that we should endeavour to lay our hand on the more outstanding features of his character.

In addition to his distinguished mental gifts, the first thing that rises before us, as giving shape and colour to his history, is the depth and intensity of his devotion. He would unquestionably have risen to eminence apart from the influence of religion, but it was this Divine and overmastering force that both made him so great and made his greatness beneficent.

We have sometimes heard him described as an ascetic, but, unless the word is to be understood with a novel meaning, there is scarcely any epithet that is more inapplicable to the pastor of Anwoth. He did not seek to annihilate the lower parts of his nature; he only sought

to obey the voice of Christ calling him to control and ennoble them. He was no recluse, but he was a man of prayer after the Luther style and measure. Those long, undisturbed morning hours spent by him in meditation and direct exercises of prayer, often in the natural sanctuary beneath the trees, explain many things in his life and character, and account for his success. They gave a grand unity to his life, concentrating all his faculties on one object, and this object was the highest—the glory of God in the salvation of men. They enabled him to shake himself free from all worldly ambitions and earth-born desires. They inspired his preaching with a kind of eloquence which no mere schools of rhetoric could ever have taught him ; and his extraordinary sanctity of character gave a force and momentum to whatever he taught, whether speaking from his pulpit, or conversing in the cottage of the peasant, or in the castle of the peer. The effect of all this was, that, within a period of nine years, not only had Anwoth become as “a field which the Lord had blessed,” but the mingled influence of his ministry and character was felt in the remotest glens of Galloway.

Another thing remarkable in Rutherford was the singular variety of his gifts. We have already quoted the strong testimony of contemporary historians to his great power and excellence as a preacher, one of whom represents him as “one of the greatest preachers in his own, or perhaps in any age.” And the language of other contemporaries scarcely falls short of this. “Heart-melting” is an epithet which they frequently apply to his preaching.

And this confirms us in the impression which a perusal of some of his sermons has left upon our mind, that, with the exception, perhaps, of Bunyan, he was unmatched in the pathos of his appeals. There was a tender side in Rutherford's nature which revealed itself in his preaching, and touched the finest and most hidden chords of sensibility in other hearts. This same quality may probably account for the influence of his ministry upon many ladies of rank in his own and neighbouring parishes. No one can fail to be struck with the holy tenderness which gleams through his letters to Lady Kenmure and other "honourable women not a few."

We know little, except through reports of his contemporaries, of the gifts of Rutherford as a debater and adviser in the ecclesiastical councils of his age. But the testimonies, not only of Baillie, but of the Erastian Lightfoot, leave us in no doubt regarding his apparently inexhaustible resources, perfect self-command, and readiness in discussion. And the simple fact that he was chosen by the General Assembly of his Church as one of its commissioners to the great Westminster Assembly of Divines, and that, in the face of his repeated entreaties to the contrary, he was not allowed to return even once to Scotland during a period of more than four and a half years, should be sufficient to assure us of his pre-eminent qualifications both in counsel and debate.

We have remarked in the course of our narrative on the number and variety, as well as the high value, of the published writings of Rutherford. Some of the most elaborate of these, which produced powerful effects in

their day, are now only to be found in old editions and antiquated bindings, and are seldom disturbed on the higher shelves of University libraries and the stores of great book collectors. But we have already remarked on two of his works which have nearly lived through two centuries and a half, and are not likely to be forgotten for centuries to come, either of which would be sufficient to preserve an author's name from oblivion. These are his "Letters" and his "Lex Rex." It has been truly said of the former that "the smell of the myrrh and the cassia has never departed from them." Not the least striking fact is the difference in the nature of these compositions. The letters are unique in epistolary writing. They flash upon the reader with original thoughts, and abound in lofty, devotional feeling clothed in the radiant garb of imagination, in which there is everything of poetry but the form. So much is this the case that a skilful versifier, in sympathy with the author, might with little difficulty turn many of the letters into hymns that would make the universal Church richer. Indeed we could name individual sentences that have supplied the germ-thought of some of the most beautiful spiritual songs in modern poetry.

Minds that have risen into the region of the higher religious life, love Rutherford the best. The sainted McCheyne made his "Letters" his constant companion in the closet. And John Brown, the well-known author of the "Self-Interpreting Bible," acknowledges in his Journal, that in his times of great sorrow, he found in the same book a deep, sweet well of comfort.

Books of the class to which the "Letters" belong, only appear in the literary firmament, like our more brilliant comets, at rare intervals, but with this advantage, that when they come, they remain, and are a permanent increase to the wealth of the Church. There is much truth beautifully stated in the remark of an American bishop that "the great religious works in which deepest piety, keenest thought, and richest imagination form an indissoluble but almost divine unity, are the rarest of human productions. God seems to confer this gift most sparingly, as if He would compel the human soul to His own book. When conferred, it ever dwells in the full splendours of that Book, like Mercury in the blaze of the sun, and seems to be, as it really is, 'Bright effluence of bright essence increate.' Of these few, Jeremy Taylor's 'Holy Dying,' 'Pilgrim's Progress,' 'Religio Medici,' 'Christian Morals' of Sir Thomas Browne, Pascal's 'Thoughts,' Augustine's 'Confessions,' Herbert's 'Poems,' and Rutherford's 'Letters' are not only specimens, but nearly the whole repertorium."

There is the same asbestos quality in the "Lex Rex," which has raised Rutherford to merited eminence as a philosophical thinker, and holds, among books on Constitutional Government, a place kindred to that which is held by Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations" in the science of Political Economy.

Few things have more impressed us than Rutherford's extraordinary power of work. This is especially remarkable in connection with two periods in his public life. In his University life at St. Andrews he had not

only to discharge the duties of one of the most arduous and important of its theological chairs, but, at his own desire, he united with this, along with a colleague, the pulpit and pastoral duties of one of its parishes. He even at length consented to combine with these the higher offices of Principal and Rector, which required a large measure of administrative wisdom and activity. When we add to this the large amount of thought and correspondence which must have fallen to the lot of a man like Rutherford in those times of trouble, we are apt to think that almost any other man would have been staggered and crushed under the burden of such herculean toils. All this would have been less remarkable, had he been content to do his work superficially, and to take the honour of services a great part of which he left to more obscure men to do for him. But he was not a man who could do anything by halves. When he undertook anything, he so concentrated his energies upon it for the time as to do it with all his might.

The same remark applies to the years which he spent in attendance on the Westminster Assembly of Divines. There is abundant evidence of his presence on the anxious deliberations of its numerous committees, and his prominence in the debates of the Assembly itself, demanding of those who were leaders in its discussions that they should have mastered many of the most difficult problems in theology. This would have been burden enough for the shoulders of most men; but it did not exhaust the resources or satisfy the mental

activity of Rutherford. During all those laborious years, he was keeping the press busy with the printing of one new work after another—for in each year he sent forth what was equivalent to a goodly-sized quarto volume—one of them at least displaying an amount of learning that would have been sufficient as the ripe fruit of a life.

This marvellous productiveness of Rutherford's intellect finds its explanation in more than one circumstance. His habit of early rising, which appears to have been continued through his whole life, accounts for much. So do his love of order, his conscientious economy of time—which he would no more have thought of wasting on trifles than the miser of casting away his gold—and his mastery of himself in concentrating his faculties upon whatever work for the time engaged him. And no doubt in some of his greatest works, which appear to have been written in a comparatively brief period, he was drawing upon the accumulated mental stores both of learning and matured thought, which had been gathering during many previous years, even as the wise nation prepares its material of war in its times of peace.

We should imperfectly estimate the debt which posterity owes to this truly great man, did we not advert to the service which he did, in his position as an ecclesiastic, in contending and suffering for great and beneficent principles which have since triumphed, and helped much to make Britain the great and free nation that it is. We have seen that he, in common with the greater number of the men of his age, fell far short of enlightened

views on the subject of toleration, and was grievously mistaken in his imagination that the arm of civil power might, in any circumstances, be invoked to punish heresy or schism. But how much do we owe to him, not only for contending in his writings, but for endeavouring in his action, during his long public life, to restrain kingly power within constitutional limits; and, at the hazard of everything that was most dear to him, resisting the intrusion and dictation of kings in the councils of the Church, or in their restraints upon the voice and will of the people in their parliaments? He was one of the sowers of those seeds which bore the blessed fruits of that revolution which, in embodying his principles, has made liberty the surest guardian and defence of law, order, and peace. His letters bear evidence that he foresaw this as the issue of his principles, and never despaired of their triumph even in his darkest and most depressing hours. He believed in the immortality of truth, and in its early resurrection even when it seemed buried like the God of truth, in spite of the great stone, and the seal, and the Roman guard.

