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Pastoral Sketches

By J. C. Philpot

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Contents

An excerpt from J. C. Philpot's "Memoir of William Tiptaft"

I feel that my Memoir gives but a feeble and defective record of William Tiptaft. Those features of his natural and spiritual character which won from all who knew him such renowned affection and esteem, were so personal and practical that they were better seen in him, than can be described of him. His daily, I may almost say hourly, self-denial was such as I believe few others have ever witnessed. He seemed ever ready to make any personal sacrifice for the glory of God, or the good of His people. Time, money, health, strength, and life itself—he did not consider his own. He felt he was but a steward who held them in trust, and who might be called at any hour to render an account of his stewardship. To live for God—to walk in His fear—to serve and please Him—to preach His truth—to do His work—to know and obey His will—and be made a blessing to His people—seemed to be his daily end and aim.

I have known men—of greater natural abilities—of deeper and more diversified experience—of more shining pulpit gifts—of more enlarged views of divine truth; but I have never seen anyone, whether minister or private Christian, who approached him in practical godliness—and which was carried out with undeviating consistency for the 35 years during which I had the pleasure and profit of his friendship.

The churches of truth needed an example of the practical power of the doctrines which they profess. A light, loose, antinomian spirit had too much prevailed—and with a great deal of religious talking, there was a very small amount of religious walking. But however low quickened souls or living churches may sink, they have still a conscience made tender in the fear of God, and to this conscience William Tiptaft's keen, pithy remarks, and, above all—his godly life and shining example, commended themselves.

And as he honored God, so did God honor him. His last days were his best days. He was buried amidst the sobs and tears of a people who loved and revered him—and he has left to us all the benefit and blessing of a conspicuous example of vital godliness and practical religion, as well as a testimony of the faithfulness of God to His own Word and work.

I have always thought that his distinguishing feature, through the whole of his spiritual life, was the fear of God—manifesting itself in a most self-denying, upright, practical walk and conduct. Where shall we find one, who, from the

beginning to the end of his profession, lived and walked like Tiptaft? Truly in him the fear of the Lord was a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death. This fear, as the beginning of wisdom, was implanted in his soul. Its first effects were—to separate him from the world—to lead him to solitude and reflection—and give him an earnestness and seriousness of character which were in striking contrast with the lightness and frivolity of his college life.

Those who knew William Tiptaft know that no minister feared man less—or God more. He was full of zeal and earnestness—of a most bold, undaunted spirit—and counted the smiles of men as dust in the balance.

Yet, one of the most marked features of his character was the sympathy he felt with the poor, and the thoroughness with which he identified himself with their feelings, views and interests. He was eminently—the poor man's friend.

return to contents

WILLIAM GADSBY

A Tribute of High Esteem and Love.
By J. C. Philpot, 1844

When the Lord called to Himself the soul of our dear friend, William Gadsby, with truth it might be said, "There is a great man fallen this day in Israel" (2 Sam. 3:38). We believe we are but speaking in full unison with the feelings and sentiments of the living family of God in this country when we say that, taking him all in all, we have lost in Mr. Gadsby the greatest minister that God has raised up since the days of Huntington.

Our remarks we may conveniently throw under two heads—what he was viewed NATURALLY—and what he was viewed spiritually.

His natural intellect seems to us to have been singularly clear, sound, penetrating, and sagacious. We have in our day met with men of more capacious mind, greater reasoning powers, and more varied and versatile talents—but with few or none so quick-sighted and ready-witted. He seemed at once intuitively to penetrate through the folds of delusion and error, and

with a glance of his eye to look into the very heart of everything that he turned his attention to. We venture to say that few people ever spoke to Mr. Gadsby without his knowing pretty well the end of the sentence before they had got halfway through it, or before his quick and humorous eye had not already deciphered the character of the speaker. His quick, ready witted replies, embodying so much in a few words, will be long remembered by those who heard them from the pulpit or in the parlour.

Though not possessed of much education (an advantage, by the way, much overrated), he was a man of much reflection, and may be said in this way to have educated his own mind far better than school or college could have done for him. His mind was of that class which rises according to the emergency. Some minds sink and fail when unusual circumstances and pressing difficulties arise. ... But there are other minds (and Mr. Gadsby's was one of that class) which rise with, and are called out by difficulties and emergencies, and shine most conspicuously when weaker minds give way.

The Lord had appointed Mr. Gadsby to be a leader, and to stand for half a century in the front rank of His spiritual army. He therefore bestowed upon him a mind not to be daunted with difficulties and dangers, but to rise with and to be ready for every new emergency. He was to occupy a post also in keen-witted and energetic Manchester—where, perhaps, of all places in the kingdom, strength, decision, and soundness of mind are most required; and to labor much in the North, where brains or the lack of them are quickly perceived by its sagacious inhabitants. The Lord therefore gave him a mind eminently adapted for his post. Classics and mathematics, grammar and history, and all the lumber of academic learning were not needed; but an acute, sagacious, clear, and sound understanding was required for such a commanding post, as Mr. Gadsby was to occupy. We only knew him when his mental faculties were guided by grace, and made to glorify God; but, viewed in that light, we consider that his mental endowments were admirably fitted for his post.
Benevolence and sympathy with suffering, in every shape and form, we believe to have been natural to Mr. Gadsby; and though it may be hard to define to what extent and in what direction grace enlarged and guided his natural disposition, we do not doubt that, even had he lived and died in a state of nature, the character of humanity, kindness and affection, would have been stamped upon his memory.

But we pass on to view him SPIRITUALLY, and here we freely confess our

inability to do him justice. We shall briefly mention first what strikes us as the prominent features of his ministry, and then what we have observed in him as connected with his Christian profession.

Thorough soundness in every point seems to have been peculiarly stamped upon his ministry. Whether he handled doctrine, experience, or precept—his speech and his preaching were sound, clear and scriptural. We know no preacher who was so equally great in these three leading branches of the Christian ministry. Some may have excelled him in clearness and fullness of doctrinal statement; others may have entered more deeply and fully into a Christian's diversified experience; and others may have more powerfully enforced the precepts of the gospel. But we never heard anyone who was so uniformly great in all—and so clearly, ably and scripturally gave to each their place, and yet blended their distinct colors into one harmonious gospel tint. In doctrine he was not dry, in experience he was not visionary, and in precept he was not legal—but, in a way peculiarly his own, he so worked them up together that they were distinct and yet united, relieving each other without confusion, and like the three strands of a rope, strengthening each other without cumbrous knot or loose tangle.

In handling DOCTRINE he showed "integrity" (Titus 2:7), and was singularly free from fanciful interpretations, strained and mystical views upon dark texts, and that false spiritualization which passes with many for wondrous depth, but which he valued at its due worth. In reading his published sermons we have been much struck with the soundness, clearness, simplicity and sobriety of his interpretations. He saw too clearly that his doctrine was the doctrine of the Scriptures to wrest any part of the Word from its connection, or to rest a truth upon a text which did not clearly declare it, when there were so many passages in which the Holy Spirit had plainly revealed it.

His object was not that William Gadsby should be admired for his ingenuity, learning, depth of eloquence—but that the God of all grace should be glorified. He did not dare to make the pulpit a stage for 'creature display', still less a platform from which he might keep up a perpetual excitement by some new view of a passage, some startling paradox, some dazzling array of figures and illustrations—the whole sermon being to illustrate this text—"Who so great a man as I?"

In doctrine his favorite topic was the union of the Church with her covenant

Head, and all the spiritual blessings that spring out of that union. Nor did he ever keep back the grand truths which are usually denominated Calvinistic, but which should rather be called 'Bible truths'.

Election, in particular, was a point he much dwelt upon, and it usually occupied a prominent place in all his discourses. No man was less afraid of the doctrine frightening and alarming people, or being a stumbling-block in the way of the enquirer. He had no idea of smuggling people into religion, and insinuating Calvinism so gently that they were made Calvinists almost before they knew it. He knew that the doctrine was of God—and, as the servant of God, he proclaimed it on the walls of Zion.

The doctrine of the Trinity too was a darling topic with him. He well knew that it was the grand foundation stone of revealed truth, and that out of a Triune God flowed all the mercies and blessings that are bestowed upon the Church of Christ.

In a word, he held "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." No novelty in doctrine allured him from the old path. For nearly fifty years he stood upon the battlements of Zion, holding forth the word of life; and from the beginning to the end of his ministry maintained, with undeviating consistency, the same glorious truths, and sealed them at last with his dying breath.

"Among innumerable false, unmoved,
Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,
His loyalty he kept, his love and zeal;
Nor number, nor example, with him wrought,
To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind,
Though single."

In handling EXPERIENCE, into which he seemed more particularly led during the latter years of his life, he neither set up a very high—nor a very low standard. But he always insisted strongly upon such an experimental knowledge of the spirituality of God's law as should completely throw down and cut to pieces all creature righteousness, and always contended for such an experimental knowledge of Christ as should bring pardon and peace. No man ever, we believe, expressed himself more strongly upon the deep corruption of the heart, its deceitfulness, horrible filthiness, and thorough helplessness.

One point we have often admired in his ministry; he would touch upon such spots as no other minister that we know ever dared approach. And this he did in a way peculiar to himself. He did not give glowing descriptions of human depravity; but sometimes in a way of warning, and sometimes with self-abhorrence, and sometimes as a word of encouragement to poor backsliders—he would touch upon sins which would make pious professors lift up their eyes with mock horror. But he hit the right nail on the head, as many of God's children know to their soul's joy. Of sin he never spoke but with the greatest abhorrence; but he was not one of those who are all holiness in the pulpit, and all filthiness out of it.

Another point which we have thought he handled in a way peculiarly his own, and with great sweetness and power, was, to use his favorite expression, "the riches of matchless grace." Were we to mention a text which seems to sum up his preaching, it would be Romans 5:20-21, "Moreover the law entered that sin might abound"—(these were his views upon the law) "but where sin abounded" (what a field for opening up, as he would sometimes do, the aboundings of inward sin and filth!) "grace did much more abound"—here he was at home in tracing out the glories of sovereign, distinguishing grace. The glory of God's grace, from its first rise in the eternal covenant, to its full consummation in future blessedness, was indeed his darling theme. When speaking of the heights of super-angelic glory to which the blessed Redeemer had raised the Church, he was sometimes carried, as it were, beyond himself. A grandeur and dignity clothed his ideas, and he spoke with such power and authority, that it seemed almost as if he had been in the third heaven, and was come back to tell us what he had seen and heard there!

Great originality, all must admit, was stamped upon his ministry. His ideas and expressions were borrowed from none. His figures and comparisons were singularly original and pertinent, and generally conveyed his meaning in a striking manner. Few men's reported sermons bear reading so well as his—that great test whether there is any sterling stuff in them. Very simple, and yet very clear, very full of matter, and that of the choicest kind, with the text thoroughly worked out, and that in the most experimental manner.

A friend of ours and his well characterized, we think, in one sentence Mr. Gadsby's ministry. "It contains," said he, "the cream of all the preachers I ever heard." We think this is an appropriate expression. His sermons were not 'skimmed milk'—but were rich in unction savor, and power—and possessed a fullness and depth such as we find in no other reported sermons

that we have seen.

But our limits remind us that we must not dwell too long upon his ministry, and therefore we proceed to drop a few hints on his CHRISTIAN CHARACTER, more especially as it came under our personal observation.

1. One feature we have often admired in Mr. Gadsby's character—his singular HUMILITY. Who ever heard him angle for praise? Who ever heard him boasting of, or even alluding to—his popularity as a preacher—his large congregation—his gifts for the ministry—his acceptance with the people of God—his numerous invitations to preach at different places, and the blessing that generally rested upon his pulpit labors? Who ever perceived him, in the most indirect manner, fishing to learn who had heard him well, and dabbling in that wretched love of flattery—which, disgusting in all, is doubly so in the ministers of the gospel?

We have seen him, after some of the grandest sermons we have ever heard in our lives, sitting with no self-approving smile upon his countenance—no mock-bashful looks, as if waiting to receive the incense of flattery—no self-enthroned dignity of state as king of the pulpit and lord of the vestry—but like a little child, simple and humble, the chief of sinners, and less than the least of all saints. Great as he was as a minister, and deservedly esteemed and loved, there was nothing in him of 'the great master'. No man was ever more free from priestly dignity or fleshly holiness. It was not with him, "I am the great man to be listened to by my knot of admirers—what I say is law—and all you have to do is to approve." Such parlour priest-craft the honest soul of William Gadsby abhorred!

2. His conduct out of the pulpit, as far as our observation goes, was singularly consistent with all his profession in it. We do not speak here of mere outward consistency. What but a lying tongue, ever found a visible blemish in his fifty years ministry? But in the little courtesies of life, who ever entertained a more courteous visitor than he? Who of the numerous friends who at different places received him into their houses ever saw in him an overbearing, fretful, covetous, selfish, proud disposition? Kindness and friendship, and courtesy to all, sometimes even to a fault, shone forth in him.

3. And who ever heard him slander and backbite, or peddle gossip from house to house? Admitted as he was into the bosom of so many families, who ever knew him to talk of what he must have seen and witnessed in so many places?

Naturally disposed to humour, what a fund there would have been for his quick and ready-witted tongue! But who ever heard him make any allusion, except to the kindness of his entertainers, or who ever knew him carry tales from one end of England to the other?

4. How singularly free, too, was our departed friend from running down and depreciating brother ministers! We never once heard him drop an unkind allusion or say a disparaging word against a minister of truth. His hand never carried a secret dagger to stab his brethren with. On the contrary, we have thought him too open hearted and long-armed, and too ready to receive as men of God ministers whose only recommendation was a sound Calvinistic creed. If he erred, it was that he thought and spoke too well of some professing godliness—from whom the mask has since dropped. But of this a minister might be sure, that if Mr. Gadsby received him as a brother, he treated him as such behind his back as well as before his face. He never sought to exalt himself by depreciating them, and was the last to say a word to their discredit, or which, if repeated, would wound their minds.

5. And to this we may add, that, as he was the last to depreciate, so was he the last to flatter. His kindness and brotherly love kept him from the one, and his sincerity preserved him from the other. He neither said crude things to wound—nor smooth things to please. He did not tyrannize with violent temper—nor fawn with canting servility. He neither took liberties nor allowed them; he knew his place and kept it; and while, by a calm, courteous demeanor, he preserved the respect due to him as a Christian man and minister, he was frank, free, and obliging. In fact, he rather erred, now and then, as we have hinted, on the side of courtesy. He was desirous of making himself agreeable, and sometimes this led him to repeat the thrice-told tale, and tell the well-known anecdote, sometimes humourous, but usually profitable in its intention, and almost always to depreciate himself.

But we feel we must stop. Our limits do not allow us to dwell upon his extensive labors in the ministry, his frequent and long journeyings to preach the gospel—his self-denying and temperate habits of life—his prudence in domestic and monetary matters—his kindness and liberality to the poor—the noble manliness of his character—and his entire freedom from cant, hypocrisy, and whine. We highly esteemed and loved him, and revere his memory with growing affection. We consider it a privilege to have known him, and would not be in the ranks of those who despised or slandered him for a thousand worlds.

return to contents

JOHN WARBURTON

A Tribute of Affection and Regard
By J. C. Philpot, 1857

Who that knows anything of the wondrous doings and dealings of the Lord in providence and grace can say that miracles have ceased? It is true that the croaking raven no longer brings bread and flesh, morning and evening to an Elijah by the brook Cherith; nor does the palsied leave his bed, or the dead come out of his grave, as in the days when Jesus walked here below. But wonders as great, though less visible to the eye of sense, are daily and hourly wrought by the same Jesus, now sitting at the right hand of God.

The life and death of our dear and esteemed friend, the late Mr. Warburton, proclaim this truth as with trumpet tongue to those who have ears to hear, and write it up, as with a ray of light, to those who have eyes to see how great are the signs of the Lord, and how mighty His wonders to those who fear and love His great Name. He was indeed a special instance of those miracles of providence and grace which testify to the power and presence, the mercy and love of a Covenant Jehovah.

But most Christians have a history of their own, a wondrous tale to tell of the providence of God, as displayed in their past life—dull, indeed, and trivial to carnal men, unimportant and uninteresting, if not a scoff and a jest, to such as would push God out of the government of His own world—but precious beyond all price to themselves, as affording them, through its intimate connection with the work of grace, blessed evidences of their present sonship and future inheritance. When faith is in living exercise, and can roll out and read the long, and, it may be, intricate scroll of bygone years—sweet is it to see the providence of God in well near every line.

However long may be the chain, it is all linked together from beginning to end, nor can one link be severed without breaking asunder the connection of the whole.

Why born of such and such parents? Why so, in earliest infancy, brought up?

Why so circumstanced in childhood? Why so situated in this or that locality? Why exposed at this or that period, to such trials and difficulties? Why directed to such a spot as years grew on? Why, in tender youth, cast into this or that deep trouble, and heart-breaking sorrow? Why these fair prospects blighted, those warm affections withered, these airy castles shattered—when least expecting, and least able to bear the shock? Why this sudden and unexpected turn of events, bringing on the hour when grace first visited their souls?

All who have any living experience of the 'path of the just' have their individual life-history in which they can at times trace the wonder-working hand of God holding the marvelous chain—and winding out link by link all these varied circumstances.

All, it is true, cannot tell the moving history recorded in Mr. Warburton's "Mercies of a Covenant God." They have neither had the deep troubles nor the blessed deliverances of the Lancashire weaver. Their goods have not been marked for rent, nor they and their children trundled off to the workhouse. They have not had the heavy trials in their families, in their churches, or in their own souls, which Infinite Wisdom had assigned to our departed friend. Still less have they had his great blessings and powerful manifestations of the love and goodness of God in providence and grace. Nor has their tongue, if ministers, been clothed with that rich savor and divine unction which so marked his words in the pulpit, and in the parlour.

God designed him for a great work in the Church of Christ, and therefore abundantly and eminently qualified him for it. However at the time hidden from his eyes—his heavy trials in providence—his deep and long poverty—the sinkings of his own desponding mind—the continual debt into which he was plunged—his dismal and gloomy forebodings of a still worse future—his fears of bringing a reproach on the cause of God—the temptations of Satan with which he was assailed—the hidings of the Lord's face—his quakings and tremblings lest he had run unsent—and the whole series of anxieties and distresses through which he was called to pass—all, connected as they were with the manifestations of God's love and mercy to his soul—were mysteriously tending to make him what he eventually was—a minister to the suffering Church of Christ, a feeder of the 'flock of slaughter', a feeling experimental man of God to the mourners in Zion, the broken in heart, and the contrite in spirit. As in Paul, God chose an instrument wherein "to show forth all patience to those who would hereafter believe on Him to everlasting

life," so in John Warburton the Lord chose a vessel of mercy to show the power of His grace above all the wisdom of the creature.

But it has been well and wisely said that though God saves by "the foolishness of preaching"—He does not send fools to preach. This is eminently true in the instance before us. Mr. Warburton was not a man of learning, or even much education—but he was naturally possessed of a sound, vigorous understanding, without which original gift, mere school-cram is nearly useless. Great mistakes prevail on this subject. Education is one of the grand idols of the present day, and is continually spoken of and cried up as the one thing needful, not only to root out of the land all immorality and vice—but to convert the rising generation into a race of philosophers, lawyers, statesmen and divines. It is quietly assumed almost as a first principle—a mere matter of course, that the mind of man is naturally like a peach tree or a vine, which has only to be trained in a certain way and laid in to a certain length, and it is sure then to produce unceasing crop of fruit; or that it resembles a bale of cotton, which may be folded, doubled and drawn, twisted and spun, woven and printed into any length, shape size, and pattern that the manufacturer chooses.

Just as if the original force, and feebleness of the mind, its natural quality and staple, were of no account—and just as if education could convert weak intellect into a strong one—and schools and colleges turn out Miltons and Bacons by contract, at so much a pupil. The school and the academy cannot turn a 'noodle' into a Newton, nor educate a blockhead into a genius. We do not deny that education will, according to the literal meaning of the word, draw out what is in the mind—but it must first be in the mind. You may draw and draw, but your thread will never have any strength or length, unless there be at the bottom the needful staple and the requisite supply.

What Mr. Warburton might have been, had his naturally strong and vigorous intellect been cultivated by a sound education in early boyhood and youth, cannot now be said. But most probably, we might rather say most certainly—it would have ruined him. We might have had Warburton the acute lawyer, or Warburton the learned divine—but we would not have had Warburton the preacher, Warburton the feeling and experimental minister, the tried and exercised man of God. That he might not be thus spoiled, God Himself took charge of his education, by placing him in early youth, not in an academy for young gentlemen, nor in a classical and commercial establishment—but in the school of Christ.

'Moses' was made his schoolmaster, and first caught hold of him in Bolton Church, where, instead of charming his ears with the melodious tones of the new organ—he sounded in them such a terrible peal of death, hell, and judgment to come—that his pupil dropped down half dead at his feet. Here he learned his A B C in experimental religion—here Moses shook over him for the first time the rod—here the first lesson given to him, amid many sighs and tears, was to learn to spell the first letter of that dreadful sentence—"Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things written in the book of the law to do them."

What school or college could have experimentally taught him what he first learned in Bolton Church—that he was a sinner, under the curse of God's righteous law? What labored course of lectures, free library, or institute of learning, could have made him cry out, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" all the way home, until his breast-bone was sore?

Education is admirable in its way, excellent for a time state—but no education—classical, theological, moral, or religious—could have made, though it might have marred, a John Warburton—either as a Christian or a minister, or brought him with sighs and groans to the Redeemer's feet. And when peace and pardon first reached his heart—when rich, free, sovereign, and superabounding grace poured salvation into his soul, as he sat in Mr. Roby's chapel—he learned more in one moment what the love of God was—whence it came, and where it led, what it could do, and what bliss and blessedness it could create—than all the doctors and proctors, pastors and masters, schoolmasters or scholars, lecturers or libraries, teachers or tutors, could have taught him in half a century!

When fierce temptations assailed his soul, when hell rose up in arms, and Satan—enraged to see so useful a tool lost to his service and enlisted in God's—hurled his fiery darts thick and fast against him—he was still at school, still learning better and wiser lessons than the Academy or the University could have taught him.

When dark clouds rested upon him in providence—when poverty and need knocked hard at his door—when little work and scanty wages, hard times and an increasing family plunged him into a sea of debt and distress—he was still learning deep and blessed lessons, never taught at college or learned at the university. When the clouds of darkness broke in showers upon his head—

when the Sun of righteousness gleamed upon his path, in providence and grace—when he could set up an Ebenezer here and a hill Mizar there—when he could "look from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards," and see the valley beneath all flowing with milk and wine—what books or book-makers could have taught him there was such a God in Israel—or have raised up in his heart such faith, hope, and love towards Him?

So with all his long experience of the ups and downs, ins and outs, joys and sorrows, risings and sinkings, feastings and fastings, smiles and tears, songs and sighs, mercies and miseries, heavens and hells of a living experience—what substitute could be found in human genius, or human learning, for this course of heavenly instruction?

We are not setting up Mr. Warburton—but the grace of God in him. We are not daubing his memory with oily eulogy—extolling and idolizing a worm of earth—or dressing out his poor cold remains with carnal flattery and empty praise. Could he speak out of the graveyard, he would bid us, with that voice which has struck awe into whole congregations—to be silent. And would admonish us in tones that would make us tremble, to ascribe the glory first and last to God. By the grace of God alone he was what he was. Grace began, grace carried on, and grace completed the whole work, from first to last, upon his soul.

Great, especially in his early days, were his afflictions, and proportionately great were his consolations. But the Lord was with him in all his troubles and sorrows, temporal and spiritual—and brought him triumphant through them all. His debts which had lain so heavy a burden upon him for many years, he was enabled honorably and fully to discharge, mainly through the blessing of the Lord resting on his little work, "The Mercies of a Covenant God." Thus his very providential trials proved providential blessings, and his debts were paid by his experience of their burden.

Yet if many his miseries—many were his mercies. He was blessed with a large measure of health and strength for many years—was favored with an affectionate wife and family, some of whom he had the happiness of seeing called by grace—was much loved and esteemed by the church of Christ, to which he was made so signal a blessing—was spared to a good old age, without many of its usual infirmities—was sweetly supported on his bed of sickness and languishing by the presence and love of his dear Lord—and,

after many longings to be gone, yielded up his spirit into His bosom with "Hallelujah" upon his lips.

