NOTES OF ADDRESSES

BY THE LATE

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CHURCH TO CHINA.

EDITED BY

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XVII.

A LETTER TO THE PEOPLE IN THE

HIGHLANDS OF PERTHSHIRE.

[*The affection with which Mr. Burns was regarded, wherever he went, by those who attended his ministry, was doubly manifested towards him by the ardent Highlanders. From the Highland districts which he visited, as from his other scenes of labour, he received so many letters of gratitude and of inquiry, that it was impossible for him to reply to them. He would sometimes write a letter to be read by the ministers to the people, who would at once have it printed, that each might possess a copy. His last visit to the Highlands was paid in the year 1854, when, having returned from China for a few months, he went north from Perth by Blair-Athole and Tummel Bridge in the first week of December. He reminded his hearers of his deep regret, while among them formerly, that he could not address them in the Gaelic tongue; but said he could now at least read to them a chapter in it, having learned as much in Canada from the Highlanders there.*]

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I

have often thought of writing to you, but have I been hitherto prevented by various causes; and I now take up my pen in great haste to send you a few hurried lines, praying that Jehovah, the God of all grace, may enable me to say a word in season to each of your precious and dearly beloved souls.

It has given me unfeigned joy to hear that those appearances of spiritual concern, which I was privileged of God to witness among you, have *not* proved in every case as the morning cloud, and as the early dew; but that some among you who seemed, when I was among you, to be enter­ing in at the strait gate, are still following on to know the Lord. It is a sweet and sure consola­tion to me to think that the work is Jehovah’s, and His alone; that He *will* have mercy on whom He will have mercy; and that, though many, alas! may, and actually do, abuse their privileges, and grieve away the Holy Ghost, and are left, in righteous judgment, to follow their own ways and perish, yet the Lord *will* pluck His own chosen ones as brands from the burning, and *will* put His fear in their hearts, so that they *shall not* depart from Him.

I. Blessed indeed are *those among you whom God has called by His grace to the fellowship of His Son.* Your blessedness, believers in Jesus, is infi­nitely greater than the tongue of archangel can express. *Now* arewe the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. *All* things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death,—all are yours; and ye are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s! True it is, my dear brethren in the Lord, that you must, through *much* tribulation, enter the Kingdom. *All* that will live godly in Christ Jesus *shall* suffer persecution. You will be hated by an unrighteous and ungodly world; assaulted and buffeted by a cunning and malicious devil; and, above all, de­ceived, and in danger of being destroyed by a desperately wicked heart. But be encouraged, fainting believer, He that shall come *will* come, and will *not* tarry. Then shall the battle be over, the victory be gained, the crown of glory be bestowed by the hand of Jesus! Then we shall see face to face that adorable and matchless One whom, not having seen, we love. Then shall we join the blood-washed throng in crying, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed us to God with His blood, and hath made us kings and priests to God and the Father, and we shall reign for ever and ever!”

How sweet the trials of a Christian are when he meets with Jesus in them, and feels that the Lord is making them a means of purging away his dross, and taking away all his sin. The believer’s trials are like the fiery furnace to the three children of Israel at Babylon, which burned off their bands, but touched not a hair of their heads. Seek, dear followers of the despised Immanuel, to obtain glimpses of His divine glory and grace, through the power of the indwelling Spirit, and these will make you to *see* such a surpassing beauty and glory in Jesus, that you will count *all* things loss that you may win Him, and be found in Him. If you find the way to glory hard and rugged, oh! think what it cost the Son of God to open up that way! Remember also that, wherever you are called to go, in following the Lamb, you may see, by faith, the prints of Immanuel’s feet on the path before you. He *does* lead His people through fire and through water, but it is to a *wealthy place.* Soon will He come to call us home to the place prepared for us above. Soon He will offer up for us the prayer, “Father, I will that these whom thou hast given me may be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory,” and then shall we depart and be with Jesus! To them that look for Him, He will appear the second time without sin unto salvation! Now the just shall live by faith; but, if any man draw back, my soul, saith God, shall have no pleasure in him. May none of you be of them that draw back unto perdition; may you all be of those who believe unto the saving of the soul.

Let me exhort you, beloved, with a view to your perseverance in the good ways of the Lord, to feed continually upon Jesus Christ and Him *crucified,* as He is made known in the holy word of God, and, by the Holy Ghost. For this purpose read the Bible much, and pray continually over it for the saving illumination of the Spirit. Examine your hearts frequently in regard to your acquaintance with sin, and your knowledge of the Lord Jesus. See that you be *wholly* dedicated to God in Christ; that His holy, heart-searching law be written on your hearts; and that you be aiming habitually with a single eye at the advancement of the divine glory. It was the common saying of an eminent saint (Brainerd), that nothing else made him con­tent to remain in this world for a single day, but that God could be seen and could be served in it. This is the language of the heart of every true saint; though, alas! few can say it with such em­phasis as he.

Let me press upon you, also, to make the truly godly your only companions, and to seek that God may greatly bless to you the fellowship of the saints. Avoid, I beseech you, in all things the very *appearance* of evil; and make it manifest, by your holy, pure, humble, meek, spiritual, and con­sistent walk, that you are no more of the world, but have been born of God, and are preparing to enter into the holy kingdom of your Father who is in heaven. Finally, let me exhort you to keep the conscience always clean and peaceful, by be­holding the bleeding Lamb of God as your Surety and Saviour, to put on the divine righteousness of Jesus as the only covering of the guilty, naked soul, at the bar of divine justice, and to be filled with the Holy Ghost, who quickens, sanctifies, comforts, supports, and at last glorifies the soul in which He dwells!