Nor must we overlook the fact that Samuel Rutherford has left behind him the inheritance of a noble example. His is one of those lives to which we can point as an instance of what the religion of Christ, when left to work out its full effects upon a human character, is capable of producing in unfaltering fidelity to principle, holy beauty, meek endurance, and moral courage that never feared the face of man. During the whole of his public life, from the time that he entered on his young ministry at Anwoth until he died full of years at St.

Andrews, in the midst of circumstances that try men's spirits to the utmost—when they are tempted to unworthy compromise in order to avoid suffering, or to acts of dubious morality in order to reach some desirable end—it is impossible to lay our finger on a single instance in which he failed to hold fast his integrity. When men's hearts were failing them for fear on every side, and, "because iniquity abounded, the love of many had waxed cold," this man of God stood unshaken and unswayed. We can see in many a passage in his letters, the glowing intensity with which he aspired after holiness as the very prize and crown of his being; while he had nothing but arousing words of warning for those who "loved by measure and weight," and thought "to fly to heaven in their bed, and in a night dream." The voice of the Church has long since added his name to the shining roll of those witnesses who encompass the wrestlers in the great soul conflict in these later times, to stimulate and encourage them by their example and their triumph. He carried with him, in his bosom, the true martyr-spirit from youth to old age, and at the sublime end, as Livingstone, one of his contemporaries, has told us, he was more than willing to seal his testimony with his blood, and "much regretted that he was not able to go and suffer for the truth he had maintained." He had declared in one of his letters that it would be a well-spent journey that brought him to heaven, though seven deaths lay between. And at length, when the morning light of earth was dawning, he found himself home. Is it too bold to think that, even as in the visible heavens

there are bright constellations of stars, forming one group, and drawn towards each other by a mutual attraction, so there may also be groups and constellations of saints in the higher heavens? and thus we may imagine such men as Usher and Rutherford, and Baxter and Leighton, and Howe, and Latimer and Cranmer associating together—filled with light that has made them at length see eye to eye, rejoicing in a perfected love that had begun in the Church below, and radiant with the surpassing glory which “dwelleth in Emmanuel’s land.” So had one of their number sung in hope—

“As for my friends, they are not lost :
The several vessels of thy fleet,
Though parted now, by tempests tost,
Shall safely in the haven meet.

Before the throne we daily meet,
As joint petitioners to Thee :
In spirit we each other greet,
And shall again each other see.”¹

¹ Baxter.



HONEY FROM THE HONEYCOMB,

BEING

SELECTIONS FROM RUTHERFORD'S LETTERS.



I.

CHRIST—“THE ALTOGETHER LOVELY.”

I DARE say that angels' pens, angels' tongues, nay, as many worlds of angels as there are drops of water in all the seas, and fountains, and rivers of the earth, cannot paint Him out to you. I think His sweetness, since I was a prisoner, hath swelled upon me to the greatness of two heavens. O for a soul as wide as the utmost circle of the highest heaven, that containeth all, to contain His love! And yet I could hold but little of it. O what a sight, to be up in heaven, in that fair orchard of the New Paradise, and to see, and smell, and touch, and kiss that fair field-flower, that evergreen Tree of Life! His bare shadow would be enough for me; a sight of Him would be the earnest of heaven to me.

SURELY, running over love, that vast, huge, boundless love of Christ, is the only thing I would fain be in hands with. He knoweth that I have little but the love of that love; and thus I shall be happy, suppose I never get another heaven, but only an eternal feasting of that love! But, suppose my wishes were poor, He is not poor; Christ, all the seasons of the year, is dropping sweetness. If I had vessels I might fill them, but my old, riven, and running-out dish, even when I am at the well, can bring little away. Nothing but glory will make tight and fast on leaking and rifty vessels. Alas! I have spilled more of Christ's grace, love, faith, humility, and godly sorrow than I have brought with me. How little of the sea can a child carry in his hand; as little am I able to take away of my great Sea, my boundless and running-over Christ Jesus!

O, WOULD to my Lord that I could cause paper and ink to speak the worth and excellency, the high and loud praises of a Brother-ransomer! The Ransomer needeth not my report; but O, that He would take it and make use of it! I should be happy if I had an errand to this world but for some few years, to spread proclamations, and outcries, and love-letters of the highness, the highness for ever more, the glory, the glory for ever more of the Ransomer whose clothes were wet and dyed in blood!

WE are all obliged to love heaven for Christ's sake. He graceth heaven and all His Father's house with His

presence. He is a Rose that beautifieth all the Upper Garden of God—a leaf of that rose of God for smell is worth a world.

IF there were ten thousand thousand millions of worlds, and as many heavens, full of men and angels, Christ would not be pinched to supply all our wants, and to fill us all. Christ is a well of life; but who knoweth how deep it is to the bottom? Put the beauty of ten thousand thousand worlds of paradises, like the Garden of Eden, in one; put all trees, all flowers, all smells, all colours, all tastes, all joys, all loveliness, all sweetness, in one. O what a fair and excellent thing would that be? And yet it would be less to that fair, and dearest well-beloved Christ, than one drop of rain to the whole seas, rivers, lakes, and fountains of ten thousand earths.

WELCOME, welcome Jesus, in what way soever Thou comest, if we can but get a sight of Thee. And sure I am that it is better to be sick, providing that Christ come to the bedside, and draw aside the curtains and say, "Courage, I am thy salvation," than to enjoy lusty health, and never to be visited by God.

II.

“*VIA CRUCIS, VIA LUCIS.*”

SWEET, sweet is His cross ; light, light and easy is His yoke. O what a sweet step were it up to my Father's house through ten deaths, for the truth and cause of that unknown, and so not half well-loved, Plant of Renown, the Man called the Branch, the Chief among ten thousand, the Fairest among the sons of men. O what unseen joys, how many hidden heart-burnings of love are in the remnants of the sufferings of Christ ! Welcome, welcome, sweet, sweet and glorious cross of Christ ; welcome, sweet Jesus, with Thy light cross ; Thou hast now gained and gotten all my love from me ; keep what Thou hast gotten.

TAKE his cross with him cheerfully. Christ and His cross are not separable in this life ; howbeit, Christ and His cross part at heaven's door, *for there is no house-room for crosses in heaven.* One tear, one sigh, one sad heart, one fear, one loss, one thought of trouble, cannot find lodging there ; they are but the marks of our Lord Jesus down in this wide inn, and stormy country on this side

of death : *sorrow and the saints are not married together ;* or, suppose it were so, Heaven would make a divorce.

How sad a prisoner should I be if I knew not that my Lord Jesus had the keys of the prison Himself, and that His death and blood have bought a blessing to our crosses as well as to ourselves ! I am sure that troubles have no prevailing right over us, if they be but our Lord's sergeants, to keep us in ward while we are in this side of heaven. I am persuaded, also, that they shall not go over the boundary-line, nor enter into heaven with us ; for they find no welcome there, where “there is no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither any more pain ;” and, therefore, we shall leave them behind us.

I FIND crosses to be Christ's carved work that He marketh out for us, and that with crosses He figureth and portrayeth us to His own image, cutting away pieces of our ill and corruption. “Lord, cut ; Lord, carve ; Lord, wound ; Lord, do anything that may perfect the Father's image in us and make us meet for glory !”

WHEN you are come to the other side the water, and have set down your foot on the shore of glorious eternity, and look back again to the waters, and to your wearisome journey, and shall see, in that clear glass of endless glory, nearer to the bottom of God's wisdom, you shall then be forced to say, “If God had done otherwise with me than He hath done, I had never come to the enjoying of the crown of glory.”

I FIND one thing which I saw not well before : that when the saints are under trials and well humbled, little sins raise great cries and war-shouts in the conscience, and in prosperity conscience is a Pope, to give dispensations, and let out and in, and give latitude and elbow-room to the heart. O, how little care we for pardon at Christ's hand when we make dispensations ! And all is but child's play till a cross without begets a heavier cross within, and then we play no longer with our idols. It is good still to be severe against ourselves, for we but transform God's mercy into an idol, and an idol that hath a dispensation to give for the turning of the grace of God into wantonness.

HIS loved ones are most tried ; the lintel stones and pillars of His New Jerusalem suffer more knocks of God's hammer than the common side-wall stones.

YOUR Lord hath the pick and choice of ten thousand other crosses besides this, to exercise you withal ; but His wisdom and His love selected and chose out this for you besides them all ; and take it as a choice one and make use of it, so as you look to this world as your step-mother in your borrowed prison. For it is a love-look to heaven and the other side of the water that God seeketh ; and this is the fruit, the flower and bloom growing out of your cross, that you be a dead man to time, to clay, to gold, to country, to friends, wife, children, and all pieces of created nothings ; for in them is not a seat nor bottom for soul's love.