He was not, indeed, without his faults and failings; but these much sprang from, and were closely connected with, the warmth of his natural feelings. If at times he was irritable, it arose, not from moroseness and sullenness of temper—but from that same depth and warmth of feeling which, flowing in another channel, made him so fond of his wife, children and grandchildren—and so opened his heart to sympathize with their afflictions and trials, and take such a lively interest in all their concerns. He was also often considered overbearing with his church and congregation. But Scripture and experience alike show that in a church, as in every other group, there must be order and government. If then the pastor does not exercise his legitimate influence and authority, there are those in every church who will rule the rest if they can—and as the other members will not quietly submit to this, the necessary consequence is strife and confusion.

If Mr. Warburton held the reins with a firm hand, and sometimes sharply lashed the unruly, it was, in most cases, for the general good of the whole. He viewed himself as the father of the church and congregation, as indeed he was—for the former church was chiefly made up of his spiritual children—and the latter church was gathered and kept together by his gifts and grace. If then, as a father, he fed them—as a father he thought it right to govern them. His post was to lead, not to follow—to rule and govern—not to yield and obey. If sometimes he stretched his power beyond the usual limits of a pastor, and used the rod as well as the crook in ruling the church and congregation committed to his charge—it was not to exalt himself, make divisions, or introduce error—but for the good of the cause and the glory of God.

He was naturally gifted with much sound good sense, knew the weakness and wickedness of the human heart, and seeing how soon divisions arise in a church, and what havoc they make of its prosperity and peace, he at once, with his broad, weighty foot, trampled upon the rising flame which other ministers, of weaker and less determined minds, would let smoulder on—lest, in putting it out, they should burn their own fingers. Lack of order and discipline is a prevailing evil in our churches—and when a pastor uses the authority which the Lord has given him to rule as well as feed the church, a cry is soon raised by those who are opposed to all order and discipline—that he is tyrannical and arbitrary.

He might sometimes, when thwarted and opposed, speak sharply, and look angry—and there was something in his fine, portly person, commanding look, and loud voice, that struck terror into the timid and silenced the talkative—but a tenderer heart never beat before the throne of grace and at the footstool of mercy. There indeed he was a little child—a babe, a humble, broken-hearted sinner. Much has been said of his temper and obstinacy, especially of late years, when painful divisions broke out in his church. But we challenge all his opponents and detractors to name a minister more broken and humble than he was before God. We have known many ministers, many good and gracious servants of God, but we never knew a man more tender in real soul feeling, more broken, and simple, and child-like, when the hand of God was upon him. His temper was naturally stubborn and obstinate, but this made the contrast all the greater to what he was by grace.

Thousands can testify to what he was in the pulpit. No one who knows what spiritual tenderness, divine sensations, and heavenly blessings are, could hear him pray or preach, when the Lord was with him—without feeling there was a peculiar savor and power in his words. This dew and unction, with which he was favored above any living minister, made him so acceptable to the tried and experienced family of God. It was not his gifts of eloquence, or powers of thought and expression—it was not the beauty of his language, or the force of his arguments—for in these external things he did not shine—that drew such crowds to hear him in London and the country—but the peculiar savor and sweetness that dropped from his lips.

He was truly and peculiarly an experimental minister of God's truth. He preached what he knew in his own soul by the power of God—what he had tasted, felt, and handled of the word of life for himself—what had been wrought in his heart and conscience by the operations and influences of the Holy Spirit. For him it was eminently true, that "the heart of the wise teaches his mouth and adds learning to his lips" (Proverbs 16:23). He was, therefore, "a minister of the Spirit, not of the letter," "a workman who needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." He honored God—and God honored him.

No minister in these last fifty years, excepting Mr. Huntington and Mr. Gadsby, has been so blessed to the church of God, or had so many seals to his ministry. Let those men or ministers who, for years, have been snarling at him and secretly whispering their slanders, produce as many witnesses on their behalf. Let them search and see whether God has blessed them as He blessed

Mr. Warburton. Can they preach with his savor and power? Can they describe the trials and afflictions of the people of God as he could? or the feelings of the soul under His smiles, as he was enabled to?

return to contents

The Puritans

By J. C. Philpot

The Puritans, called so derisively from their purity of principle and conduct, were hooted down, and driven from society as disturbers of the public peace. They had no need to separate themselves from the world, the world separated them from itself. Thus one grand point was gained. The church and the world were really separated. Ranks of society in those days were much more marked by outward distinctions than in our own. The gayest dresses, the richest silks, the most gaudy colors were then worn by all of both sexes who aspired to worldly distinction. Here were our Puritan ancestors specially distinguished. Their plain garb and unadorned apparel at once marked them. This made a gulf between the world and them, now too much bridged over. And as thus they were driven out of the world, they were more closely united with each other than we have in our day any conception of. Two distinct forces were thus at work to bring together the people of God—external persecution and internal love. One drove and the other drew; one closed the circle from without, and the other attracted in the circle from within.

But as in all ages grain and chaff have been strewn on the same floor, wheat and tares have grown up in the same field, fish, good and bad, have swum in the same net, the Puritan assemblies were not exempt from admixture. If there was a Judas among the disciples, an Ananias and Sapphira among the Pentecostal converts, a Demas among Paul's personal friends, were the Puritans likely to be, according to their name, a pure heap of unmixed grain? But this very circumstance exercised a peculiar influence on their ministry and writings. If there had been no 'Talkatives' in the little meetings at Bedford, what materials would there have been for Bunyan's inimitable life-portrait? If no 'Mr. By-ends' or 'Mr. Hold-the-world' were to be found within reach of the Tinker's eye and voice, they would not have fallen within the scope of the Tinker's pen. 'Mr. Money-love', it will be remembered, says to his good friend By-ends, "They, and we, and you, Sir, I hope, are going on

pilgrimage." And pilgrimage in those days did not mean complying with the Act of Uniformity. In this, however, as elsewhere, we see good springing out of evil.

Being thrown by the circumstances already mentioned more closely together, if there was on one side deeper hypocrisy, there was on the other clearer discernment. In their small assemblies *character* became more closely watched, and therefore better known. Professors of religion lived more under each other's eye. There was more spiritual conversation; more discussion of doctrine and experience; more marked displays of God's providence; more mutual communion and affection; more sympathy and communion; more bearing of each other's burdens; and more general equality and brotherhood than we have any idea of. Those who experimentally knew the things of God lived more under their power and influence than in our day; and religion, as a personal reality, was with them more a matter of daily and hourly experience and consideration. As a necessary consequence, counterfeits were better got up. If the coins from heaven's mint had in those days a clearer ring, were of brighter hue, bore a more deeply-cut impress, and showed a closer resemblance to the Sovereign's image, the master of the infernal mint was not then behind in his imitative coinage. The crude, mis-shaped, base money of the present day would not have passed in times when Bunyan and Owen were assayers. Their sharp eyes would soon have detected the clumsy counterfeit. This has made the Puritan writers so searching, so discriminating, so minute in the marks which they lay down of a real work of grace.

But the Puritan ministers were also men mighty in the Scriptures. When they had opportunity they had been hard students. Dr. Owen was one of the most learned men of the seventeenth century, and was appointed by Cromwell Dean of Christ Church and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford, mainly for the advantage of the students. Most also of the ejected ministers were men of ability and learning. But persecution drove them from public libraries; and poverty soon compelled them to part with books for bread. A learned ministry was rather an idol with the Puritans; and this idol was to be broken. Having to defend the truth from the assaults of Popery on the one hand and infidelity on the other, they had been compelled, as they considered, to study works of learning. But, hunted down by informers, haled before magistrates, hooted by mobs, and immured in prisons, they had little time for learned researches. Poverty made them dig other roots than those of Hebrew words; and the prison taught them to tag laces instead of turning over lexicons. Hiding in a wood by day, and preaching in a cottage by night,

expecting every moment to hear the door driven in, were not situations favorable to hard reading. Folios and quartos, the usual sized books of that day, were not readily carried about when soldiers were on their track; and a hollow tree or a damp cellar made but an indifferent study. Thus were they driven to study the heart instead of books, and to watch the movements of grace and the workings of sin instead of confuting the infidel arguments of Hobbes, or replying to the objections of Socinus.

The work of grace on the soul, its various counterfeits, how far a person may go and not be a Christian, the certain marks of regeneration, the opposition made to it by sin and Satan, the privileges and duties of a believer, the misery and danger of an unconverted state, the work of Christ on the cross, and the influences and operations of the blessed Spirit on the heart—these and similar topics form the staple of the writings of the Puritans. And though in some points, such as the law, general invitations, &c., they may be obscure, or even erroneous, yet where they are at home there is a peculiar weight and power in their works. They are eminently scriptural and invariably practical. They were keen anatomists of the human heart, dissecting its hidden fibers to the very core. Its deceitfulness and hypocrisy were well known to them, and they possessed a peculiar ability in laying bare all its pretenses and false refuges. They were sometimes, perhaps, too systematic, and would scarcely tolerate the least deviation from the prescribed formulas of doctrine and experience. But they were a blessed generation, maintaining alive by their writings, when persecution had much silenced their voices, the hidden life of godliness in the hearts of hundreds; and by sending abroad from their hiding-places their spiritual and savory works, they much made up by their pen what had been lost from their tongue.

The writings of the Puritans are the brightest mirror of their character, as well as the most enduring evidence of their worth; for in them, as in a mirror, we see reflected the features of the men, and, we may add, of that wondrous era when religion in this country was not a shadow but a substance, not a form but a power, not a name but a living reality, pervading all classes and ranks to a degree never before, and never since known. Then appeared a long and successive series of writers upon every religious subject, doctrinal, practical, and experimental, who filled the land with their works.

The history of the Puritans, as a religious body of England, reaches from the accession of Queen Elizabeth, (A.D. 1558,) to the Revolution (1688.) But their writings, at least most of those preserved to the present day, have not so wide

a range. The early Puritans were chiefly engaged in controversy against the corruptions of the Establishment, the spread of Popery and Arminianism, and the arbitrary power of the bishops. Their writings, therefore, were not of the same experimental character as the later productions of the same school. The press also being heavily fettered, and no publications permitted but those which were licensed by the Authorities in Church and State, truth was gagged, and its voice choked in the very utterance. When before the writer stood the pillory with the Westminster mob, at its foot the executioner with the hot branding iron in one hand and the shears in the other, and behind it a cell in Newgate for life, it required some boldness of heart to put pen to paper, and paper to press. In Laud's bosom there was no more pity for a Puritan than now rests in the bosom of a London magistrate for a garotter; and as to punishment, there is not the least comparison, for no criminal out of Russia would now be treated as was Dr. Leighton.

But when what is usually called the Great Rebellion, but what should rather be termed the uprising of the English people against the most determined conspiracy of Church and King to overthrow all their ancient laws and liberties, broke out, and in its progress and results liberated, to a large extent, the public press, then appeared a long and successive series of writers upon every religious subject, doctrinal, practical, and experimental, who filled the land with their works.

The religious activity of that age it is almost impossible for us to conceive, and the contrast which it forms with the present is something absolutely marvelous. The change is as great as that of a man one day in full vigor of mental and bodily health, and the next lying on his bed with a paralytic stroke; or that of a fire blazing high, and casting heat and flame in all directions, and then sunk down into a heap of black ashes, under which it feebly and faintly smoulders. When, too, we consider other points of comparison, the contrast will appear more marvelous still. England at that period, say from A.D. 1640 to 1660, may well be contrasted with England of the last twenty years. It was then very thinly inhabited, its whole population probably not exceeding four or five million. There were no great towns; manufactures were but scanty, the woollen being the only one of any importance; the roads most miserable, and to wheel-carriages almost impassable. And yet, with all these disadvantages, there was an energy in writing, reading, and spreading religious works all over the length and breadth of the land as much beyond the present apathy as the serious earnestness, the ardent zeal, the Christian devotedness, the godly life, and the

unwearied labors of the Puritan ministers outshine the words and works of their degenerate descendants.
In those days men breathed religion, ate religion, drank religion. In the House of Commons, Oliver Cromwell would speak more in one half hour of the grace of God, the work of the Spirit, and the blessedness of knowing and serving the Lord, than most ministers in our day in a whole hour's sermon; and the very soldiers in his army over their watch-fires would read more in their little black bibles by the lurid light, and talk to each other more of the precious things of God in one evening, than many of our great divines would do of either in a week.

We by no means intend to express an opinion that all this was real religion, vital godliness. There is no fire without smoke; but, again, there is no smoke without fire. Shadow is not substance; but there is no shadow without it; and the larger the substance the greater the shadow. There is, indeed, the form without the power; but form presumes the existence of power, as much as the image of David, which Michal made in the bed with a pillow of goat's hair for his bolster, (1 Sam. 19:16,) presumed the existence of David. In those days there was, you will perhaps say, much false fire, hypocrisy, delusion, enthusiasm, and wild fanaticism. No doubt there was. But false fire implies true fire, or why should it be false? If, as has been well said, hypocrisy be the tribute paid to godliness, there must be the tribute receiver as well as the tribute payer. So with delusion, enthusiasm, and fanaticism. Where would be the place for these imitations of the light, life, and power of the Spirit—except in a day when his operations were specially manifest?

But Satan is often transformed, you will say, into an angel of light. True—but there must be angels of light to induce the arch deceiver to attempt the transformation. Thus, after making all the deductions that a friend, not an enemy, to vital godliness may assume, we must believe that in that day there was a blessed amount of real, experimental religion. How men could find time to write, money to buy, leisure to read, and strength to digest the ponderous folios which issued from the pens of Owen, Goodwin, Charnock, Manton, Howe, etc., seems at the present day an almost inexplicable mystery, of which we know but one solution—that in those days there was a large number of people in different classes of society who took the deepest and most lively interest in the things which concerned their everlasting peace.

Now, such writers must have had readers of a similar spirit with themselves—solid, serious, spiritually-minded men, with a heavenly sobriety of spirit, well-

ripened judgment, and clear discernment in the things of God. There is no fairer or better test of an age than its approved authors, for they represent and embody its spirit.

But while we have sufficiently, we think, indicated our high opinion of the value of these good old Puritan divines, we would carefully guard ourselves against the conclusion which some might thence draw that we fully agree with all their views and sentiments. This is very far from being the case; for in some points we most widely differ from them, as, for instance, in offers of grace, progressive sanctification, the law being a rule of life, calls to the dead. Upon these points, mainly through Mr. Huntington's writings, the church of God has more light than in the days of the Puritans; and as we are to call no man master on earth, and are bound to walk according to the light which is given us, it does not make us inconsistent to revere and admire the Puritan writers, and yet not tread servilely in their footsteps. We follow them as far as they follow the word; but when they depart from that, we depart from them. This is our Christian liberty; and as long as we use it not as a cloak of licentiousness, but as enabling us to serve the Lord in newness of the spirit and not in the oldness of the letter, none can justly condemn us for inconsistency.

return to contents

JOHN BUNYAN

by J. C. Philpot

John Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" is known wherever the English language is spoken. No, it has become known beyond those limits, by means of translation into most of the European, and into some Oriental tongues. A great critic and historian has said that the seventeenth century, so prolific in writers, produced but two thoroughly original works, which would be handed down to posterity; and it was noteworthy that both these were produced by the pens of Dissenters—Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," and Milton's "Paradise Lost."

Bunyan himself, we believe, was not aware of his own peculiar genius. Owing nothing to education, his powerful intellect grew like a wild tree, unpruned and unnailed to university wall, but it made up in strength for what it might

lack in symmetry. He possessed by nature three rare gifts, which education might have refined, but could not have imparted, and possibly might have weakened—a most vivid imagination,—a singular power of dramatic representation,—and a most expressive style and language. The first and last are self-evident; the second may require a few words of explanation. Bunyan possessed, then, one of the rarest faculties of the human mind—the power of so throwing himself into the very character which he was drawing that he makes him speak exactly as that person would have spoken had he actually existed.

A Puritan in principle and practice, he justly abhorred the theater; and yet, without knowing it, he possessed in the highest degree that very talent in which consists the perfection of that species of writing. By means of this peculiar talent, his men and women are to us as substantial realities, as thoroughly living, breathing characters as if they had actually existed. Christian, Pliable and Obstinate, Faithful and Hopeful, with matronly, prudent Christiana, and modest, maidenlike, timorous Mercy—we know them all as if we had lived next door to them. This perhaps is his most striking faculty, and has made the "Pilgrim's Progress" a spiritual drama. What life and animation has this gift cast over it! Look, as a sample, at Obstinate's short and characteristic sentences. "Tush! away with your book. Will you go back with us or no?" "What, more fools still!" Compare these sharp, short, iron sentences with Pliable's soft, wax-like, ductile words, "And do you think that the words of your book are certainly true?" How his pliable disposition is shown by this soft, drawling sentence to turn and wind itself round Christian's belief! But what a peculiar gift was this to strike off with a few words two characters which have imprinted themselves on the minds of hundreds of thousands! But look also at his vivid, powerful, picturesque *imagination*. How image after image comes forth with unflagging interest and boundless variety! What force and power in his pictures! The Slough of Despond, and the Wicket Gate, and the Hill of Difficulty, and the Castle of Giant Despair, the Valley of the Shadow of Death, Vanity Fair, Faithful's trial, and the close of all—the passage of the Dark River—why does the mere mention of these scenes recall them at once so distinctly to mind?

Because they are drawn by a master's hand, giving form and body to scenes pictured in his imagination as living realities. His hand but executed what his eye saw; and thus his vivid imagination has engraved them more deeply on our memory than many scenes which we have seen with our bodily eyes. Is any book so well remembered? Has any made so vivid an impression? And all

without the least effort on the part of the writer.

The third striking feature is the plain, clear, strong, noble, good old Saxon English in which it is written, a style so admirably suited to the great mass of readers, and at the same time possessing, from its purity and simplicity, a peculiar charm for the most refined English ear.

"But," suggests a reader, "you have merely noticed the genius of Bunyan! What was that? It was only nature. There was no grace in that. Why do you not speak of his grace and experience, and the teaching of the Spirit in his soul?" But, my good friend, don't you see how the Lord bestowed this genius on a poor illiterate tinker for a special purpose? Did not grace sanctify his natural genius, and direct it to the glory of God and the good of his people? And don't you perceive how this peculiar genius, of which you think so lightly, was absolutely necessary to produce the "Pilgrim's Progress," a work which will live when our heads are laid low? Bunyan was not striving after effect, beyond the best of all effects—being made a blessing to the church of God. He was not aiming at a dramatic representation of character, which a playwright might well envy. He saw Christian with his mind's eye in the Slough of Despond. His own feet had been fast held there. He saw and heard him in the dungeons of Giant Despair. He had lain there himself, and the iron had entered into his soul. He did not sit down as a play-writer to produce a drama, of which every character and scene were thoroughly fictitious. He had himself passed through all the scenes, and was, under the name of Christian, the leading character, the hero of the piece. The successive scenes were all deeply imbedded in his memory, and they came forth from his mind and pen as the deepest and most solemn realities.

He therefore, under an allegory, described what he himself had seen, and where he himself had been, as a voyager in the Arctic regions might depict the frozen seas and piercing climate where the iceberg dwells in lonely grandeur; or as a tropical traveler might retrace the bright skies and lovely isles where the sun walks in its meridian glory. Thus Bunyan is himself reflected from every page of the "Pilgrim's Progress." He is the pilgrim who progresses from the City of Destruction to the heavenly Jerusalem. It is, in fact, his own experience so far modified as not to be exclusive. He did not, like some, set up his own experience as a standard from which there must not be the slightest deviation. Mercy, who hardly knows why or wherefore she set out, except to accompany Christiana, is drawn as a vessel of mercy as much as Christian, who spends his nights in sighs and tears. But still he has drawn with vigorous

hand a certain definite path, in tracing which the highest genius and the greatest grace combined to produce a work blessed beyond measure to the church of God, and yet so animated with natural talent as to be handed down to an earthly immortality. Who shall say the hand of God was not here? Who but he raised the immortal tinker to this distinction? The same hand which took David from the sheep-cotes to feed his people Israel raised Bunyan from the tinker's barrow to feed the church of God; and the same power which gave David strength and skill to sling the stone put into Bunyan's hand a pen which has done far more execution.

But besides these extraordinary endowments of genius and grace, Bunyan's *experience* was in itself peculiarly calculated to produce a work like the "Pilgrim's Progress." Were we to characterize this experience in one short sentence we should say it was the *abiding power of eternal things resting on his soul.* He did not only believe, he saw. The word of God did not merely speak to him; it entered into his inmost soul. Hell, with its sulphurous flames, Heaven, with its glorious abodes, were to him more distinct realities than the earth on which he trod; for the latter was but temporal, while the former were eternal; the one but a passing shadow, the other an enduring reality. So when the law sent its curses into his inmost conscience, he saw more clearly its lightnings, and heard more distinctly its thunders, than his outward eyes ever saw the vivid flash or his natural ears ever heard the pealing thunders of a passing storm. The dark clouds of the natural sky soon rolled away, and ceased to peal forth their terrors, but the Law knew no intermission for time or eternity. Thus, too, when Christ was revealed to him, he saw him by the eye of faith more distinctly than he ever saw any literal object by the eye of sense; for the natural sun itself, the brightest of all objects, could but fill his eye, but the Sun of Righteousness filled his very soul. When he talked with God, he talked to him more really, truly, and intimately than he could ever talk with an earthly friend, for to God he could unbosom all his heart, which he could not do to any human companion. His spiritual sorrows far outweighed all his temporal griefs, and his spiritual joys far surpassed all his earthly delights. The one were measured by time, the other by eternity; man was but the subject of one, God the object of the other. The experience of the power of eternal things made Bunyan such a mighty preacher.

"For I have been in my preaching, especially when I have been engaged in the doctrine of life by Christ, without works, as if an angel of God had stood at my back to encourage me. Oh! it has been with such power and heavenly evidence upon my own soul, while I have been laboring to unfold it, to

demonstrate it, and to fasten it upon the consciences of others, that I could not be contented with saying, I believe, and am sure; methought I was more than sure (if it be lawful to express myself) that those things which then I asserted were true."

His was no cut-and-dried ministry, but the outpouring of his whole heart; and as God had blessed him with remarkable powers of expression, he sent arrow after arrow from his full quiver, lodging them in the hearer's conscience up to the very feather. He was not what men commonly call eloquent, and yet was so in the highest sense of the term, for his words were words of fire. The most manly fervor was combined with the greatest simplicity; language which a child could understand came forth from his lips, but a giant wielded the words. Blow after blow, thrust after thrust came from his vigorous hand. The subject was simple, the manner of handling it was simple; but the simplicity was that of the life-guardsman's sword, of which the hilt is not gilded nor blade filigreed. Ornament would be foreign to the massive strength of either. Bunyan will make himself understood. He uses many words, but not a cloud of idle epithets. He thus addresses at the same time the understanding and the conscience, and reaches the latter through the former. The point of the sword enters the understanding; one home-thrust carries the blade deep into the conscience. This is the perfection of preaching—clear thoughts and words which pass at once into the understanding, and home-thrusts which reach the very soul. How many preachers and writers fail here! Confused ideas, cloudy, long, entangled sentences, which require the utmost stretch of attention to understand, perplex alike speaker and hearer. "What is the man driving at? Poor fellow! he hardly knows himself what he means;" and similar thoughts rise up almost involuntarily within. Others again speak and write with tolerable clearness, but their words are like Jonathan's arrows. None hit the mark. The arrow is beyond the lad, and the conscience is no more touched than the great stone Ezel, behind which David hid himself.

Bunyan was a most prolific writer. His mind teemed with divine thoughts. His heart was ever bubbling up with good matter, and this made his tongue the pen of a ready writer. Besides the "Pilgrim's Progress" and "Grace Abounding," his two best works, for in them his whole heart lay, his "Holy War," "The Two Covenants," his little "Treatise on Prayer," his "Broken Heart the Best Sacrifice," and others which we need not name, are deeply impregnated with Bunyan's peculiar power and spirit. There is some powerful writing in the three treatises contained in the little volume before us.

That he is in places somewhat legal, and speaks too much of the "offers" of the gospel, we freely admit. This was the prevailing theology of the day, from which scarcely any writer of that period was free. But he sometimes employs the word "offers" where we should rather use the term "promises" or "invitations;" these said "offers" being not so much offers of grace to dead sinners as promises of mercy to God's living family who feel they are sinners.

