

## NOTES OF ADDRESSES

BY THE LATE

**REV. WILLIAM C. BURNS,**

MISSIONARY OF THE ENGLISH PRESBYTERIAN

CHURCH TO CHINA.

EDITED BY

**M. F. BARBOUR,**

*Author of "The Way Home," "The Child of the Kingdom,"*

*"The Soul-Gatherer," &c.*

LONDON:

JAMES NISBET & CO., 21 BERNERS STREET.

1869.

## VII.

### THE LORD PASSING BY.

*[The following address was delivered in the Free Middle Church, Perth, on the evening of Sabbath, February 12. 1844. It is given as it was delivered; the previous addresses are considerably shortened from the original notes. It is believed that some readers will like to possess one specimen with that redundancy of expression and repetition of the same line of thought, which was customary with Mr Burns, when he did not feel that the first part of his address had told on the consciences and laid hold on the hearts of his audience. Sometimes, on such occasions, when the circumstances did not admit of continuing the service longer than the usual time, he would shut the Bible with a look of sadness, as though he feared that they had met in vain. At other times, he would patiently go over the ground again, in varied words, until those before him were hemmed in and shut up to realise the truth which he declared. That overawing sense of the Lord's presence, without which he never was satisfied to conclude a service, filled the place or hung over the assembled multitude on the hill side, nor did it depart till sleeping souls had awoke and taken the first step on the way to heaven.]*

"I PASSED BY."—Ezekiel XVI. 6.

THIS chapter contains a figurative and wonderfully exact representation of our state as sinners, and also a real representation of the Lord's covenant. The first truth we notice is that contained in the third verse, describing the birth and origin or parentage of those addressed,—teaching the great truth that we are depraved; wholly and utterly so, lying under the curse of sin; because, *first, we are cursed in our birth*. The Canaanites were the people of the curse, while the children of Israel were ever made a blessing. This infant, then, was born in Canaan, and its father was an Amorite. Verily this is true; our father hath sinned, and in him we have broken the divine covenant, individually and personally, offended the divine majesty, lost the divine image, and entered this world the children of disobedience; not as the children of our Father who created us, but of our father who degraded us. Here God reminds his own people of *what they were*. This chapter loudly tells us to "look unto the rock whence we were hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence we were digged." One look at that will show us that we were indeed as a child cast out in the day of its birth,—lying in all our natural pollution, to the loathing of our person. Ah, brethren! the nature of man is utterly and entirely polluted. The works of the flesh are these, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; and "the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." Confess now to the Lord and to yourselves, that you are in a state of pollution.

But, *secondly, we are also in a state of rejection*. As an infant thrown away,—not pitied, or blessed, or cared for,—so is man by nature cast out from the presence of God, and separated from him for ever; his transgressions having brought him into a state of rejection and disgrace,

whence none can draw him forth. Again, we are in a *state leading to death*—certainly ending in the ruin of soul and body, should none be found to deliver. The margin expresses it as “trodden under foot,”—cast out, without any to pity, and therefore ready quickly to die.

Such are some of the views which this supposed case gives of the state of man. You see that each of us is by nature under the curse, because he is born of those who are themselves under it, and because, in the person of Adam, their representative, the entire human race has broken the divine covenant, and cast off the allegiance of God, rejecting Him as their Father and Head. This is a truth of which the word of God is full. It is not so much declared as a separate truth, as it is bound up in every other truth.

Men are fond of speculating as to the origin of evil, but no countenance is given to this in the Word of God, where we are simply told that man is depraved; and we see it in Cain, who was born in the image of his father Adam, and of his father the devil. There never was one born among the millions of the world that did not go astray, speaking lies from the beginning. Our mouth is as that of a serpent; we are as a deaf adder, we cannot hear the voice of the living God. See what a view the Lord takes of our state as he sitteth in the heavens, “God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God.” And what report does He give? Ah! how it might *lay our pride*, for it is the very same He gives to-night of this vast assembly,—“Every one of them is gone back; they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.” This description extends and applies to the youngest and the last of Adam’s posterity,—to men of every rank, age, and condition. There is not one on whom the traces and marks of the fall are not written and engraved; and if you or I wish to understand the nature of our guilt, look at it as the iniquity of a reasonable being, and the rebellion of a responsible agent.

But, alas, alas! my dear friends, polluted creatures with polluted tastes, and eyes put out by sin, do not and *cannot* see their pollution. They are oftentimes,—and indeed always, except the Lord be striving with them,—blind to their degradation. Yes, “there *is* a generation that are pure in their own *eyes*, and yet are not washed from their filthiness.” Still, whether you believe it or not, there is in every heart among us a depth of evil, sufficient to pollute and to defile a whole universe.