WHEN His people cannot have a providence of silk and roses, they must be content with such an one as He carveth out for them. You would not go to heaven but with company; and you may perceive that the way of those who went before you was through blood, sufferings, and many afflictions: nay, Christ, the Captain, went in over the door-threshold of Paradise, bleeding to death. I do not think but you have learned to stoop, and that you have found that the apples and sweet fruits which grow on that crabbed tree of the cross are as sweet as it is sour to bear it; especially considering that Christ hath borne the whole complete cross, and that His saints bear but bits and chips; as the Apostle says, “the remnants, or bearings of the cross.”

III.

*“THE CROSS OF CHRIST CAN MAKE ALL OTHER
CROSSES STRAIGHT.”*

I HAVE but small experience of suffering for Him ; but let my Judge and Witness in heaven lay my soul in the balance of justice, if I find not a young heaven, a little paradise of glorious comforts and soul-delighting love kisses of Christ here beneath the moon, in suffering for Him and His truth ; and that the glory, joy, and peace, and fire of love, which I thought had been kept until supper-time, when we shall get leisure to feast our fill upon Christ, I have felt in glorious beginnings in my bonds for this princely Lord Jesus.

OUR sufferings are washed in Christ's blood, as well as our souls ; for Christ's merits brought a blessing to the crosses of the sons of God. We are over the water some way already ; we are married, and our marriage portion is paid ; we are already more than conquerors, “as dying, and behold we live.” I never before heard of a living death, or a quick death, but ours : our death is not like the common death ; Christ's skill, His handiwork, and a new cast of Christ's admirable act, may be seen in our quick death. I bless the Lord that all our troubles come through Christ's fingers, and that He

casteth sugar among them, and casteth in some ounce-weights of Heaven, and of the spirit of glory, that resteth on suffering believers, into one cup, in which there is no taste of hell.

IF you go to weigh Jesus, His sweetness, excellency, glory, and beauty, and lay opposite to Him your ounces, or drachms of suffering for Him, you will be straitened in two ways: 1. It will be a pain to make the comparison, the disproportion being by no understanding imaginable; nay, if Heaven's arithmetic and angels were set to work, they should never number the degrees of difference. 2. It would straiten you to find a scale for the balance to lay that high and lofty One, that over-transcending Prince of Excellency in. If your mind could fancy as many created heavens as time hath had minutes, trees have had leaves, and clouds have had rain-drops, since the first stone of the creation was laid, they would not make half a scale in which to bear and weigh boundless excellency.

MEN have no more of you to work upon than some inches and span-lengths of sick, coughing, and phlegmatic clay. Your souls, your love to Christ, your faith, cannot be summoned, nor sentenced, nor accused, nor condemned, by Pope, deputy, prelate, ruler, or tyrant. Your faith is a free lord, and cannot be a captive. All the malice of hell and earth can but hurt the scabbard of a believer; and death, at the most, can get but a clay-pawn in keeping till your Lord take the king's keys, and open your graves.

IV.

MAKE YOUR CHOICE.

YOU will find, in Christianity, that God aimeth, in all His dealings with His children, to bring them to a high contempt of, and deadly feud with the world; and to set a high price upon Christ, and to think Him one who cannot be bought for gold, and well worthy the fighting for. And for no other cause doth the Lord withdraw from you the childish toys and the earthly delights that He giveth unto others, but that He may have you wholly to Himself.

O, IF this world knew the excellency, sweetness, and beauty of that high and lofty One, that fairest among the sons of men, verily they would see that if their love were bigger than ten heavens—all in circles beyond each other—it were all too little for Christ, our Lord. I hope that your choice will not repent you, when life shall come to that twilight between time and eternity, and you shall see the utmost border of time, and shall draw the curtain, and look into eternity, and shall one day see God take the heavens in His hands and fold them together like an

old, worn-out garment, and set on fire this clay part of the creation of God, and consume away, into smoke and ashes, the idle hope of poor fools who think there is not a better country than this low country of dying clay.

ALAS, that we should be glad of and rejoice in our fetters and our prison-house, and this dear inn, a life of sin, when we are absent from our Lord, and so far from our home. O, that we could get bonds, and low suretyship of our love, that it fasten not itself on these clay-dreams, these clay-shadows, and worldly vanities! We might be oftener seeing what they are doing in heaven, and our hearts more frequently upon our sweet treasure above. We smell of the smoke of this lower house of the earth, because our hearts and our thoughts are here. If we could haunt up with God, we should smell of heaven, and of our country above, and we should look like our country, and like strangers or people not born or brought up hereaway. Our crosses would not leave their mark upon us if we were heavenly-minded.

PUT Christ's love to the trial, and put upon it our burdens, and then it will appear love indeed. We employ not His love, and, therefore, we know it not. I verily count the sufferings of my Lord more than this world's lustrous and over-gilded glory. I dare not say but my Lord Jesus hath fully recompensed my sadness with His joys, my losses with His own presence. I find it a sweet and rich thing to exchange my sorrows with

Christ's joys, my afflictions for that sweet peace I have with Himself.

I AM still welcome to His—Christ's—house. He knoweth my nook, and letteth in a poor friend. Under this black, rough-tree of the cross of Christ, He hath ravished me with His love, and taken my heart to heaven with Him. Well and long may He enjoy it! I would not exchange Christ with all the joys that man or angel can devise beside Him. Who hath such cause to speak honourably of Christ as I have? Christ is king of all crosses; and He hath made His saints little kings under Him; and He can ride and triumph upon weaker bodies than I am—if any can be weaker—and His horse will neither fall nor stumble.

I THINK the men of this world, like children in a dangerous storm in the sea, that play and make sport with the white foam of the waves thereof, coming in to sink and drown them; so are men making fool's sports with the white pleasures of a stormy world that will sink them.

CHRIST is worth more than all the world's May-flowers, and withering riches and honour, that shall go away as smoke, and vanish in a night vision, and shall, in one half-hour after the blast of the archangel's trumpet, lie in white ashes. Let me beseech you, draw aside the lap of time's curtain, and look in through the window, to great and endless eternity, and consider if a worldly price—

suppose this round, clay globe were all your own—can be given for one smile of Christ's godlike and soul-ravishing countenance, in that day, when so many joints and knees of thousand thousands wailing, shall stand before Christ, trembling, shouting, and making their prayers to hills and mountains to fall upon them, and hide them from the face of the Lamb.

V.

HOW TO SEEK CHRIST.

I PRAY you to make your poor soul sure of salvation, and the seeking of heaven your daily task. If you never had a sick night and a pained soul for sin, you have not yet lighted upon Christ. Look to the right marks of having closed with Christ. If you love Him better than the world, and would quit all the world for Him, then that saith the work is sound. O if you saw the beauty of Jesus, and smelled the fragrance of His love, you would run through fire and water to be at Him.

I REJOICE to hear that Christ hath run away with your young love, and that you are so early in the morning matched with such a Lord; for a young man is often a dressed lodging for the devil to dwell in. Be humble and thankful for grace; and weigh it not so much by weight as if it be true.

REMEMBER that many go far on, and reform many things, and can find tears, as Esau did; and suffer hunger for truth, as Judas did; and wish and desire the

end of the righteous, as Balaam did ; and profess fair, and fight for the Lord, as Saul did ; and desire the saints of God to pray for them, as Pharaoh and Simon Magus did ; and prophesy, and speak of Christ, as Caiaphas did ; and walk softly, and mourn for judgments, as Ahab did ; and put away their sins and idolatry, as Jehu did ; and hear the Word of God gladly, and reform their life in many things, as Herod did ; and say "Master," to Christ, "I will follow Thee whither Thou goest," as the man who offered to be Christ's servant ; and may taste of the virtues—or powers—of the world to come, and be partakers of the wonderful gifts of the Holy Ghost, and taste of the good Word of God—and yet all these are but like gold in clink and colour, and are plated silver and base metal.

SEEK the Lord while He may be found : the Lord waiteth upon you. Your soul is of no little price. Gold or silver of as much bounds as would cover the highest heaven round about, cannot buy it. To live as others do, and to be free of open sins, that the world crieth shame upon, will not bring you to heaven.

MANY are beguiled with this, that they are free of scandalous and crying abominations ; but the tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is for the fire ; the man that is not born again cannot enter into the kingdom of God—*common honesty will not take men to heaven.* Alas, that men should think that ever they met with Christ, who had never a sick night, through the terrors of God in their souls, or a sore heart for sin !

CHRIST must have honesty or nothing—but if you mean that He will have no service at all, where the heart draweth back in any measure, I would not that were true, for my part of heaven, and all that I am worth in the world. If you mind to walk to heaven without a cramp or a halt, I fear that you must go alone.