But we are unwilling to dwell on his blemishes. The Lord, whose servant he was, honored him in life, was with him in death, and his name will be dear to the church of God while there is a remnant on the earth.

return to contents

Martin Luther

by J. C. Philpot

When anything great has to be done on earth for the glory of God and the advance of his kingdom, his usual, if not invariable way has hitherto been to raise up some one instrument, or several instruments, whom he endues with grace, wisdom, and power for the work to be done, and whose labors he blesses to bring about the end that he has determined should be accomplished. Joseph to feed the children of Israel in Egypt; Moses to bring them out of the house of bondage; Joshua to lead them into the promised land; the Judges that succeeded Joshua, such as Gideon and Jephtha, to deliver them from the various captivities into which they fell; Elijah to destroy the idolatry of Baal, and restore the worship of the God of their fathers; Ezra and Nehemiah to bring them back from Babylon, and rebuild the city and temple—all these are so many marked instances of the Lord's using special and chosen instruments to bring about his appointed ends. Had it been his sovereign will, he might have worked otherwise. He might, for instance, have impressed it at once on the minds of all the children of Israel to leave Egypt without any particular leader or guide, or under one of their own choosing; or he might have made them, as one man, by a simultaneous rising, burst the chains of the Midianites without the sword of Gideon; or he might have led them back to himself from the worship of Baal without the ministry of Elijah. But no! he would select and qualify some one individual who should be his chosen instrument, and in whom and by whom he would work by his Spirit and grace to accomplish his destined purpose.

When we come down to New Testament times, we see the same principle still at work, and the same agency employed. The Lord Jesus Christ chose disciples that they might be constantly with him, to receive the words of life and truth from his own sacred lips, and, when baptized with the Holy Spirit and with fire, to go forth as apostles to preach the gospel among all nations for the obedience of faith. Paul, the great apostle of the Gentiles, is a special instance of the point we are seeking to establish, and one which sets it in the fullest, clearest light. How striking in this point of view are the words of the Lord to Ananias concerning him: "Go your way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel." (Acts 9:15.) All that the Lord did by Paul he might have done without Paul. With a look, a touch, a word, a breath, a nation might have been born in a day, or myriads have started up, like the bones in the valley of vision, and stood up upon their feet an exceeding great army.

But no! Paul was to be the chosen vessel to bear his name before the Gentiles. The mad Pharisee, the bloodthirsty persecutor, the waster of the church of God, was to preach the faith which once he destroyed. He who stood by when the blood of the martyred Stephen was shed, and, consenting unto his death, kept the clothing of them that slew him—this was the man who was to suffer all things for the elect's sake, to be in labors more abundant than all his fellow-servants, and to travel from sea to sea, and from shore to shore, that by him as a chosen instrument the Lord might open the eyes of elect Gentiles, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.

In the times which followed the New Testament records, when error and corruption had done their sad work, we still find the same principle in operation when God made his right arm bare. When Arianism, in the fourth century, threatened to drown the truth as it is in Jesus as with a flood from the mouth of the serpent, and the faithful few, like Eli, sat trembling for the ark of God, Athanasius was raised up to assert and defend the fundamental doctrine of the Trinity. So alone did this chosen instrument stand, and so boldly did he maintain the field, that it was a common saying of the period, "Athanasius against all the world, and all the world against Athanasius." But we owe it, humanly speaking, to this undaunted champion that the grand foundation doctrine of the Trinity was preserved to the church. When Pelagianism, or the doctrine of human merit, rather more than a century later, was spreading its poisonous influence far and wide, Augustine was raised up to expose and overthrow it. When the densest darkness of Popish

error, and, we may add, of Romish oppression, was settling deep and wide on this country, Wycliffe was called forth to herald in, and, as it were, antedate the Reformation. When Wycliffe's followers here, and John Huss, Jerome of Prague, to whom his writings had been blessed, on the continent, were crushed by the iron hand of persecution, and the Romish church seemed to have secured for herself undisputed sway over the minds and liberties of men, God raised up Luther, and wrought by him the greatest and most blessed work since the days of primitive Christianity.

LUTHER is perhaps one of the strongest instances which can be adduced of the truth of the principle we are seeking to establish—that not only does the Lord work by human instruments, but usually by one select instrument; and it is with a special eye to him in this point of view that the preceding sketch has been traced out. For lack of seeing this, not only the character of Luther, but the very nature of the Reformation itself, has been totally misapprehended. The only writer in the multitude of authors, civil and religious, who have drawn their pens in behalf of or against the Reformation, who seems to have thoroughly seen this, is D'Aubigne; and in the clear appreciation of this point lies the chief value of his work. He clearly saw that the Reformation was worked out in Luther's soul, and that thus Luther was not so much a Reformer as the Reformation; in other words, that the abuses, the errors, the burdens against which he testified by voice and pen with such amazing energy and power, were errors and burdens under which his own soul had well near sunk in despair; and that the truths which he preached with such force and feeling had been brought into his heart by the power of God, whose mighty instrument he was. Thus as error after error was opened up in his soul by the testimony of the Spirit in the word of truth and in his conscience, he denounced them in "thoughts that breathe and words that burn;" and similarly, as one blessed truth after another was revealed to his heart and applied to his soul, he declared it with voice, and pen dipped in the dew of heaven.

The Reformation, therefore, at least in Germany, was, so to speak, gradually drawn out of Luther's soul. He did not come forth as a theologian fully furnished with a scheme of doctrines, or as a warrior armed at all points, but advanced slowly, as himself a learner, from one position to another, gradually feeling his way onward; taking up, therefore, no ground on which he had not been clearly set down, and which he could not firmly maintain from the express testimony of God. It is true that this gradual progress of his mind involved him at times in contradictions and inconsistencies, not to say

mistakes and errors, which his enemies have availed themselves of to sully and tarnish one of the noblest characters, both naturally and spiritually, that the world has ever seen. It is the distinguishing feature of low, base minds to fix their eyes on the blemishes of those noble characters, whose excellencies they cannot understand for want of similar noble feelings in themselves. Any one can censure, criticize, and find fault; but any one cannot admire, value, or rightly appreciate, for to do so requires a sympathy with that which deserves admiration. Envy and jealousy may prompt the detracting remark; but humility and a genuine approval of what is excellent for its own sake will alone draw forth the admiring expression. Admiration, or what a popular writer of the present day calls "hero-worship," should not indeed blind us to the faults of great men.

But a discerning eye, while it admits Luther's inconsistencies, sees displayed more manifestly thereby the mercy and wisdom of God. The Lord, indeed, was no more the author of Luther's errors than he was of Luther's sins, but as he mercifully pardoned the one, so he graciously passed by the other, and over-ruled both to his own glory. Several great advantages were, however, secured by the slow and gradual way whereby Luther advanced onward in the path of Reformation.

1. He won his way thereby gradually and slowly in the understanding, conscience, and affections of the people of God, who received the truth from his mouth and pen by the same gradual process as he himself had learned it. Had he at once burst forth into all the full blaze of truth, the light would have been too strong for eyes sealed in darkness for ages. But, like the sun, his light broke gradually upon the eyes of men, and thus they could follow him as he clambered slowly up to the full meridian. Thus he and those whom he taught grew together, and the master was never so much in advance of the pupil as to be out of sight and hearing.

2. Again, by this means, as each corruption of doctrine or practice was laid open to the conscience of the Reformer, or as each truth was made sweet and precious to his soul, he spoke and wrote under the influence as then and there felt. As he gathered the manna fresh, so he filled his omer, and that of his neighbors who had gathered less. The showbread, after being presented before the Lord, was eaten by the priest and his family at the end of the week, before it was spoiled by keeping; and when that was being eaten, fresh was set on the holy table. If Luther and his spiritual family ate together the bread of truth which had been placed before the Lord for his approving smile, while

still retaining all its original flavor and freshness, was not that better than if, by long keeping, it had in a measure lost its original sweetness?

3. But further, if Luther had at once come forth with his sweeping denunciations of the Pope as Antichrist, without the minds of men being gradually prepared to receive his testimony, his career, humanly speaking, would have been short, and he would have been cut off at once by the iron hand of the Papacy, and not only his work cut off with him, but his very name now might have been unknown. Charles V., it is well known, regretted to his dying day what he considered the grand error of his life—not violating the safe conduct he had given Luther to come and return uninjured from the Diet of Worms, and not burning him to death as a heretic on the spot, as his ancestor, Sigismund, had burnt John Huss and Jerome of Prague, a hundred years before.

Luther, viewed as regards his natural temperament and disposition, is not a character that an Englishman can well understand, and still less an Englishman of our day and generation. He was a thorough German, but one of the old type, the old-fashioned German stock, closely allied to us in blood, and race, and mental qualities, but in manner and expression somewhat more homely, blunt, and coarse. He was quite a man of the people, being the son of a miner, and had all that rough honesty and plainness of speech and manner which marks the class whence he sprang. Such men, when grace softens their hearts, and refines their minds, are of all best suited for the Lord's work. Peter, the fisherman, and Paul, the tent-maker, Bunyan, the tinker, and Huntington, the coal-heaver—such men, when called by grace and qualified by heavenly gifts, are far better instruments than scholars and students who know nothing beyond their books, and are lost when out of the smell and sight of their library.

Luther, it is true, was a highly educated and indeed a very learned man; but he never lost, amid his dusty folios, his native simplicity of heart and manners. He was, therefore, frank, open, sincere, outspoken, but withal rough, violent, and often coarse—no, sometimes almost insolent in the tones of defiance that burst forth from him, almost as fire from a volcano. When once roused, as for instance by our King Henry VIII., he spared no one he considered the enemy of truth. Kings, emperors, princes, and popes, were all to him mere nine-pins, whom he trundled down one after another without any scruple or the least ceremony, if they seemed to stand in the way of the gospel. In that age of feudal obedience, when one class exacted, and the other paid, a servile respect,

and a crouching deference of which we can form no idea, it was indeed a daring innovation for a shaven monk, and he by birth and blood but a miner's son, to defy the united strength of Pope and Caesar, and set up the word of God as supreme over the consciences of men.

Never, perhaps, did a man live since the time of the apostles, over whose own conscience the word of God exercised such paramount dominion. He had felt the power of that word in his soul. It had sounded the inmost depths of his conscience. In no recorded experience do we read of any man whom the holy, just, and righteous law of God more terrified and broke to pieces. It is wonderful to see a man of his powerful mind, one of the most fearless, bold, and energetic that ever came from the hand of the Creator, so terrified and almost distracted by the majesty and justice of God as revealed in a broken law. Three days and three nights did he once lie on a couch without eating, drinking, or sleeping, under the terrors revealed in the words, "the righteousness of God." He would sometimes shriek, and cry, and faint away under a sight and sense of the holiness of God, and his own sinfulness before him. No saint of God could more truly say, "While I suffer your terrors I am distracted;" nor did any one ever more find the word of God to be quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow—a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

And when mercy and grace were revealed to his soul, as they in due time were, from the very passage which had so terrified him (Rom. 3:24-26), what a supremacy of the word of God did this experience of law and gospel establish in his heart! He could then take this two-edged sword, which had so pierced him, and wield it so as to pierce others. It then became in his hands a weapon not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

In this supremacy of the word of God, as thus established in Luther's soul, lay the whole pith and core of the Reformation. When he found the old Latin Bible in the convent library, and day after day crept up to read and study it under the terrors of the Law, the accusations of a guilty conscience, and the temptations of the devil, God was planting in his soul that godly tree, under the boughs of which we are now living, and from whose branches we are still gathering fruit. When he stole away from sweeping out the church and the

filthy rooms of the convent, and could, away from the bread-bag, which his brother monks compelled him to carry through the streets of Erfurt to beg victuals for them, read in secrecy and solitude that sacred book, the very existence of which they scarce knew, God was secretly sowing the seed of the Reformation in his heart. When that pale-faced, worn-out monk lay crying and groaning in his cell, under the most dismal apprehensions of the eternal wrath of God, he was, so to speak, travailing in birth of the Reformation and when deliverance came to his soul, the Reformation was born.

The supremacy of the inspired Scriptures, the paramount authority of the word of God over the word of man, seems a simple principle to us who have been cradled in its belief. In fact, it is one of those self-evident propositions which have only to be stated to be universally received. But simple and self-evident as it seems to us, it was not established until Luther brought it forth out of the depths of his own heart, and laid it down before the eyes of men, as God had laid it down in his soul. Never was a principle laid down by the voice and pen of man more fruitful in result. Hitherto the Bible was scarcely known, even to learned men; and being locked up in the original languages, Hebrew and Greek, to all others it was a sealed book. In the controversies that arose in the middle ages, it was scarcely ever appealed to, and was totally misunderstood. Decrees of Popes, acts of Councils, decisions of Universities, opinions of the Fathers, sentiments of learned men—these were the ruling authorities, and were appealed to in all disputed points as lawyers now quote established cases in a court of law.

But Luther made short work with them all, and swept them away never more to stand. Never did earth witness, in modern days, a grander, more majestic, and, in its consequences, a more triumphant scene than Luther standing at the Diet of Worms, before the Emperor, the Princes, and all the civil and ecclesiastical authorities and dignitaries of Germany. A poor monk, holding by the word of God as felt in his conscience against all the majesty and wrath of Pope and Emperor—here was a sight for angels to look at (1 Cor. 4:9); and well might those ministering spirits wonder and admire the grace of God thus shining forth in a dying man. There he stood as the servant of the living God, with the word of the Lord in his heart and mouth. The Lord gave him faith thus to speak and act; honored it, and brought him off more than conqueror; and not him only, but the Reformation of which he there stood the living representative. The supreme authority of God's word over the consciences of men, and its paramount authority in all matters of faith, were then brought forth; and before that glittering weapon which the champion of God then

drew from its sheath, and brandished before the eyes of assembled Germany, Popery sank down with one of its heads wounded to death. The word of God and the word of man there met face to face; truth and error were there put into the scale.

Scarcely did any man ever leave behind him such materials for a biography as "The solitary monk who shook the world." His works fill several thick folio volumes. He wrote hundreds of letters to his friends, nearly all of which are preserved; and well they deserve it, for they are full of sense and wisdom, as well as of frank cordiality and warm affection. His very conversation, at his meals and in private—for he used to board and lodge students gratis, and his house was open to all refugees for conscience' sake—his "table-talk," was taken down, and occupies a good-sized volume. There is scarcely, indeed, any one man of whom we know so much—one may almost say too much, for all his weaknesses and failings are recorded as well as his better qualities. And as he, when not depressed with temptation and gloom, was lively and cheerful, and a great talker, his enemies have availed themselves of some of his speeches to tarnish and sully his bright name. But let such vipers gnaw the file! It is proof against their teeth and their venom. But to those who love truth and yet know their own hearts sufficiently to be prepared to meet great faults and blemishes, we would say, Such a man is worth studying, such a history is worth reading; for it is the history, not merely of a man most distinguished by nature and grace, but of a mind which has exercised the greatest influence over the minds of men, and, one may say, over the destinies of the church of God, as well as of nations, since the days of Paul.

Some of our ministers are trying to pick up a few scraps of the Greek and Latin languages, which they can never learn to be of the least use to them; for a language, like a trade, must be learned in boyhood and youth, to be thoroughly understood; and if not thoroughly mastered, will only mislead. Instead of all this useless toil, if they want some more reading than the Bible gives them, and wish for some trustworthy information of the state of things in times gone by, let them read such works as Foxe's "Book of Martyrs," D'Aubigne's "History of the Reformation," Milner's "Church History," Neal's "History of the Puritans." We do not name such works as substitutes for spiritual and experimental writings.

But all things have their place; and sometimes, when the mind, through temptation or sluggishness, cannot approach the purer fountains of truth, a book like D'Aubigne's "History of the Reformation" may be read not without

profit. But it is not possible to lay down rules for any to go by. Some have no time, others no inclination, to read; and what little time they have they devote to the Scriptures. They cannot do better; there they have the truth in its purity, and need not forsake its streams for the turbid pools of man. It is not reading, learning, or study that can make an able minister of the New Testament. If so, the academies would give us an ample supply. But the greatest readers and most laborious students are usually the most ignorant of the teaching of the Spirit, and the work of faith with power. "The heart of the wise teaches his mouth, and adds learning to his lips"; and this learning is not of the schools. A man who reads his eyes out may be most ignorant, for he may know nothing as he ought to know; and a man who reads nothing but his Bible may be most learned, for he may have the unctuous teachings of the Holy Spirit.

There are three books which, if a man will read and study, he can dispense with most others.

1. The Book of Providence; and this he reads to good purpose, when he sees written down line by line the providential dealings of God with him, and a ray of Divine light gilds every line.

2. The Word of God; and this he reads to profit, when the blessed Spirit applies it with power to his soul.

3. The Book of his own heart; and this he studies with advantage, when he reads in the new man of grace the blessed dealings of God with his soul, and in the old man of sin and death, enough to fill him with shame and confusion of face, and make him loathe and abhor himself in dust and ashes.

return to contents

John Calvin

by J. C. Philpot

Two men, giants in intellect and blessed saints of the Most High, but widely differing in the work which they had to perform, and the manner in which they executed it, were raised up in the 16th century by the God of all grace to commence and carry on the blessed Reformation, that goodly tree under the

shadow of which we are now sitting. These two eminent saints and servants of God, in whom gifts and grace, cultivated intellect and spiritual light, human learning and divine teaching, apostolic labors and apostolic suffering, were combined in a way of which we have now lost even the very idea, were Luther and CALVIN. The two men widely differed in their mental constitution, temper, habits, and even in some of their religious views. Luther was a thorough German; and had, in spite of occasional coarseness of language and rudeness of manner incidental to the period, all that native nobility of mind, that openness, frankness, bravery, and boldness, sincerity and truthfulness, which, from the remotest ages, have characterized the German race.

Calvin was a Frenchman; and though widely differing in mental constitution from that light-hearted nation, yet, as a writer, had all that subtlety of intellect and clearness of thought, that buoyancy of style, that logical accuracy, and that high finish which distinguish the French authors above those of all other nations. Both were men of powerful intellect, deep learning, and intense study, thorough masters of the scriptures, which they read day and night, unwearied preachers in public and indefatigable instructors in private, faithful counselors of all that needed advice, fervent lovers of truth and holiness, and no less fervent haters of error and evil; godly in life, blessed in death, and now happy in eternity.

But with all these points of resemblance, the two men widely differed. Luther was more the Elijah, Calvin the Paul of the Reformation. Luther thundered and lightened against the Pope and his shaven crew; burnt his bulls; mocked and derided his legates and prelates; and by a very storm of tracts, in thoughts that breathe and words that burn, lighted a fire in Germany which, like that on Mount Carmel, consumed the wood, and stones, and dust, and licked up the water in the trench. Calvin was not such a man of action, or of such fiery energy; he had not by nature the same intrepidity of mind, or even by grace the same martyr spirit; nor did he stand so forward in the very van and front of the battle as the stout-hearted German. Luther at the Diet of Worms, confronting the Emperor and all the assembled princes of Germany, and Calvin publishing his works under false names, and hiding himself in various places in Paris and other parts, present a striking contrast. His work, though in the issue perhaps more important than that of Luther's, was not to stand before assembled princes, or hurl bold and loud defiance against popes, but was carried on in the quiet depths of his own mind, and the close recesses of his study. There, in silence and solitude, were molded and elaborated those works which have exercised so vast and salutary an influence on the church of

God, and the leading truths of which have penetrated into so many living consciences.

Though a man of energy and action at a later period, when grace gave him a firmness and boldness which he did not naturally possess, enabling him to rule Geneva with a rod of iron, and to exercise almost as much civil as spiritual authority in that little republic, his chief work was rather to take the burning fragments of truth, mingled sometimes with scum and slag, that Luther hurled forth, and separating from them the dross and tin, to weld the whole mass into a compact, homogeneous form. He could not preach with the power nor write with the vigor of Luther; nor had he, with all his piercing intellect, that grasp of mind and that authority of thought and language whereby the German Reformer could almost at will raise or quell a storm.

As a theologian, as an expounder of scripture, as a clear, deep, and patient thinker, as a systematic writer on the grand doctrines of truth, as an able administrator, and as a godly, self-denying, mortified saint and servant of God, Calvin excelled Luther. But in an experience of the terrors of the law and manifested blessings of the gospel, in a deep acquaintance with temptation and conflict internal and external, in life and power so far as he saw and felt the things of God, and in unvaried unflinching boldness of speech and conduct, Luther as far outshone him. Calvin was naturally shy, timid, and retiring; zealous, no doubt, for the glory of God, but not a little jealous too of his own; stern and unforgiving when offended; in principle and practice a rigid disciplinarian, and too often carrying the severity of the law into the precepts of the gospel. You would highly esteem him as a saint, and deeply venerate him as a servant of God; but you would find it difficult to love him as a man or make him a bosom friend. His godly, self-denying life and walk and holy example would often reprove you, and might stir you up to desire for yourself a measure of the same grace; but if you were much tempted and tried, plagued by sin, assailed by Satan, and sometimes almost at your wits' end, you would rather open your heart to Martin Luther than to John Calvin. He lived for the most part out of the storm and whirlwind of human passions; and therefore had little sympathy with those that have to do business in deep waters.

A stern censor of any approach to gaiety of dress, manner, or life, even in men who were manifestly unregenerate, he sternly carried out a system of discipline that might suit the church, but which could not be enforced on the world. He was, therefore, never beloved even in that city where he ruled as

chief and where his word was law. Living in his study in continual meditation, he could not throw himself, like Luther, into the popular heart as a man of the people; nor could he, like him, strike chords which have never ceased to sound in Protestant Germany to this day.

Every true-hearted German is proud of Luther. His very name even now calls up visions of liberty in their enthralled bosoms; his hymns are sung in their churches; his pointed, pithy sayings have become national proverbs; the educated classes admire him as the undaunted champion of civil and religious freedom, and the great classic who first molded into form and almost launched into birth their noble language; and the poor honor him as one of their own class, and as one before whom popes, emperors, and kings had to doff their caps. When Germany ceases to admire and venerate Luther, she will be Russianised in stem and revolutionized in root. None despise him there but a tyrannical aristocracy, a papistic priesthood, an infidel press, and a revolutionary mob.

Does Calvin lie so deeply imbedded in a nation's heart? Though, to a great extent, he did for the French language what Luther did for the German, making a crude and antiquated dialect a vehicle of the most accurate and refined thought, yet is he despised as a fanatic by that nation of which he is so bright an ornament, and by which he was driven into exile. Even in Geneva, the seat of his labors, where he once held almost the whole sway of government, he is but little remembered and less venerated. Socinianism fills those pulpits which once resounded with the accents of Calvin's voice, and those few ministers who hold and preach his sentiments are bitterly persecuted in the very city where he was so honored in life and lamented in death.

And yet with all this, as a Reformer in the church of God, and as an expositor of divine truth, Calvin has had an enduring influence in which Luther has comparatively failed. Not that Calvin discovered any new truth, or was the first writer who laid down the doctrine of election with accuracy and clearness. Augustine in the fifth, and Bradwardine and Wycliffe in the 14th century, had set forth the doctrines of grace with almost equal profundity of thought and clearness of style; but the age in which they lived was not prepared to receive the truth from their lips or pen. The doctrine of divine sovereignty in their mouth was rather the private experience of a solitary believer, the inward food of an isolated individual, than the bread of life broken up for famishing multitudes. But the Reformation roused men out of

the deep sleep of centuries; and the Spirit of God having quickened the souls of many into a hungering and thirsting after righteousness, when the truth of God was brought before them by Calvin's hand, it was gladly and eagerly received by those who felt themselves starving amid the husks for swine.

By the singular clearness of his style, his deep scriptural knowledge, the readiness and aptness of his quotations, and the full mastery which he had of his subject, Calvin became a teacher of teachers, and a preacher to preachers. Under his pen the scriptures uttered a definite creed; sounded by his lips, the gospel trumpet gave forth a certain sound; a harmony and consistency were seen to pervade the whole of divine revelation; and his hand, it was at once felt, had seized the clue, the only clue which led the convinced sinner safely through those mazes where so many before had wandered in confusion and sorrow. Grace having shone into his soul was reflected, as in a mirror, by his clear understanding, and thence, as he directed it upon the pages of inspired truth, the scripture was seen to be illuminated as with a new and immediate light from heaven. His writings have, therefore, influenced directly or indirectly every preacher and every writer who has been of any service to the church of God from that time to this.