How does our *ungodliness* pollute us! What polluted creatures does our *pride make* us! I believe that *it* is the sin which, if possible, is more polluting than any other, and yet it is the one which we are always longest of confessing. Sinner, do you know what a proud heart is? Have you ever discovered that you have one within you? Believe it now. And, then, what a proud people we are taken collectively, how hardened against the fear of

the Lord, how we cast off His yoke, and disown His right to reign over us, trampling, if we durst, as it were, on His forehead; setting at nought His counsel, and refusing to hear His reproof. Brethren, we are lost creatures, lying polluted by sin, and deservedly abhorred by the holy God. Yes; and that sin is *ours*; remember, *it is your own*,—flowing not from outward causes to *us*, but out from *our own hearts*; we are lying in *our own blood*, and that is what makes you and me so vile, so abominable, so loathsome, in His eye,—deserving to be cut off and cast out for ever; and yet proud, yet rebellious!

And oh! the *helplessness* of this state, no man can help us: ministers cannot help us—godly friends cannot help us—parents cannot help their children—the head of the human race could not have helped his descendants, at least except by pointing through himself as a figure to the second Adam, even the Lord from heaven. That was the utmost that by his own example he could do. It is the only way in which any lost sinner can seek to help another—to point to the Lamb of God. We are cast out by man, we are cast out by our first father, by all on earth, into the open field, unhelped, unpitied, friendless, unprotected, lost, and left to be destroyed by that roaring lion, the enemy of souls; and last of all, unable to help ourselves. Poor, helpless, hopeless sinner! this is a faint but fitting emblem chosen by the Divine Spirit to represent your case and mine—for all, all, all are lying in this fearful state.

Blessed be God, a remedy has been found. Not that we mean to say that the evil has been *cured*. Far be it from us to preach a gospel that is to put all things right in the world, and produce universal quietness, and order, and peace; for however free the gospel offers are—and they have been free to all the world for ages past—multitudes have perished eternally. The gospel offer comes too late to-night for many in your city; thousands have gone from thence to the place of darkness, and are lost beyond recall; and I fear it comes too late for some here, because they will not receive it. What follows, as to the way of salvation, is given in God's own manner, and in his own appointed order. He looks down from His sanctuary's height upon fallen, ruined man, and sees him living in open rebellion against His righteous rule, and in a state of apostasy, resting under the curse; being polluted in his mind as well as his condition by continuance in sin; while no one thing connected with him, except it be his misery and ruin, is fitted to attract the regard or the mercy of the Lord. Nothing is to be seen about him but what is the loathing and the abhorrence of all holy creatures, and, above all, of the Holy One of Israel. The sins of the unrepentant are even objects of loathing to those who are written among the living in Jerusalem, as well as to holy angels.

These, then, are the objects which meet the Lord's eye; and, lo! while you expect to see swift destruction coming forth upon them from His presence, and while you look to see Him cast the sinner into hell and to the blackness of darkness for ever, a voice speaks in mercy, and it says in majesty—I passed by! The Lord descends from the heavens, and draws near to the poor, lost, outcast, dying sinner, lying still in his “own blood,” and He saith unto him, LIVE! And oh! it is no empty sound, no merely merciful word of pity, when the Lord says to a sinner, “*Live*,” for at the sound his heart has turned to God; he complies with the call of wondrous grace; he turns, he listens, he obeys; at the Lord’s reproof, his heart yields, he gives in, while the Lord pours out His free Spirit upon him.

And then, when the soul has been made alive, what follows? “I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I aware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine.” The poor sinner deeply needs such a covering; for, at the same time when God comes thus to give us covering, your soul and mine are naked, having no kind of covering of our own by nature, but needing both to be washed and cleansed from iniquity by the Lord’s own hand, and to be clothed from head to foot. Therefore, when Jehovah thus gives life to a dead sinner, He leads him away to the fountain of His dear Son’s blood; and once made white and clean for ever there, He clothes the naked soul with the perfect righteousness of his Well-beloved. Nor does he stop there, He makes a full-promise for time and eternity,—“I sware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine.” In the day in which God calls any sinner, He enters into a covenant with him, and the first thing He engages for, comprehends everything—He engages to be the sinner’s *all in all*—“I will be a God unto thee;” and when He says that, does he not indeed say all? For everything is bound up in that—the Lord cannot say more.

But there are two promises which He makes to the soul specially in that solemn, blessed day; the first is, “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow;” and the second is, “I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them.” And then it is that the soul, being quickened and made alive indeed unto God, and *enabled* as well as *inclined* by His power

to receive the Lord Jesus Christ, hears in his heart a voice which whispers, “Thou art mine.”

“I sware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine.” And oh! the Lord *never* gives up the right that He takes over the soul in that day; come what will, oppose what may, that soul is kept by the Lord, as His own peculiar property, to all eternity.