HOLD on in feeling and bemoaning your hardness; for that is softness to feel hardness. Remember faith is one thing, and the feeling and notice of faith another. I am sure you were not always actually knowing that you live; yet all the time you are living: so it is with the life of faith.

VI.

"NEARER, MY GOD, TO THEE."

IF you would be a deep divine, I recommend to you
Sanctification.

I AM in as sweet communion with Christ as a poor sinner can be ; and am only pained that He hath much beauty and fairness, and I little love ; He great power and mercy, and I little faith ; He much light, and I bleared eyes. O, that I saw Him in the sweetness of His love, and in His marriage clothes, and were over head and ears in love with that princely one, Christ Jesus, my Lord ! Alas ! my riven dish and running-out vessel can hold little of Christ Jesus !

I MAY, from new experience, speak of Christ to you. O, that you saw in Him what I see ! A river of God's unseen joys hath flowed from bank to brae over my soul since I parted with you. I wish that I wanted part, so you might have : that your soul might be sick of love for Christ, or rather satiated with Him.

CHRIST'S comforts to me are not dealt with a niggard's hand, but I would fain learn not to idolize comfort, sense, joy, and sweet-felt presence. All these are but creatures, and nothing but the kingly robe, the gold ring, and the

bracelets of the Bridegroom ; the Bridegroom Himself is better than all the ornaments that are about Him. Now I would not so much have these as God Himself, and to be swallowed up of love to Christ. I see that in delighting in a communion with Christ, we may make more gods than one ; but, however, all was mere child's play between Christ and me till now. If one would have sworn unto me, I would not have believed what may be found in Christ.

I HAVE now made a new question, Whether Christ be more to be loved for giving sanctification or for free justification? And I hold that He is more and most to be loved for sanctification. It is, in some respects, greater love in Him to sanctify than to justify ; for He maketh us most like Himself, in His own essential portraiture and image in sanctifying us. Justification doth but make us happy, which is to be like angels only ; neither is it such a misery to lie a condemned man, and under unforgiven guiltiness, as to serve sin, and work the works of the devil ; and, therefore, I think sanctification cannot be bought, it is above price. God be thanked for ever, that Christ was a told-down price for sanctification !

VERILY, since I came to this prison, I have conceived a new and extraordinary opinion of Christ which I had not before ; for I perceive we postpone all our joys of Christ till He and we be in our own house above, as married parties, thinking there is nothing of it to be sought or found here but only hope and fair promises ;

and that Christ will give us nothing here but tears, and sadness, and crosses ; and that we shall never feel the smell of the flowers of that high garden above till we come there. Nay, but I find that it is possible to find young glory, and a young, green paradise of joy even here. I know that Christ's kisses will cast a more strong and refreshing smell of incomparable glory and joy in heaven than they do here ; because a drink of the well of life up at the well's head is more sweet and fresh by far than that which we get in our borrowed, old, running-out vessel, and our wooden dishes here ; yet, I am now persuaded it is our folly to postpone all till the term-day, seeing abundance of earnest will not diminish anything of our principal sum.

O, that all the young heirs would seek more, and a greater and near communion with my Lord tutor, the prime heir of all, Christ !

I KNOW that there is more in Christ than would make me run over like a coastful sea.

TRY and search His Word, and strive to go a step above and beyond ordinary professors ; and resolve to sweat more and run faster than they do for salvation. Men's midday, cold, and wire pace to heaven will cause many a man to want his lodgings at night, and to lie in the fields.

ALAS ! it were easy to measure and weigh the love we have for Christ by inches and ounces ! Alas ! that we should love by measure and weight, and not rather have

floods and feasts of Christ's love! O, that Christ would break down the old, narrow vessels of these narrow and shallow souls, and make fair, deep, wide, and broad souls, to hold a sea and a full tide flowing over all banks of Christ's love!

I CAN say, by some little experience, more now than before of Christ to you. I am still upon this, that if you seek, there is a hoard, a hidden treasure, and a gold mine in Christ you never yet saw.

I THINK it is possible on earth to build a young, new Jerusalem, a little, new heaven of this surpassing love. God, either send me more of this love, or take me quickly over the water, where I may be filled with His love.

SANCTIFICATION and the mortification of our lusts are the hardest part of Christianity. It is, in a manner, as natural for us to leap when we see the New Jerusalem as to laugh when we are tickled; joy is not under command, nor at our nod when it kisseth; but O, how many of us would have Christ divided into two halves, that we might take the half of Him only, and take His office—Jesus and salvation! but “Lord” is a cumbersome word, and to obey and work out our salvation and perfect holiness is the cumbersome and stormy north side of Christ, and that which we eschew and shift.

I CAN say more of Christ now by experience—though He be infinitely above and beyond all that can be said of Him—than when I saw you; I am drowned over head

and ears in His love. Sell, sell, sell all things for Christ ! If this whole world were the beam of a balance it would not be able to bear the weight of Christ's love ; men and angels have short arms to fathom it. Set your feet upon this piece of blue and base clay of an over-gilded and fair-plastered world ; an hour's kissing of Christ's is worth a world of worlds.

I NEVER believed, till now, that there was so much to be found in Christ, on this side of death and of heaven. O, the ravishments of heavenly joy that may be had here, in the small gleanings and comforts that fall from Christ ! What fools are we who know not, and consider not the weight and telling that is in the very earnest penury, and the firstfruits of our hoped-for harvest ! How sweet, how sweet is our enfeoffment ! O, what then must personal possession be !

I WILL not smother nor conceal the kindness of my King Jesus. He hath broken in upon the poor prisoner's soul like the swelling of Jordan ! I am bank and brimful ; a great, high Spring-tide of the consolations of Christ hath overflowed me. They have sent me here to feast with my King. His spikenard casteth a sweet smell. The Bridegroom's love hath run away with my heart ; O, love, love, love ! O, sweet are my royal King's chains ! I care not for fire nor torture. How sweet were it to me to swim the salt sea for my new lover, my second husband, my first Lord !

HOWBEIT, our obedience be not sugared and sweetened

with joy, yet the less sense, and the more willingness in obeying, the less formality in our obedience ; howbeit, we think not so ; for I believe that many think obedience formal and lifeless, except the wind be fair in the west, and sails filled with joy and sense, till souls, like a ship fair before the wind, can spread no more sail : but I am not of their mind who think so.

IF I were in your case I would borrow leave to come and stand upon the banks and coasts of that sea of love, and be a feasted soul, to see love's fair tide, free love's high and lofty waves, each of them higher than ten earths, flowing in upon pieces of lost clay. O, welcome, welcome, great sea ! O that I had as much love for wideness and breadth as twenty outmost shells and spheres of the heaven of heavens, that I might receive in a little flood of His love ! Come, come, dear friend, and be pained that the King's wine-cellar of free love, and His banqueting-house—O so wide, so stately !—O so God-like, so glory-like !—should be so abundant, so overflowing, and your shallow vessel so little, to take in some part of that love. But since it cannot come into you, for want of room, enter yourself into this sea of love, and breathe under these waters, and die of love, and live as one dead and drowned of this love.

O THAT I could let a lease of thousands of years, and a suspension of my part of heaven's glory, and postpone possession till a long day, of my desired sa'vation, so being that I could, in this lower kitchen and under-vault of His creation, be feasted with His love, and that I

might be a footstool to His glory before men and angels !
O that He would let out heaven's fountain upon withered
me, dry and sapless me ! If I were but sick of love for
His love—and O, how would that sickness delight me !
—how sweet should that easing and refreshing pain be
to my soul !

“MY Well-beloved is mine, and I am His,” is a sweet
and glorious course of life, that none know but those
who are sealed and marked in the forehead with Christ's
mark, and the new name that Christ writeth upon His
own.

O THAT we could wait for our hidden life ! O that
Christ would remove the covering, throw aside the
curtain of time, and rend the heavens, and come down !
O that shadows and night were gone, that the day would
break, and that He who feedeth among the lilies would
cry to His heavenly trumpeters, “Make ready, let us go
down and fold together the four corners of the world,
and marry the bride !”

WHEN I look to my guiltiness, I see that my salvation
is one of our Saviour's greatest miracles, either in heaven
or earth ; I am sure I may defy any man to show me a
greater wonder.

IT is now many years since the apostate angels made
a question whether their will or the will of their Creator
should be done ; and, since that time forward, mankind
hath always, in that same suit of law, appeared to plead
with them against God in daily repining against His

will ; but the Lord, being both party and judge, hath obtained a decree, and saith, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." It is, then, best for us, in the obedience of faith, and in a holy submission, to give that to God which His almighty and just power will have of us.