His system is so thoroughly scriptural, so accurately drawn out, and so firmly and compactly welded together, that it not only commends itself to the conscience of all who are taught of God, but presents an impenetrable front to all adversaries. His views, too, of church government, though we cannot look upon them with an approving eye, have exercised scarcely less influence than his doctrines, and have even molded the character of nations. The Scotch and Dutch people, at the best periods of their history, are wonderful instances of the permanent effect produced upon a nation by the establishment not only of Calvin's doctrines, but by the adoption of his system of church government. John Knox, Rutherford, and all the old Covenanters that did and suffered so much for the glory of God in Scotland; all those martyrs who shed their blood like water sooner than Arminianism in doctrine and Episcopacy in government should be forced upon them at the point of the sword, were but disciples of Calvin; and the Kirk which they loved almost to idolatry was but a copy of the church established by him at Geneva. No, we Nonconformists and Dissenters, who have rightly abandoned Calvin's views of church government for a purer and more scriptural system, yet we too, under God, owe mainly to him the leading principles of our faith and practice; for we are the spiritual descendants of that holy band of Puritan Refugees who, returning from Switzerland after the persecution of Queen Mary, introduced into this country

those pure principles of religious worship, learned from Calvin and his disciples, which have placed us in irreconcilable opposition to the mimicry and mummery of a worldly establishment.

The personal history of Calvin is so little known to any but those who have made it an object of study, that perhaps a short sketch of so distinguished a man may not be unacceptable to our readers as well as form a suitable introduction to the work at the head of the present article.

John Calvin was born at Noyon, a small town in Picardy, a province in the north of France, on July 10th, 1509. His father was Gerard Calvin, a notary in the ecclesiastical court of Noyon, and secretary to the bishop; an office to which he, the son of a poor cooper, had mainly raised himself by his great abilities and judgment, and in the execution of which he commanded the respect and esteem of the chief noble families of the province. Being himself a man of distinguished mental ability, and living in habits of familiar communion with the great church dignitaries and chief men of the province, he was desirous to give his children, and especially his son John, a similar education with those of the highest rank. The opportunity presented itself through an illustrious family, at that time resident in the province, of the name of Mommor, with the children of which noble house the young Calvin, who from a child manifested great talent, was domesticated and educated.

His father, like Luther, and perhaps most parents in those days, was singularly rigid and severe; and thus we see in the plastic days of childhood two opposite influences acting upon his infant mind which molded between them his future disposition—great refinement of mental culture and manner, and rigid severity of conduct. The former he owed to the circumstances of his early education; the latter, if not hereditary, to the influence of his father. Timid and bashful in disposition, silent and grave in manner, taking no pleasure in the sports of childhood, but devoted to study, and flying sometimes into the depths of the adjoining forest there to read and meditate, on he grew, until at twelve years of age he received what is called the clerical tonsure, that is, had his hair solemnly cut off from the crown of his head by the Bishop, as the first step before receiving orders in the Romish Church. The object of this step, one not unusual at that period, was not so much to devote him to the altar as to enable him to hold a chaplaincy, to which, according to the corrupt practice of that age, even a child might be presented, if he received the tonsure.

For two years had the boy chaplain enjoyed his clerical dignity and the emoluments connected with it, when a terrible pestilence broke out at Noyon. The children of the noble family of Mommor, partly to flee the pestilence, and partly to pursue their studies, were about to proceed to Paris, then as now the great center of learning and education. Terrified lest his son John should die of the plague, desirous that he should not be separated from his noble fellow students, and anxious to complete an education for which such singular aptitude was exhibited, Gerard Calvin petitioned the Chapter that the young chaplain might have a dispensation to accompany them to Paris, retaining, with an eye to what is called the main chance, the emoluments of his benefice. This being granted up to a named period, the youthful Calvin left his native town for the great metropolis, then or some time after the focus of a terrible persecution against the opponents of the Mass and the adherents to the reformed doctrines.

It does not appear that at this period the light of divine truth had either penetrated into his conscience, or had even come before his mind. What religion he had was wholly in accordance with the then prevailing Romish views, which, as we learn from himself, he held with a most bigoted and stubborn obstinacy. On reaching Paris, he became domesticated in the house of an uncle, Richard Calvin, and who seems to have been somewhat imbued with those new doctrines which were then agitating France, and which a century afterwards threw it into all the convulsions of civil war. The timid and shy student lad was now growing up into a youth of middle stature, whose complexion, naturally dark, but pale with thought and study, was relieved by a set of animated features, and an eye singularly clear and bright, which even to his dying day revealed the fire of genius that burnt within. His dress singularly neat and modest; his grave and silent deportment; his entire separation from all society but that of a few choice friends; his disgust, which he took no pains to conceal, at the sports and idle frolics of his fellow students; his severe reproofs of their outbreaks into sin and wickedness; and his own not only perfectly moral, but even austere and rigid life, gave promise of what he would be when grace visited his soul and turned the current into the channel of vital godliness.

But at this period study and more especially that of the Latin language, at that time the great vehicle of thought, and in which he became so accomplished a writer, was his main object. Like a ship launched upon the waters, or a horse rushing into the battle, this pale youth threw himself into study, mastering with such ease and so retaining in the grasp of his powerful memory all to

which he applied his mind, that he seemed to take by assault the citadel of learning which his fellow students were but slowly and often unsuccessfully besieging. Rising to the top of every class, he had to be removed from them all that he might receive that instruction in private in which no class could follow him.

Looking at the features of his mind as afterwards more fully developed by long and severe culture, he seems to have possessed from the very first certain mental qualities in a degree that few men have ever been favored with. Acute penetration into the heart of every subject, clear comprehension in the mass and in detail, power and precision in reasoning, and that logical accuracy of thought whereby every link of a long chain of argument is struck and maintained in its exact place, were the chief characteristics of his mind; and as these were aided by a most capacious and retentive memory, and a clear, simple style of language and expression, he was enabled to employ them with the greatest facility and to their utmost extent.

The college at which he was first placed not being able to advance him beyond a certain point, he removed to another in the same metropolis where he made still greater progress in those studies to which he directed his attention. Though he had received the tonsure, he had not been admitted into orders, and was therefore in a strict sense not an ecclesiastic. The extraordinary abilities which he had already displayed induced, therefore, his father to make him renounce the study of theology for that of the law. In compliance with his father's wishes, the youthful student left Paris for the University of Orleans, in order to study jurisprudence under a celebrated professor there, who was reputed the acutest lawyer in France.

His friend Beza gives us a few particulars of Calvin's life during his residence at Orleans, which he had probably heard from his own lips, and tells us that he was accustomed to spend half the night in study and in the morning lie in bed to reflect upon what he had read. But he paid the usual penalty for such intense study, for here he laid the foundation of those bodily disorders, and especially those cruel headaches which embittered his future life. Though we have no clear and distinct account of his call by grace, yet it would appear that it was during his abode at Orleans that divine light and life entered his conscience, or if the fear of God was not there first implanted, yet that there it was sensibly deepened. He tells us himself, in his Preface to the Psalms, that his call was sudden, and that previously he had been an obstinate and devoted bigot to every papal superstition.

A near relative, Olivetan, who afterwards translated the scriptures into French, was the person, according to Beza, from whom he derived his first bias toward the reformed doctrines; and it was by his advice and example that he was particularly led to read and study the scriptures. He thus came at once to the fountain head of all spiritual wisdom and knowledge, and without any other guide or teacher but the Holy Spirit, was led by him into that vital experience of the truth which he so richly possessed. But though made alive unto God, he did not at once devote himself to the service of the sanctuary.

It was the custom of that period to move from University to University, to obtain the advantage of the most celebrated teachers. Calvin therefore left Orleans to complete his legal studies at the University of Bourges, the most renowned school in France for that branch of science; and here he began to lay the foundations of a knowledge in the Greek language, to which he had as yet not paid much previous attention. But the work of God was still going on in his soul. The fire was shut up in his bones; and as it burnt within he could not stay or hold his peace.

It was at Bourges and in the neighboring villages that he first began to open his mouth in the name of the Lord, and to preach that truth which had been commended to his conscience and made precious to his own soul. Some peculiar and divine power must have rested upon him from his very commencement to declare God's truth, for before a year had elapsed all in the neighborhood who were desirous of knowing the pure doctrines of the Gospel came to him for instruction; and in spite of his shy and retiring habits and studious pursuits which made such interruptions naturally distasteful, he could not refuse to minister to their instruction and consolation.

Calvin was now about twenty-three years of age, and still studying the law at Bourges, when an event took place which exercised a great influence upon his future life. This was the sudden death of his father, which rendered him master of his own actions, and enabled him to abandon the law for those pursuits and studies which were more congenial to those desires after God and godliness which had been communicated to his soul. He therefore left Bourges, and once more repaired to Paris, where, relinquishing all other studies, he devoted his whole mind to those alone which he considered necessary to qualify him for becoming a "workman who needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

Paris was at this time in a remarkable state. Persecution had already commenced against the professors of the reformed doctrines, but not in that fearful form which it assumed about two years afterwards, when, after a solemn procession through the streets of Paris, in which the king walked barefooted, and with a candle in his hand, after the host, borne under a canopy, six people, who were convicted of Lutheranism, were publicly burnt at a slow fire. There was, however, a sufficient amount of persecution going on to compel the evangelical congregations to assemble in the greatest secrecy. Calvin, we have already remarked, was naturally not only of a very shy and retiring, but timid disposition. Yet here he began to manifest the power of grace in giving him that boldness for truth in the midst of danger which formed afterwards so prominent a part in his character. He was constantly employed in preaching to the congregations which met in secret, and always concluded with those suitable words, "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

A singular circumstance, however, was the cause of his being obliged somewhat abruptly to abandon the scene of his labors. A theological college, well known all over Europe by the name of the Sorbonne, and universally considered the great pillar of Catholic orthodoxy, had newly elected and placed at its head a rector by the name of Nicholas Cop. The new rector had secretly imbibed the tenets of the Reformation, and having become acquainted with Calvin, accepted his offer to compose a sermon which was to be delivered before the assembled College on the festival of All-Saints. To the consternation, not less than the indignation of the assembled doctors, this sermon, instead of, as was usually the case, furiously upholding the doctrines of Popery, and furiously attacking the tenets of the Reformation, boldly set forth justification by faith alone as the way of salvation, and unflinchingly declared that the Gospel was the sole standard of divine truth.

Such an attack as this upon their darling creed of salvation by works, and no less idolized doctrine of the authority of the Pope, and as they considered such an insult to the world-renowned theologians of the first college in Europe, could not be overlooked. Cop, who probably had but partially read the sermon before he preached it, was denounced by the Sorbonne doctors to the Parliament of Paris, who taking the matter warmly up, sent their officers to apprehend him. He, however, having received through a friend timely notice, had already escaped to Basle, in Switzerland, his native town, where neither doctors nor officers could touch a hair of his head; but Calvin's share in the transaction having got wind, the police were sent to seize him.

The Lord, however, would not give him over a prey to their teeth. It is said that he was so near being apprehended that he only escaped by letting himself down from his window by the sheets of his bed; and seeking the house of a vine-dresser whom he knew, probably one of his little congregation, put on his rough smock frock, with a white wallet on his back, and a hoe upon his shoulders, and took the road on foot to Noyon. He was now compelled to lead a wandering life, through which we cannot now follow him, preaching as opportunity offered, but chiefly employed in writing his great work, the "Institutes of the Christian Religion." Persecution was now growing hotter and hotter every day; and most of them who had made themselves conspicuous by their contending for the faith once delivered to the saints, felt themselves compelled to leave France for some safe and tranquil asylum.

Among these was Calvin, who fled to Basle, in Switzerland, which offered a secure refuge to all exiles for conscience sake, being a free city on the banks of the Rhine, over which neither pope nor prince had any power. Here he became acquainted with many of the leading German reformers, especially Bucer, afterwards so well known in England, and especially at Oxford, where he was made divinity professor. And here it was that he was enabled to put the last touches to, and to publish A.D. 1535, the first edition of his greet work, "The Institutes of the Christian Religion." At this time he was only twenty-six years of age; and yet his views of divine truth, especially of those doctrines which from him have been called Calvinistic, were fully matured. When we consider the wandering life which he had led from the time that grace first visited his soul, and the persecutions which he had to endure, both of which must have sadly interrupted his meditations and studies, we stand amazed at the clearness and depth of that mind which could give us, under such circumstances, a work so replete with every excellence.

His "Institutes" is a body of Christian divinity in which all the great doctrines of our most holy faith are laid down with the greatest clearness and accuracy, so that there is scarcely a single point in the whole truth of God which does not find its right place there. The influence exerted by this work, which at once became a text book for private study and public lectures, both in this and every country where the gospel found any footing, is incalculable. Never before had the truth been presented with such clearness of statement, such abundance of scriptural proof, and such felicity of language. It at once, therefore, established itself as a bulwark against error, and a guide into the truth as it is in Jesus.

But the time was drawing near when Calvin was to be no longer a wanderer and fugitive, but have a settled house and home, and be put into possession of a religious center, from which his influence, not only as a writer, but as introducing and carrying out a new and original platform of church government, might be extended to the remotest parts. Men speak of accidents; but accidents with God there can be none. It was then by an accident, as men call it, that Geneva was made Calvin's resting place. His elder brother Charles dying unmarried, the paternal inheritance devolved on Calvin. He proceeded, therefore, to Noyon, to sell the estate and put his affairs in order; for well he knew that French soil was never more to be a resting place for him. His intention, upon leaving Noyon, was to proceed to Basle or Strasburgh, meaning in one of those cities permanently to pitch his tent. The army, however, of Charles V. having at that time penetrated into France, the usual way was closed, and he was forced to take a circuitous route through Geneva. This simple circumstance determined the current of his whole future life, and this accidental visit to Geneva was, in the hands of God, made the means of fixing him there, with the exception of a short interval, for the rest of his life.

At the south-west corner of one of the largest and most beautiful lakes of Switzerland, within sight of the giant of the Alps, Mont Blanc, which rears its hoary crest more than 15,000 feet into the sky, and cut in twain by "The blue rushing of the arrowy Rhone," lies the free and independent city of Geneva. No place could have been better fitted both by local situation, and political as well as religious circumstances, to become a spiritual metropolis at the time of the Reformation, than this Queen of the Leman lake. Three great countries, France, Germany, and Italy, meet at that narrow angle where the Rhone gushes out of its bosom; and in its rear rises, in scene after scene of majestic grandeur and beauty, that land of mountain and lake, of glacier and valley, that native home of bravery and freedom, Switzerland. The circumstances of Geneva, both political and religious, at the period where we paused in our late Review of the life of Calvin, were no less favorable to its becoming a great center of the Reformed doctrines than its natural site.

Having newly shaken off her Popish bishop, and driven away by force of arms the Duke of Savoy, and thus having got rid of both her ecclesiastical and civil oppressors, she had a short time before Calvin's arrival constituted herself a republic, and thus opened a path for political liberty; and mainly through the preaching of Farel, one of the most remarkable characters that was ever raised up by the power of God to preach the gospel, had about the same

period (August, 1535) formally abolished Popery, and established Protestantism in its stead as the religion of the State.

Four ministers and two deacons were appointed by the Council with fixed salaries, payable out of the ecclesiastical revenues, and strict regulations were made to enforce the observance of the Sabbath and the conducting of public worship. Terrible scenes of violence, however, had accompanied the first planting of the gospel at Geneva; and the city was still rocking with the storm. Just then at this very crisis, when a man of powerful mind, sound judgment, inflexible purpose, and thoroughly possessed of vital godliness, was needed to grasp the helm, the providence of God sent Calvin to the city. His intention was to stop only a single night at the house of Viret, one of the lately chosen Protestant ministers. But Farel was at this juncture in the city, and hearing of the arrival of Calvin, with whose character he was well acquainted, and moved, doubtless, by a divine impulse, immediately sought him out, and obtaining an interview, earnestly begged him to abide at Geneva, and lend his aid the cause of God by accepting the office of the ministry there. Calvin at first steadily declined acceding to his request, on the ground that he did not wish to accept any public office, having determined to devote his life to private study and seclusion from all public employ. Farel, however, changing his tone from entreaty to command, and assuming almost apostolic authority, bade him stay, denouncing him with God's displeasure, and almost with the curse of Meroz if he did not come "to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty." (Judges 5:23.)

Overcome by Farel's voice and manner, which had struck awe into thousands, and recognizing in them a power which reached his inmost soul, Calvin (to use his own words) felt "as if God had laid his hand upon him out of heaven," abandoned his projected journey, and consented to remain at Geneva, but would not bind himself to accept any definite charge or public office. How strikingly do we see in all this the marvelous providence of God, and with what divine sovereignty yet with what consummate wisdom he selects as well as fashions his own instruments to execute his own work.

Calvin was not the man to rush into a Popish town, and like a soldier storming the breach, to carry the gospel in one hand and his life in the other. This was Farel's work—the fearless, undaunted Farel, who, with half of Calvin's learning, had double of Calvin's courage, and thrice Calvin's energy. But when the ground was once fairly cleared, and the Reformation firmly established, then the vigorous intellect of Calvin, his great knowledge of divine

truth, his enduring fortitude, his self-denying godly life, his far-seeing administrative talent, his calm, inflexible firmness of purpose, his amazing industry, and his great ability as a writer and as a preacher, were all admirably adapted to carry on what Farel had begun. Farel could throw down, but could not so well build; Calvin could build, but not so thoroughly pull down. But as coadjutors, they were admirably mated. Farel was a man of action, Calvin a man of thought; Farel was a preacher of fiery eloquence, Calvin a writer of deep, but calm scriptural knowledge. Both were men of God, ardent lovers of truth, bosom friends and affectionate brethren for life, and so matched as fellow laborers that Farel's impetuosity urged on Calvin's slowness, and Calvin's judgment restrained Farel's rashness.

When we consider Calvin's circumstances at this time, we can see there were solid reasons why he should be induced to pitch his tent at Geneva. Severed from all ties of family and country, driven out of France by the strong arm of persecution, he could not but be desirous to obtain a haven from the storms of outward violence, as well as a safe and abiding home, and a position where he could be of some service to the church of Christ. Thus, as most of God's saints and servants have experienced, the dealings of his providence and the dealings of his grace, both combined to work out his eternal purposes, and to fix Calvin's abode in that city which has become lastingly identified with his memory and name.

He was soon chosen teacher of theology, an important post in those days—when the truth was so little known—and one peculiarly adapted to his spiritual gifts and intellectual abilities; but from diffidence, or not seeing clearly the will of God, declined the office of minister. Such gifts as his, however, could not long be hid in a corner; and in the following year (February, 1537,) he was induced to take upon himself the burden of the Lord. His first sermon made such a deep and striking impression on the hearers that multitudes followed him home to testify to the power of the word, and he was obliged to promise that he would preach again next day, so that others who were not then present might be similarly favored.

Being thus firmly established at Geneva, and having obtained a place by his grace and gifts in the esteem and affections of the people, Calvin did not long delay to associate himself closely with Farel in pushing on those wide and deep plans of reformation and religious discipline which they believed were needful for the full establishment of the gospel in that city.

No man admires or reveres the Reformers more than we do, but if we dare to advance an opinion adverse to their movements, we have long thought that they greatly erred in endeavoring to bind a gospel yoke on a carnal people, and turn the precepts of the New Testament into a legal code. Gospel precepts, like gospel promises, belong to believers only; and New Testament discipline is for the government of New Testament churches alone. But their view was to make the reformed religion a national thing; to incorporate the gospel with the government, and to visit sins against the New Testament as crimes against the State. By so doing, they virtually denied their own principles: for if there be an elect people, the gospel alone belongs to them; and you cannot consistently punish carnal men for the infraction of gospel precepts when they have no interest in gospel promises.

We are touching here, we are well aware, on a most difficult question—how far the State should recognize the religion of the New Testament without constituting it into an establishment; and while it punishes crime, how far it should repress immorality and sin. Allow the State to interfere at will in matters of conscience and religion, and you convert it into an engine of persecution. Deny it all interference in religion, and it cannot suppress loud-mouthed blasphemy, the grossest profanation of the Lord's Day, the burning of the Bible in open day, and infidel lectures in the public streets.

Calvin, however, felt little difficulty in this matter. His views were to establish the gospel in high places, and give it supreme sway over the minds and actions of all men who came within its reach. In conjunction, therefore, with Farel, he drew up a short confession of faith in twenty-one articles, which also comprised some regulations respecting church government. Among the latter was the right of excommunication, which became subsequently a formidable weapon in Calvin's hand for the punishment of evil doers. To this confession of faith Farel appended the Ten Commandments, and in this amended form it was laid before the council of Two Hundred, who ordered it to be printed, read in St. Peter's Church every Sunday, and the people sworn to the observance of it.

But Popery had too long prevailed at Geneva, and had taken too deep and wide a root to be speedily eradicated. Almost a French city, it had a great deal of French manners, and French morality, and was not only a very gay, lighthearted, and careless seat of pleasure, but terribly dissolute and licentious. Rome cares little now, and cared still less then for the morals of her devotees as long as they worship at her altars. A drunken Irishman is a good

Catholic if he do but attend mass, take off his hat to the priest, say an Ave to the Virgin Mary, and hate all heretics. Dancing and music, the gambling table, and the masquerade, feasting and reveling every Sunday and holiday, Rome tolerated, if not encouraged, at Geneva, as long as mass was duly said at the altar and the convent vesper bell nightly tinkled over the blue lake. But there were darker crimes behind the midnight mask and holiday revel. Drunkenness, blasphemy, adultery, licensed prostitution, and the most dissolute profligacy, in which the popish clergy were not the least backward, made the city a very sink of iniquity. It was not likely then that these lovers of pleasure, many of whom still continued in Geneva, sunk as they were up to the neck in profligacy, would readily submit to the yoke which Calvin and Farel were binding on their necks.

For these men of God did not lop off merely a few twigs of the Upas tree of sin. They hacked and hewed down sin root and branch, and smote the Amalekites hip and thigh. Not only the grosser crimes just mentioned were severely punished, but cards, dancing, plays, masquerades, were all absolutely prohibited; all holidays except Sunday were abolished, and that observed with all the strictness of our Puritan ancestors. All the church bells were dismantled and silenced; the citizens were strictly enjoined to attend divine service, and be at home by 9 o'clock in the evening. Fancy an English town, a gay and fashionable watering place, such as Brighton, Cheltenham, or Leamington, subjected to these regulations, and then fancy whether our good Protestants would relish their cards, their balls, their late supper parties, their plays and concerts, their races and raffles, their coursing and hunting, all swept away at a stroke, they made to hear sermons upon election and predestination several times a week, and all to be in doors before the clock struck nine.

Geneva, the gay, the dissipated Geneva, where mirth and pleasure had long run riot, began to rebel against this bit in her jaws, and a formidable party was secretly organized to resist these stringent measures. To show how Satan can invest the worst deeds with the holiest names, these lovers of all ungodliness named themselves, "Brothers in Christ." "Libertines" was the name given them with far greater justice by the lovers of the gospel at Geneva. Our limits will not allow us, nor indeed is it necessary to detail their intrigues and the artful manner in which they disguised their real intentions. Suffice it to say, that they soon obtained political power in the executive Council, and thus brought the Genevese government under their influence. They dare not openly avow that their end was to restore the ancient reign of riot, but

intending, doubtless, to undermine or eject Calvin and Farel by surer methods, they took their stand on some points in which the reformed church at Berne differed from that at Geneva, and required the ministers to conform to them. The two main points were using unleavened bread in the communion, and celebrating four festivals in the year.

As Calvin and Farel would not, however, consent to conform to these points, and even refused to administer the Lord's Supper at Easter at all on account of the debauchery and insubordination of the people, the Council forbade them to mount the pulpit. Regardless of this prohibition, and determined to obey God rather than man, they both preached twice at their respective churches, but did not celebrate the communion. Their open disobedience to the express orders of the government brought matters at once to a crisis. On the following morning the Council met, and passed sentence of banishment on both Farel and Calvin, issuing at the same time an order that they must quit the city in three days. The Council of Two Hundred and the General Assembly, the two fountains of all power at Geneva, convened especially for the purpose, confirmed the sentence of the Executive Council; and their decision being without appeal, submission was their only alternative. The exiles simply exclaiming, "It is better to serve God than man," and turning their backs on the city which had thus cast them out, went first to Berne, and thence proceeded to Basle, where they were received with the greatest cordiality. But neither tarried there long, and were soon separated, Farel repairing to Neufchatel, and Calvin to Strasburg, a free and imperial city on the Rhine, where the Reformation was firmly established, where he was received with open arms, appointed professor of theology, and a pulpit and congregation assigned him.