In order that we may all get a fuller view, than I fear we are yet doing, of this, let me call you to fix your minds more particularly upon some of the points, already named, a second time. And first, let, me entreat you to consider well the source whence this salvation springs. It is not from the creature, not from man himself, in respect either of merit or power. Merit! how can it be, when all that he ever can appear in God's sight is loathsome and abominable—oh, no! There is truly nothing to attract in poor, fallen man; all that is to be found in him, “that is, in his flesh,” is opposition to God's law—opposition to His being—opposition to His will—opposition to His glory. Our carnal minds are enmity against God, enmity against His law, enmity to His holy perfections, enmity to His sovereignty.

It is no merit in man that draws forth His love: What, think you, could tempt any man to look upon a poor cast-out infant, such as the chapter we are reading describes? What but love could move him? Oh! surely nought but the

purest pity and the tenderest compassion would lead a man to take on himself all the care and trouble needful to relieve, to save, and then support the poor and outcast little one.

And it is nothing, nothing but love, unbounded, unmeasured, incomprehensible—it is nothing but divine pity and compassion—it is nothing but the infinite yearnings of an eternal love that moves the holy Lord of heaven to pity you. This may well bring down your *pride*, believers. This may bring down your proud countenance and your high looks, when you think how for many a day, in your nature, in your character, in your conduct, in your heart, in your life, you have been grieving and provoking your Creator and Redeemer; that you have been abominable in His sight—a withered branch, a degenerate vine. Your state has not been a whit less hateful to His sight, nor your sin less heinous, than that which moved him to destroy the old world entirely and for ever; not a whit less heinous in His sight than the sin of the fallen angels who are cast out for ever from His presence—aye, the sin that provoked the thunders of His wrath *then*, is more hateful in sinners now.

Ye that dwell under the gospel, *one* such call would tenfold increase—your guilt above theirs. If you had never heard the gospel, your case were different; but you have heard, and heard for years upon years, until your guilt has become awfully aggravated. Yet, if any are getting a view of their natural pollution, and feeling that by nature they are a *sink* of evil of every kind—that every monster-form of sin that ever grew out of a creature's heart has its seeds and its like in yours—that you never heard of any sin being committed that has not a counterpart in you, were temptation to blow upon corruption—and that you conceive hourly sins, more than you have the means of acting out. Oh! if you are indeed crying to the Lord in words like

these:—*I cannot look upon myself; if the Lord's people even could see my heart they would turn away amazed from me, and ministers would have nothing to do with me; could any fellow-sinner see me as I stand in God's sight, he would not speak to me, how much less the Holy One of Israel.* Take courage, it is a creature in that very state, in so far at least as words can describe a lost sinner's state, it is on such—YES, on SUCH—that the God of love hath turned His eye, and to whom, in passing by, He says, LIVE, LIVE.

Do not think that you must make yourself pleasing in the sight of the Holy One of Israel to be accepted by Him. Fellow-sinner, He knows your state, and He does not make it better either. It is when in thy blood He speaks to thee. He repeats it, “Yea, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, LIVE.” These words *do* spring from His own infinite love—from His everlasting, free, unsought mercy—from the infinite yearnings of a heart of overflowing loving-kindness. And then observe, He does not wait till you go to Him, till you learn His ways, and *love* to seek His face. He would wait long enough if He did; He would wait for ever.

Would anyone possessed of reason expect the poor infant that we are likened to, to rise up and walk, or to wash and purify itself. Ah no! The benevolent individual who saves it, feels in this way:—If I don't go to it, and go *now*, its strength will fail, and its soul will perish. This is what the Lord sees in each one of us, and so He comes to the sinner, approaches, as it were, quite close to him, and whispers in his heart, “Come, now, and let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” It is in a marvellously attractive, winning character that the Lord appears at this time. The work is wondrous. It is saving—it is Godlike in the self-moved nature of its origin, in the sovereign freeness and spontaneous bestowal of its gifts. For, see, again, the great, the glorious, the holy, the compassionate, the divine Deliverer descends, draws nigh, comes up to where the poor sinner is lying forlorn, cast out, miserable, hopeless, dying, perishing eternally; yea, and polluted, too, and almost dropping into hell, on the very verge of the second death; and Jehovah saith unto him, LIVE. Ah! sinner, whence is that? What does it mean?

It is the forthcoming of *eternal compassion*. It is the bursting forth of the waters of divine, unending life! It is the drawing of the cords of everlasting love! It is the gentle yet omnipotent constraint of the bands of the man Christ Jesus! The Lord has come nigh, the Holy Ghost is given, the sinner is saved, and the Saviour is glorified.