I WAS once that I would make the house ado, if I saw not the world carved and set in order to my liking ; now, I am silent. I pray God that I may never find my will again. O, that Christ would subject my will to His, and trample it under His feet, and liberate me from that lawless lord !

O, BLESSED soul ! that could sacrifice his will, and go to heaven having lost his will, and made resignation of it to Christ ! I would seek no more than that Christ were absolute king over my will, and that my will were a sufferer in all crosses without meeting Christ with such a nod. "Why is it thus?"

Let not the Lord's dealing seem harsh, rough, or unfatherly, because it is unpleasant. When the Lord's blessed will bloweth across your desires, it is best, in humility, to strike sail to Him, and to be willing to be led any way our Lord pleaseth. It is a point of denial of yourself to be as if you had not a will, but had made a free disposal of it to God, and had sold it over to Him ; and to make use of His will for your own is both true holiness, and your ease and peace ; you know not what the Lord is making out of this, but you shall know it hereafter.

VII.

HINTS FOR PILGRIMS BY THE WAY.

THAT hours of the day, less or more time, for the Word and prayer, be given to God, not sparing the twelfth hour, or midday, howbeit it should then be the shorter time.

1. In the midst of worldly employments there should be some thoughts of sin, death, judgment, and eternity, with a word or two at least of ejaculatory prayer to God.

2. To beware of wandering of heart in private prayer.

3. Not to grudge, howbeit you come from prayer without sense of joy ; down-casting, sense of guiltiness, and hunger, are often best for us.

4. That the Lord's day, from morning to night be spent always either in private or public worship.

5. That words be observed, wandering and idle thoughts be avoided, sudden anger and desire of revenge, even of such as persecute the truth, be guarded against ; for we often mix our zeal with our wild-fire.

6. That known, discovered, and revealed sins, that are against the conscience, be eschewed, as most dangerous preparatives to hardness of heart.

7. That in dealing with men, faith and truth in covenants and trafficking be regarded ; that we deal with all men in sincerity ; that conscience be made of idle and

lying words ; and that our carriage be such, as that they who see it, may speak honourably of our sweet Master and profession.

THINGS WHICH HUMBLLED HIM.

1. Not referring all to God, as the last end ; that I do not eat, drink, sleep, journey, speak and think for God.

2. That I have not benefited by good company ; and that I left not some word of conviction, even upon natural and wicked men, as by reproving swearing in them, or because of being a silent witness to their loose carriage, and because I intended not in all companies to do good.

3. That the woes and calamities of the Church, and of particular professors, have not moved me.

4. That at the reading the life of David, Paul, and the like, when it humbled me, I—coming far short of their holiness—laboured not to imitate them, afar off at least, according to the measure of God's grace.

5. That unrepented sins of youth were not looked to and lamented for.

6. That sudden stirrings of pride, lust, revenge, love of honours, were not resisted and mourned for. That my charity was cold.

7. That the experiences I had, of God's hearing me, in this and the other particular, being gathered, yet in a new trouble. I had always—once at least—my faith to seek, as if I were to begin at A B C again.

8. That I have not more boldly contradicted the enemies speaking against the truth, either in public, or at tables, or ordinary conference.

9. That in great troubles I have received false reports of Christ's love, and not believed aright in His chastening: whereas the event hath said, "All was in mercy."

10. Nothing more moveth me, and depresseth my soul, than that I could never for my heart, in my prosperity, so wrestle in prayer with God, nor be so dead to the world, so hungry and sick of love for Christ, so heavenly-minded, as when ten-stone weight of a heavy cross was upon me.

11. That the cross extorted vows of new obedience, which ease hath blown away, as chaff before the wind.

12. That practice was so short and narrow, and light so long and broad.

13. That death hath not been often meditated upon.

14. That I have not been careful of gaining others to Christ.

15. That my grace and gifts bring forth little or no thankfulness.

WHAT AIDED HIM.

1. I have benefited by riding alone a long journey, in giving that time to prayer.

2. By abstinence, in giving days to God.

3. By praying for others; for by making an errand to God for them, I have gotten something for myself.

4. I have been really confirmed, in many particulars, that God heareth prayer; and therefore I used to pray for anything of how little importance soever.

5. He enabled me to make no question that this mocked way, which is nicknamed, is the only way to heaven.

VIII.

MARAH'S BITTER WATERS MEDICINAL.

TO you who are in trouble there are some chapters, some particular promises in the Word of God, made in a most especial manner, which should never have been yours, so as they now are, if you had your portion in this life as others have ; and, therefore, all the comforts, promises, and mercies which God offereth to the afflicted are as so many love-letters written to you. Take them to you, and claim your right, and be not robbed. It is no small comfort that God hath written some Scriptures to you which He hath not written to others : you seem rather, in this, to be envied than pitied ; and you are, indeed, in this like people of another world, and those that are above the ordinary rank of mankind, whom our King and Lord, our Bridegroom Jesus, in His love-letter to His well-beloved Spouse, hath named beside all the rest, and hath written comforts and His hearty commendation.

I SEE many professors, for the sake of appearance ; follow on ; but they are professors of glass. I would

cause a little knock of persecution break them in twenty pieces, and so the world would laugh at the shreds. Therefore make fast work. See that Christ lay the foundation of your profession; for wind, and rain, and floods, will not wash away His building. I should twenty times have perished in my affliction if I had not leaned my weak back and laid my pressing burden both upon this stone, the Foundation-stone, the corner-stone laid in Zion; and I desire never to rise off this stone.

THERE is no way of quieting the mind, and of silencing the heart of a mother—on the loss of her child—but godly submission. The readiest way for peace and consolation to clay-vessels is, that it is a stroke of the potter and former of all things; and since the holy Lord hath loosed the hold, when it was fastened sure on your part. I know that your light, and I hope that your heart also, will yield. It is not safe to be at pulling and drawing with the omnipotent Lord. Let the pull go with Him, for He is strong; and say, “Thy will be done!”

O WHAT owe I to the file, to the hammer, to the furnace of my Lord Jesus! Grace tried is better than grace, and it is more than grace: it is glory in its infancy. Who knoweth the truth of grace without a trial? And how soon would faith freeze without a cross! How many dumb crosses have been laid upon my back that had never a tongue to speak the sweetness of Christ as this hath! When Christ blesseth His own crosses with a tongue, they breathe out Christ's love, wisdom, kind-

ness and care of us. Why should I start at the plow of my Lord, that maketh deep furrows in my soul? I know that He is no idle husbandman, He purposeth a cross.

I FIND it to be most true that the greatest temptation out of hell is to live without temptations. If my waters should stand, they would rot. Faith is the better of the free air, and of the sharp Winter storm in its face. Grace withereth without adversity. The devil is but God's master-fencer, to teach us to handle our weapons.

IX.

“AM I HIS, OR AM I NOT?”

DIE believing, die with Christ's promise in your hand. Faith hath cause to take courage from our very afflictions: the devil is but a whetstone to sharpen the faith and patience of the saints. I know that he but heweth and polisheth stones all this time for the New Jerusalem.

DUTIES are ours; events are the Lord's. When our faith goeth to meddle with events, and to hold a court—if I may so speak—upon God's providence, and beginneth to say, “How wilt thou do this and that?” we lose ground. We have nothing to do there. It is our part to let the Almighty exercise His own office, and steer His own helm. There is nothing left to us but to see how we may be approved of Him, and how we may roll the weight of our weak souls in well-doing upon Him, who is God Omnipotent; and when what we thus essay miscarrieth, it will neither be our sin nor cross.

MAKE meikle (much) of assurance, for it keepeth your anchor fixed.

BE content to wade through the waters betwixt you and glory with Him, holding His right hand fast ; for He knoweth all the fords. Howbeit you may be ducked, yet you cannot drown, being in His company ; and you may all the way to glory see the way bedewed with His blood, who is the Forerunner. Be not afraid, therefore, when you come to the black and swelling river of death, to put in your feet and wade after Him. The current, how strong soever, cannot carry you down the water to hell : the death and resurrection of the Son of God are stepping-stones and a stay to you ; set down your feet by faith upon these stones, and go through as on dry land.

PROVIDENCE hath a thousand keys to open a thousand sundry doors for the deliverance of His own, when it is even come to a desperate case. Let us be faithful ; and care for our own part, which is to do and suffer for Him, and lay Christ's part on Himself, and leave it there.

RICHES OF FREE GRACE UNSEARCHABLE.