Meanwhile at Geneva, matters were in a strange ferment. The party which had banished Calvin and Farel had gained a triumph and were determined to make the most of it. The dancers, the gamblers, and the drunkards were pleased enough, and soon restored the ancient days when sin ran down the streets as water. But the exiled ministers had a strong party that knew and loved the truth, which daily gathered power and influence. The ministers who had succeeded Farel and Calvin were unable to maintain their ground, and left the city. Riot everywhere prevailed; strong attempts were made to re-introduce Popery; and confusion and disorder shook the city to the center. The hand of God now began to lift itself up against his adversaries. Jean Philippe, the Captain General and head of the Libertine Party, was publicly executed for killing a man in a riot.

One of the magistrates who assisted to banish Calvin, and told him "the city gates were wide enough for him," broke his own neck in trying to escape from the officers of justice out of a window. Two others were obliged to fly on charges of treason; and thus the Council became purged of Calvin's enemies. Swayed as it were from above, and feeling that he alone could restore order to their troubled and disturbed city, the hearts of the Council and a great majority of the citizens longed for Calvin's return. On the 24th of April, 1538, the sentence of banishment had been passed; on the 20th of October, 1540, the Council passed a resolution that he should be invited to come back. Calvin's heart was really at Geneva; but mindful of the troubles he had suffered there, and perhaps not being willing too soon to be won, he respectfully declined their invitation. In addition to this, as he was highly honored at Strasburg, where the Lord was remarkably blessing his labors, had lately taken to himself a wife and was deeply immersed in his beloved studies, he had every inducement there to remain. Undeterred by his refusal, again the Council pressed him most earnestly to return; again Calvin pleaded his engagements at Strasburg.

Unable to prevail with him, the Council sent a circular letter to the governments of Berne, Basle, and Zurich to request their influence in procuring his return: Farel, Bucer, and other influential ministers urged his compliance. None but he, it was felt, could raise the sinking church at Geneva, or rule the people in that riotous city. Overcome at length by these powerful persuasions, seeing, doubtless, the hand of God in them, and that Geneva was his divinely appointed post, Calvin yielded the point and consented to return. His return, under these circumstances, was a triumph of truth over error, and of godliness over ungodliness; and thus his very exile gave him a power and an authority subsequently at Geneva which he could not have had without it. How evident in all this is the wonder-working hand of God. A mounted herald was despatched to escort him from Strasburg, and a carriage and three horses sent to bring his wife and furniture.

On the 13th of September, 1541, he again entered the gates of Geneva. The Council received him with every mark of affection and respect, besought him ever to remain with them, provided him with a house and garden attached, settled on him a fixed salary, and, what we may believe Calvin valued more than all, prepared him a pulpit in St. Peter's Church, so arranged that the whole congregation might hear him with ease. From this period until the day of his decease, (May 27th, 1564,) a space of nearly 23 years, did this zealous

and godly servant of the Lord labor at Geneva. The following was the ordinary routine of his labors. Besides the Lord's day, he preached every day during each alternate week; thrice a week he gave lectures in divinity; presided in the consistory or meeting of the ministers every Thursday; and lectured at St. Peter's Church every Friday evening. On the alternate week he chiefly devoted himself to his studies, commencing at five or six in the morning, and continuing at work nearly all day.

We cannot pursue his history during an eventful period of twenty-three years. We hasten, therefore, to his end; those latter days of his life on earth, on which a peculiar halo of grace and glory was shed. For several years his bodily sufferings and afflictions had been great; but about 1561, a complication of disorders fell on his earthly tabernacle. A continual colic, incessant vomitings, loss of appetite, sleeplessness, and tormenting headaches, pressed him sore. But worse ills, asthma, gout, and stone, followed in their rear. Still he continued his severe labors, writing commentaries on the Scripture, and preaching, though obliged to be carried to the church in a chair. On the 6th of February, 1564, he preached his last sermon, though he still occasionally addressed a few words to the congregation. But, amid all his severe sufferings, no complaint escaped his lips, except that sometimes he would look up, and say, "Lord, how long?"

He was now very sensible that his earthly pilgrimage was drawing to a close. Still he pursued his literary labors; and when Beza begged of him to give up dictating, or at all events writing, his only answer was, "What? Would you have the Lord find mee idle?" On the 10th of March he was publicly prayed for in the churches by order of the government, and on the 18th, the Council sent him a present of twenty-five crowns, which, however, he refused to accept, assigning as his reason that he was no longer able to work, and therefore had no right to be paid. On the 2nd of April he was carried to church, stayed the sermon, and received the Lord's Supper from the hand of Beza. He joined in the hymn with a tremulous voice, and though his countenance bore on it the evident stamp of death, yet was it lighted up with the radiant beams of joy and peace. On the 25th of April he made his will, and on the 26th the Council assembled at his house. We could wish that our limits admitted the insertion of even a portion of his grave and wise address to the executive government of Geneva, received by them as it was with the greatest respect and affection as well as many tears. On the 28th all the Genevese ministers met at his house. These he addressed most earnestly and affectionately, exhorting them to persevere in the good work to which the

Lord had called them, to avoid all dispute and strife, and walk in mutual love and affection. He bade them firmly maintain his doctrine, and uphold his discipline, and appealed to his own experience that the Lord had blessed both him and his labors. He assured them that he had always lived with them, and was now departing from them in the bonds of the truest and sincerest love; begged their forgiveness for any peevish expressions which had escaped his lips during his illness; returned them hearty thanks for bearing his burdens; and, amid many tears on their side, shook hands separately with, and bade farewell to them all. His last letter was written to Farel to dissuade him from coming from Neufchatel to have a last interview. Our readers will peruse it with interest.

"Farewell, may best and truest brother! and since it is God's will that you remain behind me in the world, live mindful of our friendship, which as it was useful to the church of God, so the fruit of it awaits us in heaven. Pray, do not fatigue yourself on my account. It is with difficulty I draw my breath, and expect that every moment will be my last. It is enough that I live and die for Christ, who is the reward of his followers both in life or death. Again, farewell with my brethren.—Geneva, 2nd of May, 1564."

Farel came, however, to see him; but we are not favored with the particulars of the interview, which, between two brethren so long and so warmly united, and both sinking into the grave, worn out with suffering and toil, must have been most deeply interesting. The days that now remained to him on earth, Calvin spent in almost continual prayer, and ejaculating sentences from the Scriptures. On the 19th of May he took finally to his bed, where he lay in much bodily weakness and suffering until the 27th. About eight o'clock in the evening of that day, the signs of approaching dissolution appeared. Beza, who had not long left him, was sent for, but too late to see him expire. Before his friend could reach his bed-side, his ransomed soul had passed from earth to heaven, apparently without a struggle, as he looked like one who had fallen into a deep sleep, without a trace of expiring agony.

Thus lived and thus died this great and good man, this eminent servant of God, this memorable champion of the truth of the gospel, this learned and godly Reformer, John Calvin. On that night and the following day, according to the testimony of Beza, Geneva seemed plunged into universal mourning. The state lamented the loss of its most distinguished counselor; the church of its beloved pastor; the university of its unwearied and able teacher; the poor of their firm friend and sympathizing succourer; the ministers of a wise and

affectionate fellow-laborer; and a large circle of private Christians of their spiritual guide and father. Nor was the feeling of grief and lamentation confined to Geneva. The whole Reformed church, that had been so long and so deeply indebted to his labors, and a large and increasing band of correspondents, whose faithful and affectionate counselor he long had been, joined in lamenting his loss.

That Calvin had his faults, his warmest friends and greatest admirers cannot deny. His language at times against his adversaries, though it must be borne in mind that it was the prevailing evil of the day, was exceedingly violent and intemperate. "A beast, a pig, a vagabond, a scurvy knave, an impostor, a foul-mouthed-dog;" such are some of the epithets that fell from his pen. Castellio, against whom these angry invectives were launched, thus pointedly reproves Calvin for using them—"Even were I as truly all these things as I really am not, yet it ill becomes so learned a man as yourself, the teacher of so many others, to degrade so excellent an intellect by so foul and sordid abuse."

He was also stern and unforgiving on points where his own authority was in question, and ruled, both in church and state, with too much of an iron hand. The times were, however, peculiar, and a silken glove was not adapted for the turbulent city of Geneva: nor were the principles of liberty understood there as now with us, with whom they have been the growth of centuries. The fairest way is to look at the result of his rule. That he found Geneva full of riot and turbulence, a very sink of sin and immorality, and left it at his death a seat of order and quiet, of morality and good government, and a favored spot of truth in doctrine and godliness in life, all must admit who are not blinded by a spirit of prejudice and error.

But his best and most enduring monument is the fruit of his pen. There he peculiarly shone. His great and varied learning, his logical, accurate mind, his deep knowledge of the scriptures, his ardent love of truth, his clear and forcible style, and the strength of his arguments, all combined to give his writings a power and prevalence in his own age, of which we still feel the effects, but can hardly realize the conception. His writings, it is true, are now little read, and have become in a measure superseded by more modern works. It is good, however, to go at times to the fountain-head; and Dr. Cole has thus conferred a benefit on the church by translating and publishing the work at the head of the present article.

Many speak as if Calvin *invented* those doctrines which are so frequently

called by his name, and others as if he first discovered them in the Bible. He did neither the one nor the other. Before Calvin had birth or being, they had a place in the scriptures of truth; and before the Bible itself had birth or being, they had a place in the heart of God. The grand doctrine of election was not left for Calvin to discover in the Bible. It is not a faint, feeble glimmer in the word of truth, an obscure doctrine, which, with much painstaking and piecing of text to text, may at length be dimly descried lurking in some intricate passages, but a ray of light that shines through and illuminates the whole scripture from the first promise made in Eden to the close of the sacred canon.

return to contents

George Whitefield

by J. C. Philpot

At this distance of time, we can scarcely frame to ourselves an idea of the general burst of execration that assailed Whitefield on the one hand from the dead formalists of that day and generation, and of the mighty revolution in the minds of hundreds and thousands on the other which led them to hail him as an ambassador of heaven. Let us present a slight sketch of this remarkable man.

God usually works by means, and brings about appointed ends by appointed instruments. These instruments are usually not only adapted to the work which they have to perform, but to the age and generation in which they live.

Luther was so adapted to Germany, Knox to Scotland, and Farel to Switzerland, that, humanly speaking, had the men been transferred to each other's soil, the work of reformation would have immediately stopped. So Whitefield was especially adapted to his day and generation. We speak sometimes of the low state of things in our day, as if all vital religion were perished out of the land. But whatever our day be, it is clear to all who know the history of that period that things then were much worse. Then there was scarcely any profession. People speak against our day as a 'day of profession'. It is true—but profession in many as much implies possession in some, as forged coin proves the existence of genuine, or as shadow implies substance. In that day there was little or no profession, for the same reason that there is no shade in the Arabian desert—there are no trees. The influence of

Puritanism had gradually worn out—the flood of corruption introduced by Charles II had gradually (the barrier of Puritanism being well-near in ruins) settled down over the lowlands of society as well as submerged its highlands. The pulpits resounded with moral essays. With the experience of the power, the very doctrine of godliness was lost in the Churches. Arminianism ruled far and wide; and as this has always been half-brother to Socinianism, a dark cloud was brooding over the land, akin to that which has buried Germany in neology and France in infidelity.

Thus the state of torpor and death everywhere prevalent before Whitefield was raised up is indeed indescribable. The very doctrine of the new birth was all but lost out of the land. It is hard to say whether Church or dissent was the worse; for though the latter might retain more of the form of sound words, yet it seems to have been nearly as destitute of the power.

In this state, of things, then, when all was torpor and death, God raised up Whitefield, and, in his providence and grace, sent him through the length and breadth of the land, proclaiming the necessity and nature of the new birth. To us who at this day read his sermons, there seems comparatively little in them to produce such powerful effects. When we read of the thousands who hung entranced upon his lips; of his arresting into silence the disorderly multitude of a London fair—of his receiving on one day a thousand notes from people under convictions of sin; and then quietly read the sermons which came abroad under his name, we look in vain for the "thoughts that breathe and words that burn" which produced such effects; and we seem led to the conclusion either that the published sermons are unfaithful, mutilated, imperfect transcripts of the actual discourses, or that a mighty power rested upon him which clothed with fire words and ideas which in other mouths would seem almost commonplace. But whichever solution we adopt, their effect is undoubted when delivered by him.

Besides the power from on high that rested upon him, there was a holy warmth and energy, a simplicity and godly sincerity, and a pouring out of his whole soul with fervor, that arrested the most unconcerned hearer. He spoke as one whose very heart and soul were in the work. He had, besides, great natural eloquence, a voice unrivaled for melody, variety, pathos, and strength, and every feature and gesture were lit up with energy and animation. The most fearless courage, the greatest patience, a character without a blot, the most undeniable disinterestedness, labors to us scarcely credible, a heart overflowing with tenderness and affection, and, above all, a soul favored

beyond most with the in-shinings of God's favor and love—such is a feeble sketch of England's great apostle.

To say that Whitefield in all points was a perfect minister would be foolish. He was not always clear in doctrine; and his free addresses to sinners would seem to us now strongly impregnated with free-will. Doubtless there was also much in him due to natural advantages, which should always be carefully distinguished from grace. His natural eloquence arrested the attention of Hume, the infidel historian, who is said to have declared that his address to the angel Gabriel not to depart until he could bear to heaven the tidings of a sinner's conversion was the finest burst of oratory possible; of the skeptic, Benjamin Franklin, who tells an amusing story how he was compelled to empty his purse under a charity-sermon for the Orphan Institution, though predetermined to give only a small sum; of Lord Chesterfield, who used to hear him preach at the Countess of Huntingdon's. And if men of such name and note, men of great mental ability, were so charmed with Whitefield's eloquence, we may be sure that it must have been very extraordinary.

It is evident, therefore, that many followed and admired Whitefield as in days of old. As the rebellious children of Judah listened to the "lovely song" of the prophet Ezekiel; and as the Jews were willing for a season to rejoice in John the Baptist as a burning and a shining light, thus the multitude heard Whitefield. Hundreds admired his eloquence, wept under his pathos, and rejoiced in his light who never repented of their sins, nor believed on the Son of God. Still there can be no doubt that God largely honored Whitefield's ministry in the calling in of elect souls, and that it was the commencement of a revival in the Churches. Toplady, Newton, Berridge, Romaine, and other useful men in their day, may all be said to have sprung up under the light sown by Whitefield. There was a wide revival in the land; and where Whitefield planted, others watered—and God gave the increase.

We shall take this opportunity to describe a little of Whitefield's peculiar, almost unparalleled, gifts as a preacher—gifts so remarkable that we cannot doubt they were bestowed upon him for a peculiar purpose. His voice, which is affirmed to have been so clear and powerful as to be audible at the distance of a mile, appears, by general testimony, to have been in all other respects one of the most effective ever possessed by man, capable of taking every varied tone of emotion, and whether poured forth in thunder to rouse, or in softer music to melt, making its way to the heart with irresistible force and effect. Its tones, too, were singularly varied, and at the same time so truly natural,

expressing every tender feeling of the heart with such touching pathos, that the dullest hearer was riveted as by an invincible charm as soon as he opened his lips.

His action, too, was singularly expressive and becoming, being easy, natural, and unaffected, yet eminently striking, though sometimes bordering almost on violence. His language also was peculiarly simple and full of fire, broken frequently into short sentences, abounding in figures and illustrations, interspersed with the warmest, tenderest appeals to the conscience, mingled often with his own uncontrollable sobs and tears, and divested of all that heavy lumber which weighs down preacher and hearer. Matter and manner were alike new, and burst upon a sleepy generation as a brilliant meteor, which in the midnight darkness draws to its path every eye.

Previous to his time sermons were for the most part longwinded, dull essays; and even when they were sound in doctrine, which was very rare, were, like the old Puritanical writings, more fitted for the closet than the pulpit, and divided and subdivided until "nineteenthly" weighed down eyes and ears into involuntary slumber. The holy fire which burned in Whitefield's soul burst its way through all these artificial coverings, and the glowing warmth which made his thoughts to breathe and his words to burn penetrated the hearts of his hearers.

A minister once asked Garrick, the celebrated actor, why people were so affected by a tragedy who fell asleep under a sermon? "The reason is," replied he, "that we speak falsehood as if it were truth, and you speak truth as if it were falsehood." Whitefield spoke truth as truth. The truth of God was in his heart, and a flame of love burnt there which lighted up his countenance with energy and his eyes with fire, poured itself forth in the most ardent and expressive words, quivered in every note of his melodious voice, and streamed forth in every wave of his hand. There is a peculiar charm in real eloquence, riveting the mind and swaying the feelings of the heart until it yields itself to the voice of the orator, as the strings of the harp to the fingers of the musician. The very sound of his voice can make the heart alternately burn with ardor and indignation, or melt it until the tears gush from the eyes.

All this is distinct from grace; and hundreds and thousands who melted at the accents of Whitefield's voice lived and died in their sins. Like the prophet of old, he was unto them "as a very lovely song of one that has a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument; but they heard his words and did them

not." (Ezek. 33:32.) Yet be it borne in mind, that these very natural gifts were bestowed on Whitefield for a particular purpose. It was these which gave him such congregations, and made his preaching admired by such men as David Hume, the philosopher, Lord Chesterfield, the courtier, and Franklin, the worldly politician, as much as by the poor colliers at Kingswood, when the white gutters, made by their tears, streaked their black cheeks. Whitefield was no actor cultivating his voice or studying his gestures—but these gifts were naturally in him, and he used them as inartificially as a person possessed of an exquisite ear and a beautiful voice pours forth melodious tones as the free utterance of the music within.

But besides these natural gifts, there was a peculiar power—the power of God, resting on his ministry. That a most signal blessing accompanied his labors is beyond the shadow of a doubt. John Newton, who had frequently heard him, in a funeral sermon preached at his death, from John 5:35, thus speaks of him from personal knowledge:

"The Lord gave him a manner of preaching which was peculiarly his own. He copied from none, and I never met any who could imitate him with success. They who attempted generally made themselves disagreeable. His familiar address, the power of his action, his marvelous talent in fixing the attention even of the most careless, I need not describe to those who have heard him; and to those who have not, the attempt would be vain. Other ministers could preach the gospel as clearly, and in general say the same things; but I believe no man living could say them in his way. Here I always thought him unequaled, and I hardly expect to see his equal while I live. But that which finished his character as a shining light, and is now his crown of rejoicing, was the singular success which the Lord was pleased to give him in winning souls. What numbers entered the kingdom of glory before him! and what numbers are now lamenting his loss, who were awakened by his ministry! It seemed as if he never preached in vain. Perhaps there is hardly a place, in all the extensive compass of his labors, where some may not yet be found who thankfully acknowledge him for their spiritual father. Nor was he an awakening preacher only; wherever he came, if he preached but a single discourse, he usually brought a season of refreshment and revival with him to those who had already received the truth. Great as his immediate and personal usefulness was, his occasional usefulness, if I may so call it, was, perhaps, much greater. Many have cause to be thankful for him who never saw or heard him. He introduced a way of close and lively application to the conscience, for which, I believe, many of the most admired and eminent

preachers now living will not be ashamed or unwilling to acknowledge themselves his debtors."

On this point we shall have another opportunity to enlarge; but we cannot omit here his devotedness to the work of the ministry. Seven times did he cross the Atlantic, at that time a long and perilous voyage. From the very first, too, he had a most singular power of winning the affections of his hearers. His sincerity, warmth, deep and genuine feeling, and, above all, the blessing of God resting on the word, riveted to him the hearts of hundreds.

Making every allowance for his natural gifts, there must have been a peculiar power resting on his ministry, to produce these effects.

There can be little doubt that there was in Whitefield's day more life and power in the church of God than we now witness, or perhaps have any distinct idea of. Such coldness and deadness have fallen upon the churches that it seems hard to realize the zeal, warmth, and earnestness which then prevailed. The simplest, perhaps, and easiest way to do this will be for each of our gracious readers to recall the days of his spiritual youth, "when the candle of the Lord shined upon his head, and by his light he walked through darkness; when the secret of God was upon his tabernacle; when he washed his steps with butter, and the rock poured him out rivers of oil." Let him recall his own earnestness in prayer at that memorable period, his tenderness of conscience, his zeal for the Lord, his deadness to the world, his love to God's people, his times of hearing when well near every sermon seemed blessed to his soul. The recollection of this never-to-be-forgotten season, the Spring of the soul, may serve to bring before his mind the days of Whitefield—that spring-tide of the church, when the flowers appeared on the earth, and the voice of the turtle was heard in the land; when the leaf of profession was green and the blossom of promise fragrant; before the fruit had become, as now, wizened from declining sap, and the foliage sear and yellow from the autumnal frosts.

One remarkable instance of the power of God attending Whitefield's ministry is recorded in his life—that after preaching, on one occasion, in Moorfields, he received, according to his own testimony, "at a moderate computation, a thousand notes from people under conviction." Making every deduction for natural excitement, giving the fullest allowance for temporary convictions, it affords an unparalleled example of power attending one sermon.

Where, at least in our day, is the minister whose labors are accompanied with

such striking effects? We may have men clearer in doctrine, but where can we find that life and power, that ardent zeal, that burning eloquence, that devotedness to the work, those astonishing labors, that self-denying life, that singleness of eye to the glory of God, that unwearied perseverance, or that flame of holy love which seemed to consume the very lamp in which it shone with such surpassing brightness?

And for this life and power in the soul of a minister, what can be the substitute? Shall it be learning? That, in comparison, is but a flickering flame, a mere phosphorus light composed out of dead men's brains, too faint to illuminate, too cold to kindle. Shall it be sound views of doctrine? Amid the heaps of error which are spread on every side, and amid hundreds of erroneous men who lie in wait to deceive, sound views of truth are most valuable, no, indispensable. But there may be the soundest creed in the head with death in the heart and sin in the life! Sound views without divine life resemble a sound, well-tuned ring of bells, which charm the ear more than the jangling and the cracked, but are still mere tinkling metal.

Shall it be gifts?—a flow of words as unceasing as a babbling brook, a voice as musical as the evening nightingale, action as elegant as ever graced the stage, pathos as touching as ever bedewed female cheeks with tears, animation as vehement as ever stirred the audiences of Peter the Hermit, and eloquence as ardent as ever led men on to mount the breach or charge a battalion? Alas! what are they all, destitute of life? United with life—a combination very rare, though perhaps to a great extent existing in Whitefield—they are indeed to the sword what the back is to the edge, giving it weight and strength; but without life they are a lump of iron, which never pierces to the "dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow," or is "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

To enumerate all the labors of this distinguished apostle would far exceed our pages. Wherever he went he was the same man, having but one object in view, and wholly devoted to it. This singleness of eye, oneness of purpose, and devotedness of heart won to him the admiration and esteem of many who gave little proof of a divine work in their souls.

To say that he was on all points sound, that there was no dross with his gold, no water mingled with his wine, would be indeed untrue. His ardor and zeal led him frequently to stretch the line beyond even his own views of divine truth. Thus his great theme was the Lord Jesus; but he preached him more as

the Savior of sinners generally than as the Head of the church, the Savior of elect sinners. The new birth was also with him a darling theme.

In considering the general character of Whitefield's preaching, we must bear in mind that a ministry suitable for one period of the church may by no means be adapted for another. The work of Whitefield was that of an evangelist. He was no pastor of a church, and had no settled congregation, and scarcely a fixed residence; but, burning with an unquenchable zeal, traveled from place to place, addressing multitudes who were living without hope and without God in the world. To reach their consciences was his aim and object. To set before them their perishing state as sinners, to proclaim in their ears free grace through the blood and righteousness of Christ as revealed in the gospel, to insist upon the necessity and unfold the nature of the new birth, whereby they became partakers of this salvation—these were the leading features of his preaching; and as he himself had a deep and daily experience of sin and salvation, in urging these points he poured out his very soul, and with a power and eloquence almost without example.

The best description that we know of the general drift of his preaching is the account which Tanner gives of the sermon that he preached at Plymouth, and which God owned and blessed to the quickening of his soul. When he had described, in the most touching manner, the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ, fixing his eyes suddenly on Tanner, he cried, "Sinner, you are the man who crucified the Son of God!" With such power did these words come to his soul, and his sins were so set in array before him, that Tanner, all but dropped down on the spot. This is but a specimen of his peculiar manner; but such preaching would not suit our day, as it did not suit the day which arose shortly after his death.