II. But what shall I say to *those among you who have neither part nor lot in the matter of salva­tion?* Alas! your case, dear fellow-sinners, is awful indeed, little as it *now* affects your own blinded souls. My heart is ready to break for you, when I think that, after all the solemn warnings you have received, and after all the pressing offers of Jesus that have been made to you in the name of God, you still remain in a state of heart-ungod­liness, or of open sin! Others around you can this day say with joy, “Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed:” but of you it is written in the word of the holy and unchangeable God. “Their judgment *now* of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not!” Oh! dear fellow-sinner, is it not the height of madness to go on any longer in a Christless state? You know well that except a man be born again he *cannot* see the kingdom of God—that the time is at hand when the Lord Jesus will appear in the clouds of heaven, with His mighty angels, taking vengeance on all that know not God and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that these shall be punished with everlasting destruc­tion from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power! You *may* go on a *little* longer with­out being cast into hell; but oh, how *soon* will death, the king of terrors, come and drag you to the bar of God! You *may* avoid the Throne of Grace, but you *cannot* escape the Throne of Judg­ment! You *may* despise *Jesus* asa Saviour; you *cannot* but tremble before Him as a Judge! You *may* reject Him as the Lamb of God; but, alas, you *must* endure His consuming wrath as the Lion of the tribe of Judah! You *will* not weep for sin *now,* but you must weep for it *hereafter!* You *shall* mourn for sin in hell, if you do not mourn for it on earth! Ah! tell me why you reject the Lord? What fault can you find in Jesus? Have you found any other Saviour? Oh! dear fellow-sinner, it is high time for you to awake out of sleep!

Arise and come to Jesus *now.* He is crying, Come unto me, I will in no wise cast you out. The Father is ready to receive you into His family. The Spirit is striving with you, did you not resist Him and grieve Him away. Halt no longer between two opinions. Sin and Satan are ruining you; knowledge cannot save you, decency cannot save you, profession cannot save you, con­viction cannot save you—you may go to hell with the arrows of the Almighty festering in the con­science;—nothing will avail but the blood and the Spirit of Jesus. Yield yourself, then, to the Lord as a lost sinner, and He will *not* cast you out. You have seen individuals around you, perhaps some of your own friends or companions, fleeing to Jesus; why did you not follow them? Are you *resolved* to be left behind in Sodom and to perish in the flames!

Do I seem to you, dear fellow-sinner, as one that mocks, when I thus warn you. Ah! remember it was so in the days of Noah. The old world thought him, no doubt, a self-righteous fool, when he warned them that the world was about to be de­voured by the floods of God’s vengeance; but they saw that he was divinely wise, when he entered into the ark and the flood came and de­stroyed them all! Soon will the deluge of ever­lasting wrath roll over this guilty, sin-stained earth, and sweep away, in its devouring, relentless waves, the whole world of the ungodly! Then will the penitent followers of Jesus rest secure upon the Rock of Ages, and look down without fear upon the horrific floods below! Ah, sinner! what joy will the pleasures of sin give you *then?* will you laugh, and dance, and drink with your companions *then?* Ah, no, you will rue the day that you were born! you will curse the day that you heard the gospel and despised the Saviour! Yea, you will even hear the words that I am now writing to you ringing in your ears, and add­ing new anguish to your unutterable torment! Do not, I beseech you, leave the place where you now are until you have given yourself up to the Lord, who still waiteth to be gracious. Will you *yet* delay? Oh! it is the suggestion of Satan, your murderer; yield at last to the love of God, put the crown upon Immanuel, save your soul, disappoint the devil, and give the angels a song of joy in heaven. May the Holy Ghost descend in His almighty power and prevail with you. May you *now* escape from that miserable company—the unregenerate—against whom the Lord’s mes­sengers, and I among the rest, must stand as wit­nesses at the judgment-seat of Christ, to condemn them to the second death.

Unworthy as these lines are of appearing in print, they will at least serve to put many of you in mind of those glorious days of the power and grace of the God which we enjoyed together last autumn,—days which we shall all remember, either with grief or joy, throughout an endless eternity. Oh, that these days were now to return among you with tenfold greater glory, and that multitudes who have hitherto withstood every call of God that has been made to them by their own ministers and by strangers, were at last persuaded to repent and turn to God through Jesus Christ! Oh, that the Holy Ghost were now poured out upon many thousands among you in His convinc­ing, converting, sanctifying, and comforting power! Plead, dear fellow-sinners, for this infinite pro­mise of the Father, which we have heard of Jesus. Ye that make mention of the Lord keep not silence, and *give Him no rest,* until He arise and make Jerusalem a praise among you, and through­out the whole earth.

Commending you all to the infinite, free, sovereign, and everlasting grace of Jehovah, and desiring an interest in the prayers of the Lord’s children among you,

I remain, Your affectionate and humble servant in the Lord,

WM. C. BURNS.

GRANDTULLY, *June* *11. 1841.*