I AM heartily sorry that your ladyship is deprived of such a husband, and the Lord's Kirk of so active and faithful a friend. I know your ladyship long ago made acquaintance with that, wherein Christ will have you to be joined in a fellowship with Himself, even with His own cross; and hath taught you to stay your soul upon the Lord's good-will, who giveth not account of His matters to any of us. When He hath led you through this water that was in your way to glory, there are fewer behind; and His order in dismissing us, and sending us out of the market, one before another, is to be revered. One year's time of heaven shall swallow up all sorrows, even beyond all comparison. What, then, will not a duration of blessedness, so long as God shall live, fully and abundantly recompense? It is good that our Lord hath given a debtor, obliged by gracious promises, far more in eternity than time can take from you. And I believe that your ladyship hath been now many years advising and thinking what that glory will be, which is abiding the pilgrims and strangers on the earth,

when they come home, and which we may think of, love and thirst for, but we cannot comprehend it nor conceive of it as it is, far less can we over-think or over-love it. O, so long a chapter, or rather so long a volume as Christ is, in that divinity of glory! There is no more of Him let down now, to be seen and enjoyed by His children, than as much as may feed hunger in this life, but not satisfy it. Your ladyship is a debtor to the Son of God's cross, that is wearing out love and affiance in the creature, out of your heart by degrees; or rather the obligation standeth to His free grace who careth for your ladyship in this gracious dispensation; and who is preparing and making ready the garments of salvation for you; and who calleth you with a new name, that the mouth of the Lord hath named; and purposeth to make you a crown of glory, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. Ye are obliged to postpone to Him more than one heaven; and yet He craveth not a long day; it is fast coming, and is sure payment. Though ye gave no hire for Him, yet hath He given a great price and ransom for you: and if the bargain were to make again, Christ would give no less for you than what He hath already given—He is far from rueing. I shall wish you no more, till time be gone out of the way, than the earnest of that which He hath purchased and prepared for you; which can never be fully preached, written, or thought of since it has not extended into the heart to consider it.

✓ If there had not been such a thing as the grace of

Jesus, I should have long since given up with heaven and with the expectation to see God. But grace, grace, free grace, the merits of Christ for nothing, white and fair, and large Saviour-mercy—which is another sort of thing than creature-mercy, or law-mercy; yea, a thousand degrees above angel-mercy—have been, and must be, the rock that we drowned souls must swim to. New washing, renewed application of purchased redemption, by that sacred blood that sealeth the free covenant, is a thing of daily and hourly use to a poor sinner. ✓

IF there was not a fountain of free grace to water dry ground, and an uncreated wind to breathe on withered and dry bones, we were gone. The wheels of Christ's chariot to pluck us out of the womb of many deaths are winged like eagles. All I have is to desire to believe that Christ will show all good-will to save; and as for your ladyship, I know that our Lord Jesus carrieth on no design against you, but seeketh to save and redeem you. He lieth not in wait for your falls, except it be to take you up. His way of redeeming is ravishing and taking; *there are more miracles of glorified sinners in heaven than can be on earth.* Nothing of you, madam, nay, not even your leaf, can wither.

IF God has given you the earnest of the Spirit, as part of payment of God's principal sum, ye have to rejoice; for our Lord will not lose His earnest, neither will He go back nor repent Him of the bargain. If ye find, at some time, a longing to see God, joy in the assurance of

that sight, howbeit that feast be but like the Passover, that cometh about only once a year. Peace of conscience, liberty of prayer, the doors of God's treasure thrown open to the soul, and a clear sight of Himself looking out, and saying, with a smiling countenance, "Welcome to me, afflicted soul," this is the earnest that He giveth sometimes, and which maketh glad the heart, and is an evidence that the bargain will hold.

YE may put a difference betwixt you and reprobates, if ye have these marks: 1. If ye prize Christ and His truth so as ye will sell all and buy Him, and suffer for it. 2. If the love of Christ keepeth you back from sinning, more than the law, or fear of hell. 3. If ye be humble, and deny your own will, wit, credit, ease, honour, the world, and the vanity and glory of it. 4. Your profession must not be barren and void of good works. 5. Ye must in all things aim at God's honour; ye must eat, drink, sleep, buy, sell, sit, stand, speak, pray, read, and hear the Word, with a heart-purpose that God may be honoured. 6. Ye must show yourself an enemy to sin, and reprove the works of darkness, such as drunkenness, swearing and lying, albeit the company should hate you for so doing. 7. Keep in mind the truth of God, that ye heard me teach, and have nothing to do with the corruptions and new guises entered into the house of God. 8. Make conscience of your calling, in covenants, in buying and selling. 9. Acquaint yourself with daily praying; commit all your ways and actions to God, by prayer, supplication, and thanksgiving; and count not

much of being mocked ; for Christ Jesus was mocked before you.

YE hold that Christ must either have hearty service, or no service at all. If ye mean that He will not halve a heart, or have feigned service, such as the hypocrites give Him, I grant you that—Christ must have honesty or nothing—but if ye mean He will have no service at all, where the heart draweth back in any measure, I would not that were true, for my part of heaven, and all that I am worth in the world. He knoweth our dross and defects ; and sweet Jesus pitieth us, when weakness and deadness in our obedience is our cross and not our darling.

✓ YE live not upon men's opinion ; gold may be gold, and have the king's stamp upon it, when it is trampled upon by men. Happy are ye if, when the world trampleth upon you in your credit and good name, yet, ye are the Lord's gold, stamped with the King of Heaven's image, and sealed by His Spirit unto the day of your redemption. Pray for the spirit of love. Love "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, and endureth all things." ✓

ALL, all for evermore be Christ's. What further trials are before me I know not ; but I know that Christ will have a saved soul of me, over on the other side of the water, on the yonder-side of crosses, and beyond men's wrongs. ✓

I AM Christ's sworn bankrupt, to whom He will intrust nothing ; no, not one pin in the work of my salvation. Let me stand in black and white in the bankrupt roll before Christ. I am happy that my salvation is accredited to Christ's mediation. Christ oweth no faith to me, to intrust anything to me ; but, O, what faith and credit I owe to Him ! Let my name fall, and let Christ's name stand in honour with men and angels.

XI.

"SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN TO COME UNTO ME."

IF you would not be content that Christ should hold from you the heavenly inheritance, which is made yours by His death, shall not that same Christ think hardly of you, if you refuse to give Him your daughter willingly, who is a part of His inheritance and conquest?

But what? Do you think her lost, when she is but sleeping in the bosom of the Almighty? Think not her absent who is in such a friend's house. Is she lost to you, who is found to Christ? If she were with a dear friend, although you should never see her again, your care of her would be but small. O, now, is she not with a dear friend, and gone higher, upon a certain hope that you shall, in the resurrection, see her again, when—be sure—she will neither be hectic, nor consumed in body!

And dying in another land, where his mother could not close his eyes, is not much. Who closed Moses' eyes? and who put on his winding-sheet? For aught I know, neither father nor mother, but God only. And there is as expeditious, fair, and easy a way betwixt

Scotland and heaven, as if he had died in the very bed he was born in. The whole earth is his Father's; any corner of his Father's house is good enough to die in.

As sown corn is not lost—for there is more hope of that which is sown than of that which is eaten—I hope that you wait for the crop and harvest. Then they are not lost who are gathered into that congregation of the First-born, and the General Assembly of the saints. Though we cannot outrun nor overtake them that are gone before, yet we shall quickly follow them: and the difference is that they have the advantage of some months or years of the crown before you. And we do not take it ill if our children outrun us in the life of grace. Why, then, are we sad, if they outstrip us in the attainment of the life of glory? It would seem that there is more reason to grieve that children live behind us, than that they are glorified and die before. While your child was alive you could intrust her to Christ, and recommend her to His keeping; won by an after-faith, you have resigned her unto Him in whose bosom do sleep all that are dead in the Lord. You would have lent her to glorify the Lord upon earth, and He hath borrowed her—with promise to return her again—to be an organ of the immediate glorifying of Himself in heaven. Sinless glorifying of God is better than sinful glorifying of Him.

TAKE no heavier lift of your children than your Lord alloweth. Give them room beside your heart, but not

in the yolk of your heart, where Christ should be; for then they are your idols, not your bairns. If your Lord take any of them home to His house before the storm come on, take it well. The owner of the orchard may take down two or three apples off his own trees, before midsummer, and ere they get the harvest sun; and it would not be seemly that his servant—the gardener—should chide him for it. Let our Lord pluck His own fruit at any season He pleaseth; they are not lost to you; they are laid up so well as that they are coffered in heaven where our Lord’s best jewels lie. They are all free goods that are there; death can have no law to arrest anything that is within the walls of the New Jerusalem.

XII.

"IT IS TIME TO AWAKE OUT OF SLEEP."

LITTLE holiness in our balance is much, because it is holiness; and we love to lay small burdens on our soft natures, and to make a fair court-way to heaven; and I know it were necessary to take more pains than we do, and not to make heaven a city more easily taken than God hath made it. I persuade myself that many runners will come short, and shall get a disappointment. O, how easy it is to deceive ourselves, and to sleep and wish that heaven may fall down into our laps!