Whitefield threshed the corn, but he left wheat and chaff on the barn floor, a mingled heap. He could wield the flail as few men ever handled it, but he could not, or did not, touch the sieve. To do this, God raised up Huntington, who by his preaching and more by his writings, winnowed the corn which Whitefield had threshed. What Whitefield was to the flail, Huntington was to the sieve. Between them, therefore, there is no comparison to be instituted. The flail might say to the sieve, as it hangs on the nail, "What a poor thing are you! There is a sheaf for you; come, try and get the corn out of it." But by-and-bye the flail is hung on the nail, and then the sieve might retort, "Mr. Flail, what a poor thing are you! You can not sift your own corn. What good is all this heap here? I must come down to finish your slovenly work." Well

might the laborer say to both, "Come, let us have no quarreling; you, Flail, can do your work, and no one better; and you, Sieve, can do your work, and no one better; but it is my hand which uses you both; and unless I take you down, you may hang on the nail until you, Flail, drop off by the dry rot, and you, Sieve, are eaten up by rust."

What Whitefield was, he was by the grace of God; what Huntington was, he was by the grace of God. Whitefield had not the deep experience, clear, doctrinal views, knowledge of and insight into Scripture, keen discernment, and able pen of Huntington; nor had Huntington the shining eloquence, burning zeal, and popular gifts of Whitefield; yet each were servants of God, and blessed in their day and generation. But they had their separate work. How different was Paul from Elijah! How unlike are the address of Stephen to the Jewish Council and the First Epistle of John! These differences spring, however, from the blessed Spirit, and are but diversities of his sovereign gifts—"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but it is the same God which works all in all." So with Whitefield and Huntington. Huntington could not have preached to the Bristol colliers, nor Whitefield to the congregations of Providence. We are not insensible to Whitefield's defects, even errors; but we view him as a man raised up to do a special work.

We could not consistently close our review of his life and ministry without adverting to his faults. But it is an invidious task to point out defects. There are spots in the sun, flaws in a diamond, and specks in a mirror; but the sun is still the glorious orb of day, the diamond is still the most brilliant of jewels, and the mirror of the astronomer's telescope still penetrates the depths of ether and brings to light the wonders of the heavens. So is Whitefield still the prince of preachers, and his defects are lost in the brightness of his character as a Christian and as a minister!

return to contents

John Grace

by J. C. Philpot

It is rather more than 10 years since we so far knew the late John Grace as to become personally and, indeed, we may say, intimately acquainted with him.

We were supplying at Eden Street Chapel, London, in the summer of 1854, when one morning he quite unexpectedly, and without any mutual friend's or other introduction, walked into our lodgings to make our personal acquaintance; for, though well known to each other by name, we had never met but once before, in the year 1838, and that only for so short a time as to afford no opportunity for anything beyond a little conversation. One very marked feature of his character was that he was "a lover of good men;" and believing, we suppose, that the unworthy writer of these lines was one of these "good men," he felt desirous to form his acquaintance. He therefore came and introduced himself. We at once fell into spiritual conversation, and a mutual union was, as we have reason to believe, found and felt, which not only subsisted without break, but, we may say, increased rather than diminished up to the time of his removal from this scene of sin and sorrow.

All who had the privilege of his friendship will long remember his open, cheerful, affectionate manner and address; his peaceable, tender spirit; and that where he had once formed a spiritual friendship, how firmly and uninterruptedly he maintained it by correspondence or conversation. He would often come out of his way on his journeys to the north, just to spend a few hours with us, and generally entered the room with such words as, "Let brotherly love continue." Divine things were uppermost with him in heart and tongue; and so at once we usually got, not into carnal, worldly conversation, or a long rigmarole of outside work, but into some sweet living and daily experience, into which we could see eye to eye and feel heart to heart. The life of God was much kept up in his soul, and therefore freely flowed out of his mouth. (John 7:38; Matt. 12:35.)

He was not resting upon dry doctrine, nor even a past experience which, for lack of continual renewings, had become stale and moldy. A daily life of faith in the Son of God, daily exercises from a body of sin and death, daily communications of grace and strength out of the fullness of a risen Mediator, and all kept up by a spirit of prayer and supplications was both his experience and his theme. A dead, carnal, lifeless profession was his abhorrence. Life in the soul, feeling in the heart, communion with the Lord—in a word, a daily, living, feeling, spiritual, and supernatural religion was what he knew for himself and what he looked for in others; and where he found not this, whatever were the pretensions, however correct the creed, plausible the tongue, or consistent the conduct, there, as he had no satisfaction, so he had no union or communion.

But with all this there was no cant, no sanctimonious long face, or drawling, whining phrases; no putting on of a kind of mock spirituality, whereby so many try to deceive themselves and others. We never knew a more spiritually-minded man, and yet nothing of this mock spirituality or feigned humility was visible in him. Spirituality, indeed, of mind and of conversation he had; but with all this delight in spiritual things, there was a most pleasing frankness and openness. He would ask about the wife and family, have a cheerful word for the little ones—now with us no longer little ones, the olive branches round the table, little and big, for he had not only a friendly but a fatherly heart. Thus he was a welcome guest wherever he went; for, without any worldliness or unbecoming lightness on the one hand, or pharisaic austerity on the other, he could so blend spiritual things in his conversation with passing occurrences that there was nothing repulsive in his discourse on heavenly things, even to those who could not experimentally enter into their meaning or their fullness.

But what made his conversation to be seasoned with salt was, that he had a good experience both of law and gospel; and sometimes at the breakfast or dinner table he would relate with much feeling some very marked and blessed things which he had tested, felt, and handled in his own soul. The last time that he was with us at our present abode he gave us, after dinner, an account of the sweet deliverance which he received under Mr. Vinall when he rode so many miles to hear him on a week evening, and the deep exercises of his soul previously, with the fears and faintings of his deferred hope. In a similar way he would often refer to his early days, when he sat under Mr. Vinall's ministry, and whom he loved and valued as his spiritual father, though by no means insensible to his peculiar infirmities.

The present low state of vital godliness in the churches, the lack of dew, unction, and power in the ministry, compared with the days of Mr. Huntington and his immediate followers, as Mr. Vinall, &c., the carnality of professors generally, and the levity both in conversation and conduct which so stamps the generation in which our days are cast, were things which he deeply lamented and deplored. His own soul being kept alive and fruitful, he saw all the more clearly and felt the more deeply the lack of life and fruitfulness in others. And yet with all this, he was not censorious or bitter. We never knew him guilty of that common yet detestable practice of picking holes in other men's or ministers' coats, and, under a show of a wonderful concern for holiness of speech and life, slandering and backbiting friends; nor did we ever find him spurring and flogging old nature, as if the creature, by a little extra exertion, could be made to perform spiritual acts. He did not thus belie either

his knowledge or his profession. By grace alone he knew he was what he was; and without this grace in others he equally well knew that as there could be no beginning, so there could be no advance in the divine life.

But besides these there were other noticeable features also in his Christian character which much commended both his profession and his ministry to those who knew and loved the grace of God in him. Among them was his great amiability of disposition and readiness to do good. He had naturally an active and, indeed, we may say a business mind; and as this was united to much natural amiability of disposition, and was guided and directed by the love and spirit of the gospel, he was always ready for every good word and work. He was favored also with a large congregation and a liberal people to help him forward; and, thus aided and seconded, he was always ready to do good in relieving the poor and needy, and taking up any destitute case which was commended to his conscience. In this way, by the liberality of his congregation during the Lancashire distress, he was able to afford timely help to many places in the North, and took a journey there to see for himself the real state of things, and to have the pleasure of personally distributing it. Coupled with this amiable and affectionate disposition, we must add that he was possessed of a very liberal spirit, hating everything stingy and selfish, and was ever ready to show kindness and liberality to his friends even when not needed by them.

Dropping the editorial "we," I cannot help mentioning that when he came to see me on his journeys northward, he would generally bring with him a basket of fish caught that morning, or some book which he thought I might like to possess. These things may seem trifles; but trifles, as they are called, often show men's real spirit more than larger matters; for the former are the free, spontaneous flowings forth of the disposition, while the latter are often forced upon men by circumstances. But, besides these presents, thinking that I needed some better table than I possessed for my letters and papers, he named it among his friends, and, to my surprise, on reaching home one day two or three years ago, I found in my room a very handsome library table, sent free to my door, accompanied by a kind letter, that it was given to me by himself and friends as a testimony to my long labors in the cause of truth. I love to mention these things as a little memento of my esteem and affection for him.

Of his ministry we do not feel in the same position to speak as freely and clearly as we have spoken of his personal character, from this simple circumstance, that we never, to our recollection, heard him preach above

three or four times. But, as far as we could thus judge, he seemed possessed of considerable gifts, and to have not only a good knowledge of the word, but a great readiness in bringing forward passages and especially scriptural characters and personages in connection with his subject. This aptness of bringing forward scriptural proofs and illustrations not only gave a liveliness to his preaching and a force to his words, but much made up for his lack of order; for it must be confessed that he did not usually carry into his discourses that orderly arrangement which so distinguished him in other things. He had also a nice and forcible way of quoting hymns, and especially those of his prime favorite, Hart, which backed his words with sweetness as well as authority.

But what made his ministry so useful and acceptable was the living spring of experience by which it was fed. Gifts, the greatest and most splendid, soon dry up, or bore and wear—unless they are continually fed by grace. But he had the living water, of which the Lord spoke, springing up into everlasting life. (John 4:14.) He was also at a point about his religion and experience, that it was from God. He knew his standing, and could, therefore, speak with decision and power. He dwelt a good deal when we heard him, as we believe was usually the case, on his own experience, which, being unmistakably the work of God, gave point and edge to his words. Thus, without being so separating as some are in word, he was more separating in deed; for nothing in our judgment is so separating as a good and sound experience, as it appeals so directly to the conscience; and, if there be any feeling, is so calculated to raise up the personal inquiry, "What do I know of these things?"

The Lord, as we have every reason to believe, much honored his ministry. Again and again by letter, for we frequently corresponded, or in conversation, when we met, would he relate most marked instances of the blessing of God on his ministry. At Brighton he had many hearers from London, and indeed all parts of the kingdom, who had come there for health and change of air. Thus he could cast a wider net than most of his ministerial brethren, and many good fish were caught in it who had before swum carelessly in the sea.

Many people of rank and wealth as is well known, resort during the season to Brighton. These have, of course, a retinue of servants. To many of these servants Mr. Grace's ministry was singularly owned and blessed. We have often thought of the sovereign grace of God in this. The master or the mistress is passed by. They must go to 'church'; the servant creeps into the 'chapel', where grace lays hold of his heart.

His was not a long, though in its first attack a somewhat sudden and unexpected illness, and he was mercifully dealt with, and most friendly and graciously supported in and under it. He had not what people call his peace to make, or a God to find on his deathbed. His loins were already girt and his light burning; and, reclining on the everlasting arms laid beneath him, he gently passed away into the presence of the Lord whom he so dearly loved and had so long and faithfully served.

return to contents

William Huntington

by J. C. Philpot

Thomas Hardy, in one of his excellent letters, makes the following remark, "The best Christians I meet with are generally Huntingtonians." This witness is true. There is, or as we must now say there was, for so few of them are left, a depth and clearness of experience, a savor and a sweetness, a rich, tender, feeling, unctuous utterance, a discrimination between law and gospel, letter and spirit, form and power, a separation from a lifeless profession, whether presumptuous or pharisaical, which distinguished them, in a most marked and decisive manner, as a peculiar and separate people. They had their failings and infirmities, as their justly admired and esteemed pastor and teacher had before them; and there were those, doubtless, in their ranks who had caught his faults without catching his grace, who were followers of his doctrine, but not followers of his Lord. Seeing all delusion but their own, taking hold of their teacher's skirt, as if he could thereby pull them into heaven, idolizing and extolling him, as if thereby a part of his grace were reflected upon themselves, and clinging to him as a servant of God, as if that were the sum and substance of Christian experience; if there were such among his hearers, it was only what he himself declared and denounced, and is but another proof of the desperate wickedness and deceitfulness of the heart of man.

His eminent gifts and grace, his great abilities as a preacher and writer, his separating, discriminating ministry, and the power of God so evidently resting upon him, not only gathered together a large congregation, but wherever there was a saint of God of any deep experience of the law in other

congregations seeking rest and finding none under a letter ministry, he as it were instinctively crept in to hear the man who could and did describe the feelings of his heart. And when from the same lips the gospel was preached, with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven, and pardon and peace reached his conscience, the wanderer settled under his ministry, as fraught with a divine blessing, and loved and revered him as the mouth of God to his soul. When he went into different parts of the country it was still the same. In Kent and Sussex, in the Isle of Ely, in Lincolnshire at Grantham, in Nottinghamshire at Newark and Nottingham, wherever he went, his Master went with him, and accompanied the word with signs following. His ministry was especially blessed to the gathering together of the outcasts of Israel, those peculiar characters whom Hart so well describes:

"The poor dependents on his grace,
Whom men disturbers call;
By sinners and by saints withstood,
For these too bad, for those too good,
Condemned or shunned by all."

Like Simon Peter, he was made a fisher of men. He could throw the hook into deep waters, where his brethren of the rod and line knew not where or how to angle. His own deep experience of the law, of diverse temptations, of soul distress, of spiritual jealousy, of the hidings of God's face, enabled him to drop his line into the dark waters and gloomy sunken holes, where some spiritual fish hide and bury themselves out of sight and light; and his clear and blessed deliverance qualified him to angle also for those which leap and bask in the bright beams of the noon-day sun.

By his writings, occasional visits, and constant correspondence, he kept up the tie which knit him to his country friends. His liberal hospitality opened his house to them when they came to London, where he fed body and soul, entertaining them with his lively, witty, cheerful, yet spiritual conversation, reading at a glance their foibles and failings, and entering into their varied experience of sorrow and joy, with all the freedom and familiarity of an intimate friend, and all the authority of a revered and beloved teacher.

Though not ourselves Huntingtonians, in the usual sense of the word, yet, as lovers of good men, as admirers of the grace of God wherever seen, and as pressing forward to the experience and enjoyment of the same power of godliness, we venerate with the greatest esteem and affection the memory of

Mr. Huntington and his immediate friends and followers.

It is impossible, we believe, for any person who knows anything of the power of vital godliness in his own soul to read half a dozen pages of Mr. Huntington's writings without feeling that there is a peculiar stamp upon them which none of his friends and followers, as they themselves would willingly and readily admit, have ever been able to reach. It is not merely the great and striking grasp of thought, the singular boldness and originality of expression, the wonderful aptness of scripture quotation, the firmness and decision of mind, the vigor and clearness of style, the lively wit and playful humor, the sparkling figures and pregnant comparisons, all which must ever characterize them as literary performances of a very high order to those who understand what mental ability and powerful writing are; but it is not, we repeat, these mere literary excellences (though even these have an unperceived weight and influence on the minds of many who from lack of education or mental cultivation can hardly appreciate them) that stamp Mr. Huntington's writings with such undying worth and value. It is the force of truth, the weight of deep and undeniable experience, the close and strict accordance with the testimony of God himself in the inspired word, and the life and power in them which so search the conscience and reach the inmost heart that make them acceptable to the family of God, and will always render them a priceless treasure to the Church of Christ.

The ministry of the preached word is such an express ordinance of God that he himself accompanies it with a peculiar blessing. No writings, therefore, of a servant of God, nor even his published sermons, however faithfully or accurately reported, can come up to what he is in the pulpit when his Master is with him. The sweetness and savor that fall with his words, the entrance they find into the conscience, the demonstration of the Spirit and of power that attend them to the heart, the blessing that they communicate as speaking peace, pardon, and salvation with the very voice of God himself, the softening influence that they spread to melt and dissolve the soul into humility, contrition, and love—these, and similar effects, cannot be reproduced by our holding in our hands the exact words which, as they fell from the lips of God's servant, were attended with these blessings.

At this distance of time, therefore, though we have Mr. Huntington's works, we have not Mr. Huntington. We have the sermons, but we have not the minister; we have the words, but we have not, at least not in the same measure, the power which accompanied them. It was himself, whom they saw

and heard—the reality, the substance; we have but the shadow. When he stood up before them, he so spoke what he personally and experimentally knew, what he had tasted, felt, and handled of the word of life, what he had received by divine revelation from the Lord of life and glory, that his words fell with a weight and power upon their consciences which we who read his writings can hardly now realize; for his speech and his preaching were not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; and thus the faith of his believing hearers stood not in the wisdom of man but in the power of God. From this power resting on his ministry Mr. Huntington gradually gathered round him not only a large body of hearers who warmly loved and deeply revered him for his work's sake, but a circle of attached friends who vied with one another in showing him sincere respect and affection.

The 'letter ministers' whom he exposed sometimes with such keen, caustic humor, and sometimes with such sharpness and severity, and the 'empty professors' whom he sent away stripped naked and bare of all their professed religion, naturally enough, in their spite and vexation, reviled and slandered him. He took away their gods, and what had they more? This was an unpardonable offence, and his unsparing mode of doing it made it worse. But their very outcry against him only made his real friends cleave more closely to him, as seeing in the very scorn and contempt manifested by them only the stronger proof that he was walking in the footsteps of his despised Lord, and that it was enough for the disciple to be as his Master.

Among the many striking features which distinguished the life and labors of Mr. Huntington, this was not the least conspicuous, that by the graces and gifts which the Lord bestowed so abundantly upon him he attached to himself so large a number of personal friends, some of whom became eminent ministers of the gospel. As a proof of this assertion we need only mention the names of Jenkins, Brook, Lock, Beeman, Chamberlain, Turner, Parsons, and, though last, not least, the late Mr. Vinall. The names of others may occur to our readers which have for the moment escaped our memory, or are unknown to us, but we have mentioned, we believe, the most conspicuous. Mr. Huntington, it is true, shone among them and above them all as the moon among the planets, or as David amid his mighty men of valor. In grace, in gifts, in experience, in light, life, and power, in originality and variety, in the knowledge and ready use of Scripture, in acquaintance with the human heart, in wielding the weapons of warfare on the right hand and on the left to defend truth and beat down error, none of his friends and followers approached him,

if we may use the expression, within speaking distance. There was, therefore, no rivalry between them.

Before they were drawn within his circle, the Lord had set him on high as a burning and a shining light. They had, therefore, nothing to give, or teach him, though he had much to give and teach them. Thus naturally, necessarily, he took his position, and they theirs; and his friends no more thought of rivaling him than the friends of a prince strive to be greater than he. This was not on their part servility, or on his undue assumption. The bond which knit them together was a spiritual, not a natural tie. A poor despised coalheaver as he had been, though now, by the providence and grace of God, raised up to an eminent position in the church of Christ, had no places of honor or of emolument at his disposal. If he were in their eyes the King's prime minister, he had no preferment to bestow but that of hatred from the world and scorn from the professing church.

Those, therefore, who boldly stood forth as his followers and friends had to bear their share of ridicule and shame. Competition being precluded, there was little room for envy and jealousy, for these exist chiefly among equals. Mr. Huntington was raised above rivalry, for none so fully admitted his superiority as his immediate friends. He fully repaid their respect and kindness. He gave them wise counsel in their difficulties, sympathized with them in their troubles, and was always ready to help them with his purse in their necessities. We are not setting up Mr. Huntington, for, like other great men, he had great infirmities; but merely describing what is plain to all who have read his correspondence with his friends, or have ever heard them speak of him since his decease.

To have known him, to have had the privilege of his friendship, was to the latest period of their lives regarded by them as one of their choice mercies. As flesh mixes with everything, we do not deny that on his side there might have been the gratification of pride in being so looked up to and almost revered, and on theirs the pleasure of being received by him as saints and servants of God. We think that we have seen traces of both these feelings in their communion; and as unchecked authority is apt to degenerate into tyranny, and unresisting obedience into submissiveness, so in some cases Mr. Huntington might have condemned too severely, and his friends acquiesced in his authority too implicitly.

Let us also bear in mind that, like other great men, Mr. Huntington had his

flatterers who often spread their net for his feet, and many admirers who walked in the light of his knowledge and gifts without any share of his grace. It could not be expected, therefore, that he would never be entangled by fair speeches, or always see through the mask of profession. But with all these deductions, which a sense of duty compels us to make, we must still bear in mind that, amid the storm of ridicule and contempt which assailed him from every quarter, it must have been a solace to Mr. Huntington that he had for his personal friends some of the excellent of the earth, and for them that they had the fullest persuasion in their own consciences that he was an eminently favored servant of God.

Few men have had to encounter such a storm of contempt, slander, enmity, and opposition as that eminent servant of God. The only doubt among those who despised and hated him was whether he were a fanatic or an impostor; and some very quietly and curtly settled the doubt to their own full satisfaction by pronouncing him both.

Reproach and calumny which were heaped upon him from all quarters, reaching him even after his death, and spread all over the world. But in his case there was this peculiar feature, that his greatest opponents and most violent calumniators were the preachers and professors of his day. There were, no doubt, peculiar reasons which drew forth an enmity against him and a storm of contempt and scorn by which few have been assailed as he was.

His views of the Law, at that time novel, his bold declaration that it was not a rule of life to believers, his strong and stern denunciation of the legal preachers of his day, the keen way in which he ripped up their arguments in his controversial writings, and the uncompromising language in which he laid bare their erroneous views, unmasking at the same time their profession and showing how ignorant they were not only of the truth of God but of any saving light in their own souls, provoked their wrath, and goaded them almost to madness. Knowing nothing for themselves of the sweet liberty of the Gospel, of a revelation of Christ, of a living faith in his Person and work, or of any union or communion with him, and resting all their hopes, if not professedly, yet really on a broken Law, or at the utmost on the bare letter of the word, they were naturally stung to the quick to see all their religion brushed away by him as a spider's web. He took away their gods, and what had they more? He broke up their idol, and with it fell both their countenance and their hope.

What course was then left to them? If they wrote against him, he was as a

controversialist so unrivaled in his knowledge of Scripture and the use of it, so acute to discern the whole state of the argument, so keen in his dissection of their legal views, so fearless in his attack, and so thoroughly persuaded that God was with him and would stand by him, that none of his opponents could stand before him. We are free to admit that he did sometimes mingle his own spirit in his controversial writings with that Spirit of grace and truth by which he was undoubtedly led; but he himself, who knew best his own spirit, would not allow this, and we shall, therefore, leave the point.

He tells us that "God gave him so uncommon a spirit of meekness, at his first setting off to preach that he found himself rather too tender to declare the whole counsel of God." "I was more fit," he says, "for the character of a nurse than for that of a soldier. But when these Arians came to tear up the very foundation of my hope, that spirit of meekness gave way to a fiery zeal. When I came in private before God, my soul was overwhelmed with contrition; but when I got into my pulpit, I was clad with zeal as with a cloak."

As, then, his opponents could not overthrow his testimony on grounds of Scripture and truth, and as they had nothing to say against his life and conduct, for that was most circumspect and exemplary, they turned all the current of their reproach against his views upon the Law, as if by them he had removed the very foundations of morality. Not knowing in and for themselves the constraining love of Christ, the sweet and sacred influences of the Holy Spirit, the springing up of godly fear as a fountain of life, or anything of that sacred power whereby the child of God is led into all holy obedience to God's will and word, and kept from evil that it may not grieve him, they set up an image as a mark for their arrows, which was nothing but the imagination of their own mind. Every 'young theological sprig'—as he speaks, had a word against 'the Antinomian'—against his horrid doctrine, his dreadful views, his licentious sentiments, and what a wide door his preaching and writing opened for all ungodliness.

It was impossible to convince these men of their mistake. They were honest, many of them, as far as they went, but in leveling their arrows against his doctrines it was not so much the doctrines themselves as the consequences which they in their ignorance drew from them that they attacked. They did not see that the Law for which they so zealously contended was a ministration unto death and not unto life, of condemnation not unto justification, of bondage not unto liberty, and that its fruits and effects were not to produce

obedience unto holiness, but to provoke and irritate the carnal mind and thus stir up and put power into sin, so as to deceive and slay the soul under it. Now, Mr. Huntington, on the contrary, held that the Gospel, in its truths, promises, and precepts, was the rule of life in the hands of the Spirit; and that from it—and not from the Law—flowed not only pardon and peace but holiness in heart, in lip, in life.

We are great admirers of Mr. Huntington's writings. From his works and those of Dr. Owen we have derived more instruction, edification, encouragement, consolation, and we may add conviction, counsel, reproof, and rebuke, than from any other source, except the word of God; and indeed it is because the writings of these two eminent men are so in harmony with the Scriptures, so breathe the same spirit, and are so impregnated with the same heavenly wisdom, that they are so profitable to those who know and love the truth. The Spirit of God speaks in and through them, because what they wrote they wrote under his special influences, and out of the treasure of a good heart brought forth those good things which make them so weighty and so valuable.