WE dwell far from the well, and complain but dryly of our dryness and dulness: we are rather dry than thirsty.

CONSIDER, it is impossible that your idol-sins and ye can go to heaven together, and that they who will not part with these cannot indeed love Christ at the bottom, but only in word and show, which will not do the business. Remember how swiftly God's post, time, flieth away, and that your forenoon is already spent, your

afternoon will come, and then your evening, and at last night, when ye cannot see to work ; let your heart be set upon the finishing of your journey, and the summing and laying of your accounts with your Lord. O how blessed shall ye be to have a joyful welcome of your Lord at night ! How blessed are they who in time take sure course with their souls !

SIR, make sure work of your salvation ; build not upon sand ; lay the foundation upon the rock in Zion. Strive to be dead to this world, and to your will and lusts. Let Christ have a commanding power and a king's throne in you. Walk with Christ, howbeit the world should take the skin off your face ; I promise you that Christ will win the field. Your pastors cause you to err. Except you see Christ's word, go not one foot with them. Countenance not the reading of that Romish service-book. Keep your garments clean, as ye would walk with the Lamb clothed in white. The wrongs which I suffer are recorded in heaven ; our great Master and Judge will be upon us all, and bring us before the sun in our blacks and whites ; blessed are they who watch and keep themselves in God's love. Learn to discern the Bridegroom's tongue, and to give yourself to prayer and reading. Ye were often a hearer of me. I would put my heart's blood on the doctrine which I taught as the only way to salvation ; go not from it, my dear brother. What I write to you I write to your wife also. Mind heaven and Christ, and keep the spark of the love of Christ which you have gotten. Christ will blow on it if

ye entertain it, and your end shall be peace. There is a fire in our Zion, but our Lord is but seeking a new bride, refined and purified out of the furnace. I assure you, howbeit we be nicknamed Puritans, that all the powers of the world shall not prevail against us. Remember, though a sinful man write to you, that those people shall be in Scotland as a green olive-tree and a field blessed of the Lord, and that it shall be proclaimed, "Up, up with Christ, and down, down with all contrary powers!"

WE are but loose in trying our free-holding of Christ and making sure work of Christ. Holy fear is a-searching of the camp, that there be no enemy within our bosom to betray us, and a seeing that all be fast and sure; for I see many leaky vessels fair before the wind, and professors who take their conversion upon trust, and they go on securely, and see not the water in the hold till a storm sink them.

STRIVE to make prayer, and reading, and holy company, and holy conference your delight; and when delight cometh in, ye shall by little and little smell the sweetness of Christ, till at length your soul be over head and ears in Christ's sweetness. Then shall ye be taken up to the top of the mountain with the Lord, to know the ravishments of spiritual love, and the glory and excellency of a seen, revealed, felt, and embraced Christ; and then ye shall not be able to loose yourself off Christ and to bind your soul to old lovers; then, and never till then, are all the paces, motions, walkings, and wheels of your soul in a right tune and in a spiritual temper.

HOLD fast Christ without wavering, and contend for the faith, because Christ is not easily gotten nor kept. The lazy professor hath put heaven, as it were, at the very next door, and thinketh to fly up to heaven in his bed, and in a night-dream ; but, truly, that is not so easy a thing as most men believe ! Christ Himself did sweat ere He won this city, howbeit He was the free-born heir. It is Christianity, my heart, to be sincere, unfeigned, honest, and upright-hearted before God ; and to live and serve God, suppose there was not one man nor woman in all the world dwelling beside you, to eye you. Any little grace that ye have, see that it be sound and true.

SERVE Christ, back Him ; let His cause be your cause ; give not an hair-breadth of truth away ; for it is not yours, but God's. Then, since ye are going, take Christ's certificate with you out of this life—“ Well done, good and faithful servant ! ” His “ well-done ” is worth a shipful of “ good-days ” and earthly honours. I have cause to say this, because I find Him Truth itself. In my sad days, Christ laugheth cheerfully, and saith, “ All will be well ! ”

GRACE, mercy, and peace be to you. I long to hear how your soul prospereth. I exhort you to go on in your journey : your day is short, and your afternoon-sun will soon go down. Make an end of your accounts with your Lord ; for death and judgment are tides that wait for no man. Salvation is supposed to be at the door, and Christianity is thought an easy task ; but I find it

hard, and the way strait and narrow, were it not that my Guide is content to wait on me, and to care for a tired traveller. Hurt not your conscience with any known sin. Let your children be as so many flowers, borrowed from God. If the flowers die or wither, thank God for a Summer loan of them, and keep on the most intimate terms with Him. Set your heart upon heaven, and trouble not your spirit with this clay-idol of the world, which is but vanity, and hath but the lustre of the rainbow in the air, which cometh and goeth with a flying March shower. Clay is the idol of bastards, not the inheritance of the children.

I REJOICE to hear that Christ hath run away with your young love, and that ye are so early in the morning matched with such a lord. Be humble and thankful for grace, and weigh it not so much by weight as if it be true. Christ will not cast water on your smoking coal; He never yet put out a dim candle that was lighted at the Sun of Righteousness. I recommend to you prayer and watching over the sins of your youth, for I know that missive letters go between the devil and young blood. Satan hath a friend at court in the heart of youth, and there pride, luxury, lust, revenge, forgetfulness of God are hired as his agents. Happy is your soul if Christ man the house, and take the keys Himself, and command all, as it suiteth Him full well to rule all wherever He is. Keep Christ and entertain Him well, cherish His grace, blow upon your own coal, and let Him tutor you.

HAPPY are they who are found watching. Our sand-glass is not so long as we need to weary. Time will eat away and root out our woes and sorrows. Our heaven is in the bud, and growing up to a harvest; why, then, should we not follow on, seeing our span-length of time will come to an inch? Therefore I commend Christ to you as your last living and longest living husband, and the staff of your old age. Let Him now have the rest of your days. And think not much of a storm upon the ship that Christ saileth in; there shall no passenger fall overboard, but the crazed ship and the seasick passengers shall come to land safe.

I PERSUADE my soul that this is the way to heaven, and His own truth I now suffer for. I exhort you, in the name of Christ, to continue in the truth which I delivered unto you. Make Christ sure to your soul, for your day draweth nigh to an end. Many slide back now who seemed to be Christ's friends, and prove dishonest to Him; but be ye faithful to the death, and ye shall have the crown of life. This span-length of your days whereof the Spirit of God speaketh shall, within a short time, come to a finger-breadth, and at length to nothing. O, how sweet and comfortable will the feast of a good conscience be to you when your eye-strings shall break, your face wax pale, and the breath turn cold, and your poor soul come sighing to the windows of the house of clay of your dying body, and shall long to be out, and to have the jailer to open the door, that the prisoner may be set at liberty! Ye draw nigh the water side; look to

your accounts ; ask for your Guide to take you to the other side.

THE last tide will not wait for you one moment : if ye forget anything, when your sea is full and your foot in that ship, there is no returning again to fetch it. What ye do amiss in your life to-day ye may amend it to-morrow ; for as many suns as God maketh to arise upon you ye have as many new lives ; but ye can die but once, and if ye mar or spoil that business ye cannot come back to mend that piece of work again. No man sinneth twice in dying ill ; as we die but once, so we die but ill or well once. Ye see how the number of your months is written in God's book ; and as one of the Lord's hirelings, ye must work till the shadow of the evening come upon you, and ye shall run your glass even to the last grain of sand. Fulfil your course with joy ; for we take nothing to the grave with us but a good or evil conscience. And, although the sky clear after this storm, yet clouds will engender another.

HONOURABLE Lady, keep your first love—hold the first match with that soul-delighting Bridegroom, our sweet, sweet Jesus, the Rose of Sharon, and the sweetest smelled rose in all His Father's garden. I would not exchange one smile of His lovely face for kingdoms. Let others take their silly beckless heaven in *this* life. Put up your heart. Shout for joy. Your King is coming to fetch you to His Father's house.

LET pleasures and gain, will and desires of this world,

be put over into God's hands, as arrested and fenced goods, that ye cannot intermeddle with. Now, when ye are drinking the grounds of your cup, and ye are upon the utmost end of the last link of time, and old age, like death's long shadow, is casting a covering upon your days, it is no time to court this vain life, and to set love and heart upon it. It is near after-supper; seek rest and ease for your soul in God through Christ.

XIII.

“TAKE HEED LEST YE FALL.”

I ENTREAT you now, in the morning of your life, to seek the Lord and His face. Beware of the folly of dangerous youth—a perilous time for your soul. Love not the world. Keep faith and truth with all men in your covenants and bargains. Walk with God, for He seeth you. Do nothing but that which ye may and would do if your eye-strings were breaking and your breath growing cold. Ye heard the truth of God from me, my dear heart; follow it and forsake it not. Prize Christ and salvation above all the world. To live after the guise and course of the rest of the world will not bring you to heaven; without faith in Christ and repentance ye cannot see God. Take pains for salvation; press forward toward the mark for the prize of the high calling; if ye watch not against evils night and day which beset you ye will come behind. Beware of lying, swearing, uncleanness, and the rest of the works of the flesh, because “for these things the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience.” How sweet soever they may seem for the present, yet the end of these

courses is the eternal wrath of God and utter darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

I HAVE heard of your daughter's marriage. I pray the Lord Jesus to subscribe the contract and to be at the banquet, as He was at the marriage in Cana of Galilee. Show her from me that, though it be true that God's children have prayed for her, yet the promise of God is made to her prayers and faith especially, and therefore I would entreat her to seek the Lord to be at the wedding; let her give Christ the love of her virginity and espousals, and choose Him first as her husband, and that match shall bless the other. It is a new world she entereth into, and therefore she hath need of new acquaintancẽ with the Son of God, and of a renewing of her love to Him whose love is better than wine. “The time is short, let the married be as though they were not married; they that weep as though they wept not; they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not; they that buy as though they possessed not; they that use this world as though they used it not; for the fashion of this world passeth away.” Grace, grace be her portion from the Lord. I know that you have a care on you of it that all be right, but let Christ bear all. You need not pity Him—if I may say so; put Him to it, He is strong enough.

I CANNOT but, upon the opportunity of a bearer, exhort you to resign the love of your youth to Christ, and in this day, while your sun is high and your youth serveth

you, to seek the Lord and His face, for there is nothing out of heaven so necessary for you as Christ. And ye cannot be ignorant that your day will end, and that the night of death shall call you from the pleasures of this life ; and a doom given out in death standeth for ever, as long as God liveth. Youth, ordinarily, is a post, and ready servant for Satan to run errands, for it is a nest for lust, cursing, drunkenness, blaspheming of God, lying, pride, and vanity. O, that there were such a heart in you as to fear the Lord, and to dedicate your soul and body to His service ! Seek a good conscience and your Lord's favour as your garland and crown. Grace be with you.

THE Lord hath given you much, and therefore He will require much of you again. Number your talents, and see what you have to render back ; ye cannot be enough persuaded of the shortness of your time. I charge you to write to me, and in the fear of God to be plain with me, whether or not ye have made your salvation sure. I am confident, and hope the best, but I know that your reckonings with your Judge are many and deep. Sir, be not beguiled, neglect not your one thing, your one necessary thing, the good part that shall not be taken from you. Look beyond time. Things here are but moonshine ; they have but children's wit who are delighted with shadows and deluded with feathers flying in the air. Desire your children in the morning of their life to begin and seek the Lord, and to remember their Creator in the days of their youth, to

cleanse their way by taking heed thereto according to God's Word. Youth is a glassy age. Satan finds a swept chamber, for the most part, in youth-hood, and a garnished lodging for himself and his train. Let the Lord have the flower of their age; the best sacrifice is due to Him. Instruct them in this, that they have a soul, and that this life is nothing in comparison of eternity. They will have much need of God's conduct in this world to guide them past those rocks upon which most men split, but far more need when it cometh to the hour of death and their appearing before Christ. O, that there were such a heart in them to fear the name of the great and dreadful God, who hath laid up great things for those that love and fear Him! I pray that God may be their portion.

XIV.

*“MINE EYES SHALL SEE THE KING IN HIS
BEAUTY.”*

I REJOICE in the hope of that glory to be revealed ; for it is no uncertain glory which we look for. Our hope is not hung upon such an untwisted thread as, “I imagine ;” or, “It is likely ;” but the cable, the strong hawser of our fastened anchor, is the oath and promise of Him who is eternal verity. Our salvation is fastened with God’s own hand, and with Christ’s own strength, to the strong stake of God’s unchangeable nature.

O SWEET stability of sure-bottomed salvation ! Who could attain to heaven if this were not so ? And who could be saved if God were not God, and if He were not such a God as He is ? O God be thanked that our salvation is coasted, and landed and stowed upon Christ, who is Master of winds and storms ! And what sea-winds can blow the coast of the land out of its place ? Bulwarks are often cast down, but coasts are not removed : but suppose that they were, or might be, God cannot reel nor remove.

It is a broad river that faith will not look over : it is a mighty and a broad sea that they of a lively hope cannot behold the furthest bank and other shore thereof. Look over the water : your anchor is fixed within the veil : the one end of the cable is about the prisoner of Christ, and the other is entered within the veil, whither the Forerunner is entered for you. It can go straight through the flames of the fire of the wrath of men, devils, horses, torture, death, and not a thread of it be singed or burnt. Men and devils have no teeth to bite it in two.

If it were no more than once to see the face of the Prince of this good land, and to be feasted for eternity with the fatness, sweetness, dainties of the rays and beams of matchless glory, and incomparable fountain-love, it were a well-spent journey to creep hands and feet through seven deaths and seven hells to enjoy Him up at the well-head. Only let us not weary—the miles to that land are fewer and shorter than when we first believed. Strangers are not wise to quarrel with their host, and complain of their lodging. It is a foul way, but a fair home.

It hath seemed good to Him to gather in a sheaf of ripe corn, in the death of your Christian mother, into His garner. It is the more evident that Winter is near, when apples, without violence of wind, fall of their own accord off the tree. She is now above the Winter, with a little change of place, not of a Saviour : only she now

enjoyeth Him without messages, and in His own immediate presence. I grant that death is to her a very new thing; but heaven was prepared of old; and Christ—as enjoyed in His highest throne, and as loaded with glory, and incomparably exalted above men and angels, having such a heavenly circle of glorified harpers and musicians above, compassing the throne with a song—is to her a new thing; but so new as the first Summer rose, or the firstfruits of that heavenly field; or as a new paradise to a traveller broken and worn out of breath with the sad occurrences of a long and dirty way.

SINCE he looked upon me my heart is not my own,
He hath run away to heaven with it.

I FIND when He but sendeth His hearty commendations to me, and bloweth a kiss afar off, I am confounded with wondering what the supper of the Lamb will be up in our Father's dining-palace of glory, since the short refreshment in this dismal wilderness, and when in prisons, and in our sad days a kiss of Christ are so comfortable. O, how sweet and glorious shall our case be when that fairest among the sons of men will lay His fair face to our now sinful faces and wipe away all tears from our eyes! O, time, time, run swiftly, and hasten this day! O, sweet Lord Jesus, come flying like a roe or a young hart! Alas! that we, blind fools, are fallen in love with moonshine and shadows! How sweet is the wind that bloweth out of the quarter where Christ

is! Every day we may see some new thing in Christ; His love hath neither brim nor bottom.

IF you knew what He is preparing for you you would be too glad. He will not, it may be, give you a full draught till you come up to the well-head and drink, yea, drink abundantly of "the pure river of the water of life that proceedeth out from the throne of God and from the Lamb." I dare find you the Son of God surety that when you have got up thither, and have cast your eyes to view the golden city and the fair and never-withering "tree of life, which beareth twelve manner of fruits every month," you will then say, "Four and twenty hours' abode in that place is worth threescore and ten years' sorrow upon earth."

FAINT not; the miles to heaven are few and short. There are many heads lying in Christ's bosom, but there is room for yours among the rest.

A KING from heaven hath sent for you; by faith He showeth you the New Jerusalem, and taketh you along in the Spirit through all the rooms for repose and dwelling-houses in heaven, and saith, "All these are thine; this palace is for thee and Christ;" and, if you only had been the chosen of God, Christ would have built that one house for you and Himself; now it is for you and many others also. Take with you in your journey what you may carry with you, your conscience, faith, love, patience, meekness, goodness, brotherly kind-

ness, for such wares as these are of great price in the high and new country whither you go. As for other things, which are but the world's vanity and trash, since they are but the house-sweepings, you will do best not to carry them with you. You found them here, leave them here and let them keep the house.

THE King's spikenard, Christ's perfumes, His apples of love, His ointments, even down in this lower house of clay, are a choice heaven. O what, then, is the King in His own land? Where there is such a throne, so many kings' palaces, ten thousand thousands of crowns of glory, that want heads yet to fill them! O so much leisure as shall be there to sing! O such a Tree as groweth there in the midst of that Paradise, where the inhabitants sing eternally under its branches! To look in at a window, and see the branches burdened with the apples of life—to be the last man that shall come in thither, were too much for me.

X



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