Mr. Huntington's greatest work is probably his "Contemplations on the God of Israel;" but for our own private reading we prefer his "Posthumous Letters" to any of his other writings. In them we see the man just as he was in his private moments before God; in them he pours forth to his various correspondents the treasures of wisdom and grace with which he was so largely endowed and blessed. There we see him not as a warm controversialist, nor a keen disputant provoked and irritated, as he sometimes unduly was, by the slanders of his enemies, or the errors of the day, against which he contended with such earnest zeal; but we see in them the breathings of a tender, kind, and affectionate spirit, mingled with such openings of the Scripture and the various branches of living experience as made them full of instruction and edification. As a letter writer he strikes us as unrivaled. Even apart from the subject of his letters, the ease, flexibility, originality, strength, and variety of his language is something marvelous. You never find in them anything dry, dull, and prosy; you are never wearied with long, obscure phrases and periods from which it is hard to extract sense or meaning; but his language flows from his pen with all the freshness and clearness of a summer brook, so transparent that you can see at once to the bottom, and as free from mud and mire as when it first gushed out of the hillside.

As his correspondents were very numerous, and as they were in different stages of the divine life, his Letters, taken as a whole, touch upon and unfold

every branch of living experience, from its first movements in conviction to its fullest joys in deliverance and consolation. Some of his correspondents were very young, both in age and experience. Some, like Mr. Charles Martin, for instance, had only just begun to set their faces Zionward; some had been long and deeply exercised with trials and afflictions; some were contending with sharp and powerful temptations; and some, like himself, after having been much favored and blessed, were engaged in a perpetual conflict with a body of sin and death, had to labor under the weight of a daily cross, and to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

Now, as he had traveled all these paths, and knew for himself more deeply than they did the various exercises, desires, sensations, feelings, sorrows, and joys of a believing heart, and was favored with a most wonderful gift in unfolding from the Scriptures and his own experience every feature of the divine life, he could suit his letters so as to meet the case and state of every correspondent. There is, therefore, we believe, scarcely a feeling, a sensation, or a movement of divine life in the heart which he has not touched upon or described as no other but he could do, and this with a life and power, a clearness, decision, certainty, and authority which carry with them an indescribable influence that seems to penetrate into the inmost soul. We read them again and again, and ever find something in them to instruct and edify the soul, strengthen faith, confirm hope, or draw forth love. He seems to have been singularly fond of writing to his friends, and would sometimes spend nearly a whole day in his little cabin in this use of his pen. Where he felt union, it was strong. There were few, perhaps, comparatively speaking, who had crept into his heart; but if once there, they were there forever. Those who spoke of him as harsh, austere, and stern, only knew him as opposed to errors and evil doings. They knew nothing of the man as spending hours and days in prayer and meditation, on his bended knees, before his dear Lord and Master, with flowing eyes and a broken heart. They knew nothing of his confessions in secret, his earnest wrestlings, or of the sweet union and communion with which, in answer to them, he was blessed and favored.

But if he were despised and hated by his enemies, who in truth were the enemies of God, he was proportionately loved and esteemed by his hearers and friends. Indeed, the feeling entertained toward him by many of his hearers was almost idolatry. We remember hearing a good woman say, to whom he had been much blessed, that when she looked at his house, she almost worshiped the smoke that came from the chimney of his study. This she confessed was but idolatry, yet it showed the strength of her feeling. And,

indeed, there was much in the man, independent of the grace that rested upon him and his wonderful gifts in the ministry, to make him the center and object of the greatest esteem and affection. He was gifted with a noble, liberal mind, abhorring covetousness, and giving away his money with a most profuse liberality. Though born and bred in so low a state, yet he was one of nature's gentlemen; and we have heard from those who intimately knew him that there was a dignity in his person, manners, and appearance which commanded respect.

He was also naturally of a warm, affectionate spirit, and in his conversation there was a playfulness, though no levity, and a humour without jesting, which made his company very pleasant. That he was most hospitable in his own house, we can see from his letters, in the invitations which he gives to his friends to come and make themselves at home with him; and when he saw and felt the grace of God in them, and he would have no other company or other companions, he would converse upon the things of God with such wisdom, tenderness, contrition, knowledge of the Scriptures, and so open up every point from his own experience, that it was most blessed to hear him converse. Not but that he had his angry, peevish fits; not but that his natural temper was not one of the sweetest and most equable; but at these seasons he kept much to himself, and fought the battle alone with his own spirit, with many prayers and tears before God.

We have had the pleasure and privilege of knowing at various times some of his friends and hearers, and what we have thus written about him has not been at a mere uncertainty, but been gathered both from what we have read in his writings and from what we have heard from those who knew him. And we are free to confess that we have generally found in his hearers and friends a savor, a life, a feeling after, where not full enjoyment of those divine realities, in which the power of vital godliness so much consists, that we have not found in others.

return to contents

Augustus Toplady

By J. C. Philpot

The God of all grace raised up, equipped, and sent forth many eminent

ambassadors of the Gospel, in the middle of the last century, whose names are still embalmed in the hearts of his living family; for among the innumerable glories and excellencies of heavenly grace, this is not the least of its beauty and blessedness, that wherever vitally manifested, it lives and flourishes in death, through death, and beyond death. Like, indeed, its divine Author and sovereign Giver, its beauty and glory are hidden from the eyes of a profane and professing generation, that can no more love and admire grace than Herod and Pontius Pilate or the Scribes and Pharisees loved and admired Jesus Christ; but as in the days of his flesh, there were those favored ones who "beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," so are there those now who still behold his glory, as made known to their souls in the grace of the gospel. All that savors of his power and presence, of his Spirit and love, is dear and estimable in their eyes. They love his servants, because, as anointed by his Spirit, they testify of Him; and they love what is uttered by their lips, or is traced by their pen, because, through their word and witness, heavenly blessings are communicated to their souls.

Nor does death break the bond of union which makes them and the church one in love. Their writings live when the hand that penned them is moldered to dust; the power and savor that rested upon them in life still anoints the records of their experience; and the same Jesus at the right hand of the Father now bears testimony to them, as they once bore testimony to him. Their persecutors have perished from the earth; their very names are forgotten, or, if remembered, are only so by virtue of their connection with the men whom they hated, as Alexander, the coppersmith, is preserved from oblivion by his persecution of Paul. So true is it, that "the name of the wicked shall rot," but "the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance." And why? But because as the Lord said to his disciples, "It is not those who speak, but the Spirit of their Father which speaks in them;" and what he speaks is like him of whom he testifies, "the same yesterday, today, and forever." As, then, righteous Abel, by that faith of which he was made a partaker, "being dead yet speaks," so out of their tombs, or rather from their heavenly mansions, up to which faith follows them, do many departed servants of God still speak by their writings, or by such fragments of their living experience as are left on record. And in some sense they are more honored and esteemed now than when they lived and walked upon earth.

A great writer has said, "The evil that men do lives after them; the good is often interred with their bones." This witness is true as regards the children of men, whose evil is so great and good so little; but is not true as regards the

servants of God. Their frailties and infirmities, however treasured up by a sneering world, are forgotten by the Church of God, and what they were by the grace of God is alone remembered. All in them that was mortal sank into the same grave with their tabernacles of clay, and what was immortal still survives untainted by death or corruption. So far as they were impregnated with life from the Fountain of Life, their words still live, and the same grace that breathed and spoke in them when their lips moved on earth, still speaks in their writings now that their souls have passed into glory.

But while we love the men, we do not idolize their names or canonize their writings. They are not Jesus, nor are their books the Bible. We love them because they loved Jesus, and we love their writings because they testify of him to us. What he made them they only then were, and what he makes them to us they only now are.

Among the eminent saints and servants of God, who lived in the last century, few have exercised a greater influence in the church of Christ than Toplady. He was raised up at a peculiar juncture, just when John Wesley was sowing his tares in the gospel field, and fighting with all the desperate enmity of his crafty mind against the sovereignty of God. Wesley was no common antagonist; and it needed a man of great natural powers of mind, acuteness, and force of intellect, undaunted fearlessness, readiness of pen, and above all, a deep experimental acquaintance with the truth, to meet and overthrow him in the field of conflict.

John Wesley had on his side nearly everything that could set off and recommend his flesh-pleasing doctrines. He had naturally great clearness of mind and precision of thought, and a very simple, lucid style of preaching and writing. These were backed by amazing zeal and earnestness, most unwearied labors, great self-denial, a look and manner almost apostolic, a large amount of outward holiness, and a singular power of influencing and governing the minds of men. In his preaching and writing there was so much scripture, torn and riven from its connection and plausibly introduced, as to gild over his errors; and, as he dwelt much upon the terrors of the law, and, to use the expression of his followers, "shook his hearers over hell," he alarmed the conscience of many with legal convictions, which he set himself to heal by preaching up fleshly holiness and perfection in the flesh. Against the sovereignty of grace, the glorious truths of personal election, particular redemption, imputed righteousness, a finished work, and the certain perseverance of the saints of Christ, he fought with all the subtlety, ingenuity,

and violence that could be displayed by the most daring rebel against God and godliness for more than sixty years, getting worse the older he grew. As the acknowledged leader of multitudes, he, by oceans of sermons, books, and tracts, filled hundreds and thousands of his followers with as much enmity as himself against the blessed plan of salvation by grace; and, determined to make a compact with error, and shore it up with all the beams and buttresses of human policy, he spared no labor, and shrank from no exertion to accomplish his end.

But just in the height of his war against the truths of the gospel, a champion stepped forth from the ranks of the despised Calvinists, who met him at the sword's point, beat his weapons out of his hand, and laid his pride and self-righteousness in the dust. This champion was the immortal Toplady.

A short sketch of this eminent saint and servant of God may, perhaps, be suitable. He was born at Farnham, Surrey, on the 4th of November, 1740, his father, who was a major in the army, dying at the siege of Carthagena, soon after the birth of his son. He was partly educated at Westminster school, that celebrated seminary where so many great men, and among them, neither least nor last, the poet Cowper, have received that training which fitted them to occupy the most eminent positions in the State. But he was removed thence at an early period of his age by the circumstance of his widowed mother going to Ireland to obtain a family estate, so that he continued and finished his education at Trinity College, Dublin. It was there chiefly that, by dint of hard and unwearied study, he obtained that proficiency in the learned languages, and that great knowledge of divinity and church history which appear so conspicuous in his controversial writings. He certainly was possessed of very shining abilities, of great penetration and acuteness of mind, of a peculiar fluency of language, and at times of great elevation and even eloquence of expression. To these great natural abilities was added an unwearied perseverance, which made him study night and day.

All this he might have had independent of and distinct from divine grace, and have lived and died an enemy to God and godliness. But the Lord had designed him for great and eminent services in his vineyard, and therefore, in his own time and way, called him by his grace. We do not know the exact means the Lord employed to awaken him from his sleep of death, but his mother was a gracious woman, and he sat under the sound of the gospel before he went to Ireland. He has himself told us that "he was awakened in August, 1756," but we know not how deeply he suffered under the

condemnation of a broken law and the guilty alarms of a conscience made tender in the fear of God. The time and manner of his deliverance is much better known, and was very marked and conspicuous. About a year after his first awakening, when but sixteen years of age, he one evening went into a barn at a place called Codymain, in Ireland, where a man named Morris was preaching to a handful of people. There the Lord blessed and delivered his soul from the bondage and curse of the law, and brought him near unto himself by the blood of sprinkling. He thus speaks in his diary of that memorable evening:

Feb. 29th, 1768.—At night, after my return from Exeter, my desires were strongly drawn up to God. I could indeed say that I groaned with groans of love, joy, and peace; but it was even with comfortable groans which cannot be uttered. That sweet text, Eph. 2:3: "You who were once afar off, are made near by the blood of Christ," was particularly delightful and refreshing to my soul; and the more so as it reminded me of the days and months that are past, even the days of my sensible espousals to the bridegroom of the elect. It was from that passage that Mr. Morris preached on the memorable evening of my effectual call by the grace of God. Under the ministry of that dear messenger, and by that sermon, I was, I trust, brought near by the blood of Christ, in August, 1756.

But though thus sensibly brought near by the blood of the Lamb, much darkness rested on his mind respecting those heavenly truths, which are usually called the doctrines of grace. For about two years was he searching and inquiring into the truth, until the reading of Dr. Manton's sermons on John 17 was blessed to his soul to lead him into, and establish him upon the grand discriminating truths of sovereign grace. About four years after this establishment of his soul in the truth of God, and six years from the time of his deliverance in the barn, he was ordained a minister of the Church of England.

Though unable ourselves to continue in that system, we are not so bigoted as to deny that the Lord has had dear saints and eminent servants of his, who lived and died in communion with it. Romaine, Berridge, Toplady, and Hawker, where can we find four men or ministers more blessed of God in their own souls, or in their ministry to others? In the Church of England they were born and brought up; in it they preached and labored, and God owned and blessed their labors; and in it they died in peace and joy, and the full assurance of faith.

The objections, the well-grounded objections which have compelled so many good men to leave her walls, were not laid upon their consciences. The providence of God seemed to favor their continuance where they were; and as the Lord overruled this circumstance to the effectual calling and blessing of many under their ministry, what can we say? Who that fears God and loves his truth would have lifted up his finger to prevent Romaine preaching at St. Dunstan's, Fleet Street, or St. Anne's, Blackfriars, to crowds of listening hearers? Who would not be glad were there such a preacher in London now, whether he preached in Westminster Abbey or St. Pancras Church? Who that loves the truth would wish to nail the pulpit door against Dr. Hawker, as he walked up the aisle of Charles Church, Plymouth? Had these great and good men felt as Mr. Brook and Mr. Birch felt, they would have acted as Mr. Brook and Mr. Birch acted, and cast gown and cassock, prayer-book and surplice to the moles and the bats.

But the errors and corruptions of the Church of England which have forced so many good men out of her pale, were not laid with weight and power on their conscience. They saw that she held truth, blessed truth, for the most part in her articles, and there being an open door in her communion to preach the gospel without hindrance, and being much blessed in their own souls, and in the ministry, they continued to preach peace by Jesus Christ without being disturbed in their consciences by what has been an intolerable burden to other men of perhaps less grace than themselves, but more exercised on these particular grounds.

But evil always produces evil, and the consequence of these good men remaining in and sanctioning by their example a corrupt system, has been to embolden others who have neither their grace nor their gifts to stand out against all convictions themselves and to condemn those who desire to act in the fear of God in this important matter.

Toplady evidently was greatly blessed in his own soul both in private and in public, when a minister at Fen Ottery, and Harpford, Somerset, and afterwards at Broad Hembury, Devon. No one who knows and loves the truth can read his diary, never meant to be perused by mortal eye, without seeing how, at times, his soul was blessed and favored.

return to contents

John Berridge

by J. C. Philpot

The middle and latter end of the last century was a remarkable period. A chain of ministers, commencing with Whitefield, and embracing in its links Toplady, Berridge, Newton, Romaine, Huntington, and Hawker, extends itself down to our degenerate days. However differing in gifts, all these men were evidently taught by the same Spirit, and preached the same gospel. Toplady, like a lamp fed with spirit, flamed forth, blazed, and died, from shortness of wick, not from lack of supply. Newton, snatched from Africa's burning shore, and from worse than African servitude, united to much sound wisdom great tenderness of spirit, and an experience of divine things which, if not very deep, was sound and varied. He knew much of his own heart, was singularly frank and sincere, had much sympathy with the tried and afflicted, and, being gifted with an easy, fluent style, has left behind him many useful and excellent letters. Romaine was a burning and shining light, who lived the faith which he preached, and in the midst of the metropolis for half a century had but one theme, one subject, one object—Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever.

In many points widely differing, but united by the same faith to the same glorious Head of influence, light, life, liberty, and love, was John Berridge. As all the lines of a circle radiate towards the center, all necessarily meet in one point. So, however the servants of Christ may differ in ability, gifts, time, place, and usefulness, yet all meet in one point the central Sun of the system—the crucified, risen, ascended, and glorified Son of God. We hear of "the music of the spheres." But without harmony, music there is none. If there be music in the revolving spheres, it is because each planet preserves its circuit, rolling round the sun at the appointed distance, and with the appointed velocity. And what are the servants of God but planets to the Sun of Righteousness, each having his appointed orbit, fixed as definitely by decree, as the orbit of the earth, and enjoying only light, warmth, and motion in proportion to his proximity to the glorified Immanuel? Shall they then jar and quarrel, and seek to mingle orbits, envying each other's grace, gifts, or usefulness? The light of each and all is but reflected light, the light of the Sun of Righteousness shining into their hearts; "for what have they which they have not received?"

Pride, cursed pride, is the root of that jealousy which is cruel as the grave. Did

ministers but view themselves, and did others but view them, as mere instruments, they could and would no more quarrel on the ground of superiority and inferiority than the flute would quarrel with the violin, or the chisel with the saw. Romaine poring over Hebrew roots in his study at Lambeth, and Berridge preaching from a horse-block at Potton, mingling smiles and tears, and the quaintest humour with the deepest pathos, were as different in natural disposition and constitution as can well be imagined. But each sighed and groaned under a body of sin and death, each dearly loved, and each highly exalted the dying Friend of sinners, each was honored and blessed in his work, and each is now in the bosom of his Lord and God. Of Berridge we now propose a slight sketch.

John Berridge was the eldest son of a wealthy farmer and grazier, and was born at Kingston, Nottinghamshire, March 1st, 1716. His father's intention was to bring him up to his own business, but partly through some early religious impressions and partly through an innate love to study, the youthful farmer could never learn how to hold a plough or handle a bullock. He was sent therefore to the University of Cambridge, his father probably thinking that his first-born might have sufficient talent to read prayers and preach a sermon, if not to learn the mysteries of a four-shift course or sell a broken-mouthed ewe. To Cambridge, therefore, John went; and when his father was asked what had become of the youthful student, he is said to have jocularly replied that "he was gone to be a light to the Gentiles." At the University he studied hard, but lost much of his early religious impressions, so much so as to give up almost entirely secret prayer for ten years, and to have drunk deeply into Arian and Socinian views, which at that time were widely prevalent. These last sentiments, however, he abandoned, from seeing that they lowered God the Father, as well as God the Son, and were destructive of all vital religion.

The experience of Berridge is best seen in his hymns. In them his whole heart is open. They were written in the furnace of a long and trying illness, and the fruits of the furnace are seen in them.

1. What honesty and sincerity are stamped upon them! Berridge knew himself. The Holy Spirit had taken him into the chambers of imagery, and shown him "The creeping things portrayed upon the walls round about." The veil of self-righteousness and self-complacency had been taken from off his heart, and he had seen light in God's light. This made him honest. No disguise, he knew, could shroud him from the eyes of Omniscience. "You God see me"

was engraved on his heart. And to this we owe the transparency of his character, his freedom from deceit and hypocrisy.

2. Though a man of learning, his language was simplicity itself. Simplicity is always beautiful. God's works in nature, how beautifully simple! From a blade of grass to an oak; from a fly to an elephant; from the sand under our feet to the stars in the sky! Wherever the fingers of God are there is simplicity. And his word how simple! The parables of Jesus, the sermon on the mount, the farewell chapters with his disciples in the Gospel of John, what beauty! what simplicity shine throughout! True religion, real experience, vital godliness, wants no rouge upon its cheek. It shines forth with the luster of God, as the face of Moses when he came down from the mount of communion. It is falsehood and hypocrisy that want disguise. Truth needs no adventitious ornaments to set off its intrinsic beauty. To adorn it is to spoil it—to array the virgin in the garb of a harlot. This beautiful simplicity was a marked feature in the character of Berridge, and is stamped on all his writings. He could afford to be sincere, as he alone can in whom the fear and grace of God dwell.

3. We admire, too, in Berridge the emptiness and self-destitution which form such prominent features in his character. He knew what Pharisaism was from a long experience of it in his own heart; and he abhorred the resident.

4. With this feature of destitution, poverty, and soul-emptiness which characterize Berridge, we see combined its inseparable companion, self-abhorrence. How feelingly he says,
"Self-condemned and abhorred,
How shall I approach the Lord."

And again,
"I drop my vile heart in the dust."

5. But Berridge knew also the gospel of the grace of God. Here he preeminently shines. The gospel flowed purely into his soul, and thence pure out of his mouth, not turbid and tainted like a ditch with the rotting leaves that Adam would gladly have covered himself with, but bright and sparkling as the river of life. Christ was indeed his all in all.

6. One point more we would call attention to lest we dwell too long upon this part of our subject. We mean the sweet and indescribable savor that rests upon Berridge's Hymns. They are "seasoned with salt," and are thus

preserved from corruption. How many thousands of sermons, hymns, and tracts lave been written and published within this last century! And who reads them now? They lacked that which God commanded never to be lacking from the meat offering, (Lev. 2:13) "salt." Their sacrifice was not seasoned with salt, (Mark 9:46; Col. 4:6,) and therefore lacked both savor and preservation. Not so with Berridge. His hymns are seasoned with salt; have therefore savor and flavor; have been preserved to our time, and will go down to all generations.

return to contents

John Gill

By J. C. Philpot

For a sound, consistent, scriptural exposition of the word of God, no commentary, we believe, in any language can be compared with Dr. Gill's. There may be commentaries on individual books of Scripture, which may surpass Dr. Gill's in depth of research and fullness of exposition: and the great work from which Poole compiled his Synopsis may be more suitable to scholars and divines, as bringing together into one focus all the learning of those eminent men who in the 16th century devoted days and nights to the study and interpretation of the word of God. But for English readers there is no commentary equal to Dr. Gill's. His alone of all we have seen is based upon consistent, harmonious views of divine truth, without turning aside to the right hand or the left. It is said of the late Mr. Simeon, of Cambridge, that his plan of preaching was, if he had what is called an Arminian text, to preach from it Arminianism, and if he took a Calvinistic text, to preach from it Calvinism. Not so Dr. Gill. He knew nothing about Arminian texts, or Arminian interpretations. He believed that the Scripture, as an inspired revelation from God, must be harmonious and consistent with itself, and that no two passages could so contradict each other as the doctrines of free will contradict the doctrines of grace. The exhortation of the apostle is, "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith." (Rom. 12:6.) This apostolic rule was closely followed by Dr. Gill. "The proportion," or as the word literally means, "analogy of faith," was his rule and guide in interpreting the Scripture; and, therefore, as all his explanations were modeled according to the beautiful proportions of divine truth as received by

faith, so every view disproportionate to the same harmonious plan was rejected by him as God-dishonoring, inconsistent, and contradictory. It is this sound, consistent, harmonious interpretation of divine truth which has stamped a peculiar weight and value on Dr. Gill's Commentary, such as no other exposition of the whole Scripture possesses.

But besides this indispensable qualification, it has other excellent qualities.

1. An interpreter of the word of God should have a deep and well-grounded *knowledge* of the languages in which the Scriptures were originally written. This Dr. Gill undoubtedly possessed. His knowledge of Hebrew, in particular, was deep and accurate, and his acquaintance with the Rabbinical writers, that is, the Jewish expositors of the Old Testament, was nearly unparalleled. Indeed, he has almost overlaid his Commentary too much with his vast and almost cumbrous Rabbinical learning, and seems to have given it more place and attached to it more value than it really deserves.

2. Another striking and admirable feature of this Commentary is, *the condensation of thought and expression* throughout. Dr. Gill possessed a rare and valuable gift,—that of *packing.* He will sometimes give four or five explanations of a difficult passage; but his words are so few and well chosen, and the meaning so condensed, that he will pack in three or four lines what most writers would swell to half a page, and then not be half so full, clear, or determinate. His Commentary has thus become full of ideas and germs of thought, which, by-the-bye, has made it such a storehouse for parsonic thieves; for the Doctor has in half a dozen lines furnished many a sermon with all the ideas it ever had worth a straw, and has given the two or three grains of gold which, under the pulpit hammer, have been beaten out to last an hour.

3. Another striking feature, in our judgment, of this admirable Commentary is the *sound sense and great fairness of interpretation* which pervade it. Dr. Gill possessed that priceless gift, a sound, sober mind. His judgment in divine things was not only clear and decisive, but eminently characterized by solidity and sobriety. This preserved him from all wild enthusiastic flights of imagination, as well as from that strong temptation of experimental writers and preachers,—fanciful interpretation. He never runs a figure out of breath, nor hunts a type to death; nor does he find deep mysteries in "nine and twenty knives," or Satan bestriding the old man of sin in Balaam and his donkey.

4. The *fullness* of the Commentary is another noticeable feature in Dr. Gill's

Exposition. Most commentators skip over all the difficult passages. They bring you very nicely and comfortably over all the smooth ground; but just as you come to the marsh and the bog, where a few stepping stones and a friendly hand to help you over them would be acceptable, where is your companion? Gone. Lost himself, perhaps, in the bog; at any rate, not at hand to render any help. And where are the stepping stones he promised to put down? There is hardly one to be seen; or, if there be an attempt at any, they are too small, few, or wide apart to be of the least service. To one who has any insight into the word of truth, how empty, meager, and unsatisfactory are nearly all commentaries. The really difficult passages are skipped over, or by confused attempts at explanation made more difficult than before. Their views of doctrine are confused or contradictory. The sweet vein of experience in the word is never touched upon or brought to light; and even the letter of truth is garbled and mangled, or watered and diluted, until it is made to mean just nothing at all, or the very opposite of the sacred writer's meaning. As dry as a chip, and as hard, stale, and tasteless as a forgotten crust in a corner, these miserable and abortive attempts at opening up the sacred word of God, instead of feeding you with honey out of the rock, will drain away every drop of life and feeling out of your soul, and leave you as barren and empty as if you had been attending a banter's camp meeting, or hearing a trial sermon of a Cheshunt student as fresh from his theological tutor's hand as his new gown. With all their learning, and with all their labor, they are as destitute of dew as the mountains of Gilboa; of life, as the Dead Sea; of unction and savor, as the shoes of the Gibeonites; and of power and profit as the rocks of Sinai.

5. There is at times a *savor and sweetness* in the Commentary of Dr. Gill which forms a striking contrast to these heaps of dead leaves. And this gives the crowning value to his exposition of the Scriptures.

return to contents

Samuel Rutherford

by J. C. Philpot

We wish to drop a few remarks on the leading features of Rutherford's letters.

1. The amazing warmth and energy which seem to flash through them as an electric flame must strike every gracious reader. His heart and soul were all

on fire, and his pen was as if the electric conductor to transmit the sparks to paper and thence to the heart of his correspondent. It was not with him as sometimes with us, "What shall I say next?" or, "What have I to write about?" but, "How shall I soonest pour my soul into the soul of my friend?"

2. The views and feelings which he had of time and eternity are expressed in them with amazing force. What weight and energy, for instance, are there in the following lines—"O thrice-blinded souls, whose hearts are charmed and bewitched with dreams, shadows, night vanities, and night fancies, of a miserable life of sin! Poor fools! who are beguiled with painted things, and this world's fair weather, and smooth promises, and rotten hopes. May not the devil laugh, to see us give away our souls for the corrupt and counterfeit pleasures of sin? O for a sight of eternity's glory, and a little tasting of the Lamb's marriage supper! How far are we bereft of wit, to chase, and hunt, and run, until our souls be out of breath, after a condemned happiness of our own making! O that we were out of ourselves, and dead to this world, and this world dead and crucified to us!"

3. His love to the Lord Jesus, and the breathings and longings of his soul after his manifested presence, shine forth very conspicuously in his Letters. He had such transporting views of his Person, blood, righteousness, grace, and glory, that to those who never had any powerful manifestation of the Lord Jesus, some of his expressions may seem strained. Thus he wishes that the ocean were a sea of ink, and the expanded sky a scroll on which he could write the praises of Jesus. These may seem exaggerated expressions; but if millions of saints will find eternity too short to see his beauty, behold his glory, and sing his praise, why should a redeemed sinner on earth be grudged anticipating a foretaste of heaven? What is a sea of ink to eternity, or the blue skies to the realms of endless day?

4. The godly, practical, and yet thoroughly experimental admonitions that dropped from his pen, stamp Rutherford's Letters with singular power and force. They carry a sharp edge, and yet are so blended with tenderness and affection that the wound and the balm come together. He is like one who sees a friend lying asleep on the edge of a precipice. He roughly awakens him, and yet at the same moment catches him in his arms, and bears him away from the danger with the affectionate chiding, "Dear friend, how could you go to sleep on the top of the cliff?"

5. The pith and originality of expression in these Letters are a marked feature

in them, and have embalmed them from decay. No writer will survive his own generation whose thoughts and expressions are not stamped with that force and originality which mark them as peculiarly his own. It is a man's own mint which stamps his coins and gives them currency. Here Rutherford peculiarly shines; and by engrafting on his own stock of original thoughts the forcible though homely Scotticisms to which we have before alluded, he has, without intending it, become one of the most forcible and original writers that has ever edified the church of God.

return to contents

George Isbell

by J. C. Philpot

When one whom we have loved and esteemed passes away from this mortal scene, and leaves behind him that fragrant recollection which grace alone diffuses over those who manifestly live and die in the Lord, a desire, partly perhaps natural, but partly also spiritual, springs up in the bosom that some enduring monument should be reared as a tribute of affection and respect to his memory. To this feeling we may, perhaps, ascribe many, if not most, of those Obituaries which some of our readers consider the most profitable and interesting part of our pages; for though we would willingly attribute to those who send them the higher motives of seeking thereby the glory of God and the good of his people, yet no doubt, in very many cases, there intermingle with these holier and loftier aims promptings of natural love and affection to raise some abiding memorial to the departed.

But when the deceased object of this esteem and affection has occupied a public position; when to the claims of private and personal love and esteem there are added those peculiar ties which bind a minister to a people in particular, or, if his labors have been more widely diffused to the church of Christ in general, then there seems to be a more widely-spread desire that some means should be adopted to preserve his name in enduring remembrance.

Now there is no such enduring memorial of a servant of God as his works, whether we understand by that term those living souls that were begotten under his word to life eternal, or, if a writer, the living productions of his pen.

Other memorials soon pass away, for the seeds of mortality are naturally in them; no, time gradually removes from earth the living witnesses of the most powerful ministry. How few, for instance, now remain of Mr. Huntington's attached friends and hearers; and his sons in the faith, Beeman, Turner, Vinall, and Chamberlain have followed their father to the mansions above. If affection raises a tomb over the spot where the remains of the deceased repose until the resurrection morn, stone gradually moulders and decays; and the deepest-cut inscription sooner or later fades and becomes indistinct under the corroding effects of wintry storm and summer sun. Besides which, the richest tomb which affection can rear over the grave of the departed is but local, bounded by the walls of a cemetery; and the carefully penned inscription is often only read by the idle eyes of a few summer strollers, or listlessly spelt out, letter by letter, by wandering nursemaids to their little troop.

Even the very chapel where the well-known voice once sounded forth the gospel of the grace of God can give no guarantee of permanency to the tablet which records the memory of the departed servant of Christ. What has become, for instance, of that rich marble tablet which the respect and affection of a bereaved church and congregation raised to the memory of the immortal Coalheaver, in Providence Chapel, bearing that renowned inscription which he dictated just before his decease? In a few years it was torn down, as desecrating the place which a bishop had consecrated for another church, another service, another congregation, and another gospel. But Mr. Huntington's writings had already reared a memorial to his name which will last when St. Bartholomew's, as we believe it is now called, shall have been swept away by the all innovating rail, or become re-consecrated and re-christened for the celebration of high mass and the gorgeous ceremonial of Popish worship. If there were no other memorial of Mr. Huntington than the few aged members of his church and congregation who are waiting their dismissal, or his monument at Lewes, now that his London tablet is gone, his name would soon live only by tradition. But, with a better intent and with a holier purpose, he had, like Absalom, in his lifetime reared up for himself a pillar in the king's dale, (2 Sam. 18:18) in those productions of his pen which will last, if not as long as the English language, at least as long as truth, in its experience and power, shall be prized by English saints.

It is hard, if not wrong, to put asunder what God has joined together, but we have often felt that separate from the grace and wisdom, truth and power which shine so eminently forth in "The Kingdom of Heaven taken by Prayer," and the "Contemplations of the God of Israel," merely viewed as literary

productions, they claim, from their eloquence, their vigor and variety of expression, their originality, and their constant flow of thought, a high place among our English classics. The wonder to us is, where the poor coalheaver, amid all the poverty and rags of childhood, youth, and manhood, picked up his vocabulary—the tools of his tool chest, with which, in after years, he constructed his immortal works. But his was a master mind, and when released from manual toil he cultivated it by deep and assiduous study, his powerful and tenacious memory storing up for ready use every word that met his eye or ear.

We do not expect to carry with us the assent of all our readers when we express our decided opinion that whatever writings are given to the public, either by an author himself during his lifetime, or by his friends and relatives after his decease, something more than grace is needed to give them permanent endurance. To make them the handbook of successive generations, genius must be combined with grace—the mastermind and the vigorous pen with the anointing which is from above.

For proof take two well-known books, which will live until the angel which shall stand upon the sea and the earth shall lift up his hand to heaven and swear, "There shall be time no longer,"—we mean, Bunyan's "Pilgrim" and Hart's Hymns. Do not think, gracious reader, that the only difference between you and these men of God is that they had more grace and experience than you. Do you suppose that if you had Bunyan's experience, you could sit down and write a "Pilgrim's Progress;" or if you had had such a view of the sufferings of Christ as Hart was favored with, you could compose a Gethsemane hymn? It was not grace only, or the depth and variety of his experience, which drew the immortal pictures that have made the "Pilgrim" a household word. Without grace, there would have been no "Slough of Despond," or "Castle of Giant Despair;" no "roll in the bosom," or view from "the Delectable Mountains." But genius was needed for the graphic descriptions, the life-like touches, the sharp-cut characters, the varied dialogue, the constant succession of picturesque incidents which delight all ages and all readers.

So with Hart's Hymns. It is not merely the richness and savor, depth and variety of experience, nor even the wondrous dew and savor so copiously shed upon them by the Holy Spirit, that we have sometimes felt and said that they were written under his special inspiration, which have given his hymns such a place in the church of God. Mr. Hart was a great poet, as well as a great

Christian; not, indeed, in the same sense that Milton is a great poet, as full of beautiful imagery and sublime expression. Hart rarely allows himself the use of poetic language; but he was gifted with a style unrivaled for power and what is called terseness of expression; that is, the packing of the greatest amount of ideas into the smallest amount of words, which critics consider one of the rarest and most valuable features of authorship.

You and we, dear readers, in our talk, in our letters, in our prayers, and in our preachings, and you will add, "Yes, and you in your Reviews," are like cotton-spinners; one pound of raw cotton goes a long way in thread. But there is no thread-spinning in Hart's hymns. Every word counts. Treasures are in a line; and like the Bank of England ingots, they are all so closely packed that you can scarcely find in them a useless or superfluous word. This is what we call genius. You will, perhaps, prefer to call it "gift." We shall not differ here, for it was a special gift. But you who think that you, too, possess a special gift for writing poetry, and especially hymns, just try whether you can put your experience into Hart's rhymes, or condense it into Hart's lines. Why, you can no more do it than you can give yourself Hart's revelation of Christ, or Hart's view of Christ's sufferings in the garden of Gethsemane.

But we have wandered from our subject, which was to pen a few lines on a more simple and, doubtless, less enduring memorial than the immortal works of the three great English worthies fit to rank among the three mighty men who stood first and foremost of David's thirty captains—Bunyan, Hart, and Huntington. The little work before us does not assume such a position, or take so high a flight. It is simply intended as a slight memorial raised by the hands of a widow, at the solicitation of many friends, who wished some tribute of affection to be rendered to their esteemed and beloved minister. When we add that this widow is a sister in nature as well as a sister in grace, it will be sufficiently obvious that we feel some difficulty and delicacy in reviewing the book. And yet it is but due to her and due to ourselves to declare, that we had no hand whatever in suggesting its publication, in collecting or revising the letters for the press, and that no wish has been expressed for us to take any public notice of it. On these grounds, therefore, we feel as free to express our opinion of these letters as if their writer were not a brother-in-law in nature as well as a friend and brother in grace. And yet our personal knowledge of the writer puts us in a position to make a few friendly remarks upon him, as a little introduction to the letters now given to the public.

Mr. Isbell, both as a man and as a minister, was much beloved by his friends

and those to whom his ministry had been blessed. He was naturally of a highly sensitive disposition; and if this made him acutely feel neglect and unkindness, it was compensated by a proportionate warmth of affection when it met with a suitable return from friends. It was this kindness, this amiability, this willingness to oblige which endeared him to his friends more than falls to the lot of many ministers. And yet this sensitive, affectionate disposition, which we cannot but admire, had, in his case, as in others similarly gifted, attendant inconveniences.

A minister should not to be too sensitive. If he is to feel every slight, and be deeply wounded by every arrow, directly or indirectly aimed at him, he is on the continual fret. His friends dare hardly speak lest they should hurt his mind, and his enemies are glad that he has a mind which they can so easily hurt; and thus friendships are cooled or lost, and enmities made irreconcilable. We have often thought that if we were as sensitive as our departed friend Isbell was, and felt as acutely as he did the scourge of the tongue and pen, we must have sunk long ago under the missiles thrown at us from every side. Whether our skin be naturally more tough, or has become hardened by war, we will not say; but this we know, that if our mind were as tender as our body, and we felt the cold blasts from the mouth of man as we feel the cold blasts from the mouth of the wintry east wind, we would not be fit to hold the helm, or even stand on the deck of the ship which we are now steering through the eddying waves.

It was not that he was deficient in faithfulness, for he was a remarkably bold speaker, and never truckled to any man, in public or in private. Nor did he show his feelings by warmth of temper; but an unkind word from a friend, which some would no more regard than a passing breath of wind, wounded him to the quick. We may often admire what we do not envy. Warm, sensitive, acute feelings are very beautiful, but not very desirable. A word, a look, some unintentional neglect, an unanswered letter, a hasty remark, a tart reply, so wounds your sensitive friend, as he so broods over it, that, perhaps, it costs you his friendship for life. And as this sensitiveness often costs him his friends, so it lays him open to the attack of enemies. We speak thus, not to disparage the dead, but as a word of counsel to the living. Brother ministers, we have all much to bear with from friends and foes. Our blessed Lord had to endure the contradiction of sinners against himself, and was forsaken by his disciples and friends. But he has left us an example how to act that we should walk in his steps. If, then, one who has had to bear much from friend and foe may give you counsel, he would say, "Be not too sensitive. Be firm, be faithful; but bear

with your friends, and bear from your enemies. We have found the benefit of both."

But if our friend and brother Isbell was too sensitive, it was well balanced in his case by affection; and there was this advantage, that while he chiefly suffered from the one, his friends benefited by the other. He had also a very forgiving spirit, and was thus, if soon offended, easily conciliated; nor could he do enough for his friends, and especially those of them to whom his ministry had been blessed, and who for the most part were as much attached to him as he to them. Our dispositions are often well balanced and mutually corrected. Sensitiveness without affection makes a man a selfish wretch; balanced and corrected by affection, it gives warmth to friendship, though it will sometimes turn it into partiality. On every side are extremes, snares, and dangers. Sensitiveness without taking offence, affection without partiality, boldness without bitterness, gentleness without giving way, cautiousness without cowardice, faithfulness without fury, and contention for the faith without compromise of the spirit of the gospel—how desirable, yet how rare are such qualifications for a servant of Christ.

But, as we are sketching his character, we may add that, together with this naturally sensitive yet affectionate disposition, Mr. Isbell possessed considerable natural abilities. His was not indeed a deep, but a singularly active, ready mind, and one which he had much cultivated by patient and assiduous study. He had also a peculiar aptness of eye and hand, and a turn for scientific pursuits, which, as we do not wish to disguise his failings, proved, we think, in the end rather a snare, and not only injured body and mind, but weakened the force of his ministry. We all have our snares—none more than the writer of this Review; but he knows, from painful experience, that it is as sad to be caught in them as hard to avoid them. That their profiting may appear to all, ministers must give themselves wholly to their work. (1 Tim. 4:15.) Every pursuit, therefore, however useful for other men as a part of their business or profession, which is not of the things of God, hinders the real and visible profit of a servant of Christ.

He perhaps, for we wish to speak tenderly as well as truthfully, from constitutional irritability of nerve, needed more recreation and relaxation of body and mind than harder, stronger natures, and sought to find it, not in fresh air and exercise, which we have always found to be the best remedy for a wearied brain and nerves unstrung, but in almost continual reading and study. But a good long walk or a dig in the garden would, we think, have been

a better remedy for his languid nerves; for the cure eventually proved worse than the disease, and taxed his brain instead of relieving it.

Thus worn out by a sensitive mind, an overtaxed brain, ministerial labor, and mental anxiety, joined to a constitutionally weak bodily frame, he fell asleep at the early age of 45, as his mourning widow has recorded in the interesting little memoir prefixed to the Letters which she has published.

And now a few words about the Letters themselves which are thus given to the public. Though, from our personal knowledge of the writer, we were prepared to give them a favorable reception, yet we must say that they have exceeded our expectation. Knowing his abilities, and that he was a very good letter-writer as well as one who well knew and loved the truth, we quite expected that they would outshine the general run of religious correspondence; but we did not look for so much of the writer's own experience. Not that we doubted his possession of it or his ability to express it; but we knew that from his peculiar sensitiveness, and we might almost say shyness of mind, for they usually go together, he was accustomed to keep back both in public and private much of his own personal feelings. But, these letters appear to have broken the seal that was often on his lips. In this point, therefore, they have exceeded our expectation; and yet we need not wonder at it as an unusual feature.

Letters, especially when written to beloved friends in the Lord, draw forth much of the inmost experience of the writer's heart. The very freeness of correspondence unlocks those bosom secrets which are often almost necessarily held back from a public congregation. You know that your friend will not abuse your confidence, betray your secrets, or make you an offender for a word. As you write, your friend comes before your mental eye, affection softens your heart towards him, the springs of inward feeling gradually rise, and they flow forth, according to the gift bestowed, in streams upon your paper. It is this freedom of communication and this writing out of the fullness of the heart which give letters by the saints and servants of God such a peculiar sweetness and power. Not being intended for the public eye, they are specially adapted for private reading. We can take the book up or lay it down, read a long letter or a short one, without straining the mind or distracting the attention. If it suits us, we go reading on, letter after letter, as we have often done with Mr. Huntington's Letters. If it does not suit heart, time, or place, we can but lay the book down. It is a patient visitor, not jealous of a rival or sensitive of neglect, but bearing any amount of rebuff, coldness, or silence,

and ready to speak again only when asked to do so.

The letters before us are written in a pleasing, easy, agreeable style, full of kindness and affection, for such was the man, and unfold much of his own exercised mind. Judgment, we think, has been shown in the selection of the Letters; and we are glad to see the early ones given as well as the later, as, in our opinion, there is in them more vigor and force, more freshness and originality, boldness and decision. It is the case mostly with us all. With advancing years we get, perhaps, a sounder, riper judgment in the things of God, more maturity of views, and greater firmness and solidity of experience; but the life and warmth, the fire and force of what Job calls "the days of our youth" (29:4) are usually much diminished; and of few of us, beyond middle age, can it be said, either naturally or spiritually, as of Moses, that "our eye is not dim, nor our natural force abated."

When a writer at a certain period of life (we speak here from experience) looks over his early productions, he sees in them many hasty expressions which he would not now make use of, and which he may sigh over, as scarcely becoming the meekness and spirit of the gospel. But if he has a sigh for undue expressions, he has a still heavier, more deep and long-drawn sigh for the loss of that zeal, warmth, and animation which then glowed in his bosom and fired his voice and pen, but which he can no more recall than he can give himself back the strong arm and elastic step of early manhood. But every age has its place in the church of God. Babes, children, young men, and fathers, all are necessary to the being and riper knowledge of him that is from the beginning, the young men are more strong, and the word of God abides in them, and they more stoutly fight, and more manifestly overcome the wicked one. O that we had more of these young men; that as the fathers are taken home or laid aside by sickness and infirmity, we could see rising up men of might and men of war, fit for the battle, that can handle shield and shield, whose faces should be like the faces of lions, (against error and evil,) and as swift as the roes upon the mountains, to run upon the Lord's errands. (1 Chron. 12:8.)

But as our readers will desire to form their own judgment upon the Letters before us, we will give them one, as a specimen of their general character.

"My dear Friends—Accept my thanks for your affectionate letter. I quite agree with you, that there may be a resisting the call of a church of God to the oversight of them; but I do not consider this to be at all applicable to me, as I am simply waiting the Lord's time, and am willing to go or stay, just as he

shall make known his will. If I could find one or two supplies for the people here during my absence, I should have my path made considerably plainer; and, I can assure you, that there is no church to which my poor services would more freely be given than to that at Leicester; for I cannot doubt that the Lord of the harvest has condescended to work by me when with you, and has not let the word return to him void. I confess, however, that the sense of my insufficiency is no small mountain in my way, and that I am exercised with fears on this account, which greatly impede me. The Lord alone can make our mountains become a plain, and exactly level the rough and crooked path by an assurance that 'as our day our strength shall be, while our shoes shall be iron and brass,' to enable us to pass through the thorns and briars, and to tread upon thorns and scorpions unharmed. I feel that I could go anywhere, if God's presence would go with me. This is all and in all to a weak and ignorant stumbler such as I am. He knows my frame, and remembers that I am dust. Poor and helpless, needy and sinful, I have none but Jesus to look to, and can see none that can strengthen my weak hands, confirm my feeble knees, direct my tottering feet, and bless my fainting heart but he. 'To whom shall we go?' said Peter. 'You have the words of eternal life.' And to whom do we desire to go but to him, when feeling that all our springs are in him?

O that I could love and serve him better, and not to be such a base and wandering wretch, as I am constrained to confess to him that I am. He has, before now, filled my heart, and I have seen myself 'complete in him.' Unexpectedly, suddenly, has my soul beheld his beauty and glory, and I have felt solemnly and sweetly satisfied that he is my portion forever, a portion inexhaustible and precious. But, alas! how little do I appear to profit by this, when I wander from him and grow cold and vain. Truly, my dear friends, I know, that unless he displays his charms in our hearts, by the blessed Spirit, and draw our affections after him, we cannot praise him in sincerity, cleave to him with love, fear to offend him, and wait upon him to teach us to profit, and to lead us in the way we should go. To be made conscious of our utter emptiness, poverty, and corruption, as I am, is painful and trying; for sometimes I can see no 'good thing towards the Lord God of Israel' in my soul, but so many bad things against him, that I am obliged to say, 'Behold, I am vile!' and to put my mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope.

He may well be called 'wonderful' who bears with such a base thing, and such base workings as are in me; and he must be felt to be 'wonderful,' whose mercy, notwithstanding, endures forever. It is a sad proof of our fallen state, and of the depravity of our nature, that we are so little affected by his

goodness, and so ready to depart from him, 'forsaking the fountain of living waters, and hewing out for ourselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.' Who would be so happy as we, if we could be always drinking deep into his love and grace, and having our hearts melted at the fire of his dying love, with sin subdued, and Satan bruised under our feet? But, 'in the world,' Jesus declares, 'you shall have tribulation,' and from this we cannot escape, if we are truly his disciples. Nor do we desire to escape and be at ease in the flesh when our minds are enlightened from above, for then we see the need of tribulation and trials.

'I must expect a daily cross;
Lord, sanctify my pain;
Bid every furnace purge my dross,
And yield some real gain.'

I have far more trial to endure than many suppose, not only within, but from without. 'The heart knows his own bitterness, and a stranger does not intermeddle with his joy.' Sometimes my burdens have been so many, and my heart so unbelieving and faint, that I have been bewildered, and 'ready to halt,' and have been cast down indeed; and yet I hope I may say, without any presumption, 'Lord, you have been my help,' you have made a way for me to escape, you have not given me over to the will of my enemies, nor have 'broken the bruised reed, nor quenched the smoking flax.' In my troubles I have found little disposition to make them known to man, but have kept them secret in my own bosom, and have carried them where I know help only to be laid up for the poor and needy. Here I have, I trust, found a Friend; here I have been able to lay hold of better strength than that of man; and never, when I have been permitted to roll my way simply, sincerely, and confidingly upon the Lord, have I been forsaken or failed of help. I can look back to seasons when I felt sure the Lord had heard and answered my petitions, and it has been marvelous in my eyes. But I shall appear egotistical, if I write so much about myself. My friends must forgive me if I weary them. I am often a 'burden to myself;' but I would not burden my indulgent correspondents. I hope you are helped still to seek the Lord on my behalf, to give me life, light, wisdom, grace, humility, and clear direction in my way. Both will and power do I need to do anything that is good."

—August, 1847.