Well, you say, and this is all true; but what is that to me? I, who am covered with sins, every one of which deserves eternal fire, each of which makes me a fit subject for the second death, each of which cries for the

holy, righteous, and un-mingled vengeance of the Lord,—what can I do? My dear friend, I allow it,—you *can do nothing*. The Lord takes all that into account; yea, *He tells you that you do not see half so much guilt in yourself as He sees*. Well, but what does He do next? He points you to the fair, white righteousness of the Lord Emmanuel, and says, “Behold the Lamb! “People of God, *you* know well that speaking will not save, and hearing will not save, unless the Lord comes. Prophecy to the breath that it may come upon us in this hour.

Another view which we wish to impress upon you, though we have in part described it already, is, *that the sinner is helpless*. Many think that they can, at their own pleasure, rise and walk. My dear friend, let me ask again, was this poor infant able to rise and walk? Did it even know him who came to save it? Could it thank him?

Could it raise its infant wail aloud? Or could it send forth so much as one despairing cry for pity? No, no! And, believe it, could Jehovah descend to this, and promise to give you eternal glory for one motion towards Himself, you would be lost. There is nothing between you and perdition but the forbearance of an infinitely holy God. The Lord waits not until the sinner can come to Him; He comes up to the sinner. *Are any longing for His presence?* and do you yet feel that your heart is like a stone? The sinner feels that he is chained and bound, and that the devil has him, and will ruin him; and, moreover, that all the creatures in the world cannot save him; and so the Lord, hearing his cry, and seeing his despair, comes near to help him.

Believe this. A heart *less full of tenderness* than His would do the same. You may suppose that if one with like passions to ourselves were passing in any direction, and hearing a faint infant cry, would he not stop? Yes, he turns aside, he pities, and he saves. Faint emblem, that little sufferer, of the case before us; faint is the view it gives of Him who comes to save; faint type and shadow of the love that is everlasting. Oh! that you, perishing souls, were looking out to-night for the deliverer! I know you cannot pray to Him, as you call it, *acceptably*. Oh! but He wants you to pray *miserably*, to pray *desolately*. He sees in you a returning rebel. You have hated Him; you have fought against Him; the very heart, and hands, and mouth, and soul, and strength, and youth, or riper years, that are His own gift, and which He created, that with them you might ever love and glorify Him, *you used against Him*; and with the very comeliness which He had put upon thee, and with the powers which He hath given thee, hast thou served the devil, drunk up sin greedily, and dishonoured thy God.

Oh, is your heart softening? is it *even to Him*, to this God of salvation, against whom you have sinned, that you would *come*? Do you look to Him? do you cry to Him, “*undone, ruined*”? The Lord only answers, **LIVE**. And in this new and eternal life which *He begins* in you, from first to last He

will be honoured, and you will be humbled, while you praise Him in an eternal song! Yes, thousands of such vile sinners are now around the throne, making the arches of heaven ring with the praises of the King of saints and the Saviour of sinners. And then the thought, that it is nothing else that attracts the Lord but just this, that "God is love." No other account is given but just "when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live." It may be that the Lord is now passing by. It is not unlikely that He may be saying, Live; for wherever two or three are gathered together in His name, He is in the midst of them. Sinner, are you not afraid lest He *pass by you*, and pass away without looking upon you? for eternity is at hand, and heaven's gates are barred against the unregenerate. Are you, then, seeking to attract His eye?

People of Perth! the Lord has been saying, Live, to many a one in the midst of you. He did so gloriously four years ago, and some of those remain unto this present, and some are fallen asleep. Many of you allowed that season to pass away; you were *afraid* He would say, *Live!* You were *afraid* He would pluck you out of the fire and from a yawning hell, and take you from the devil! Fellow-sinner! He may yet pass you by; for He passes by multitudes, and leaves them to perish; and yet, yet, He has set His heart on a happy few, and saved and blessed them. He has been passing through Scotland for more than three years *evidently*, and the crown is flourishing upon His head yet; in our beloved land, our new churches tell *that*, and testify that He is the Lord of all. Oh, then, brethren! will you not submit yourselves to Him? Perhaps you are sitting in some quiet corner, and conscious that *you* are one of whom nobody is thinking; and it may be so; but Jesus is thinking of you; will you not say to Him, "Save, Lord, I perish." The poor world knows it not, sees not that He is passing by; but will *you* not look to Him? He sees you in your blood, sees you to be vile, and black, and ungodly; so vile that perhaps the people of God—some of them—would not like to have much to do with you.

Is there one such among you? Let us trace his feelings. He first begins to say, *Where is God?* and then the truth is awfully revealed to him that it is no delusion; that there is a God in the earth; and when he hears that God saying to him, *LIVE*, he cannot believe it. Still the sinner is drawn, and begins to think again. Young men, are there any of you who stop here, and cannot say even *that there is a God?* It is a great point gained when a man can do that from the heart. Oh! that ministers came into the pulpit in the strength of that belief, something would breathe around them that would shake the infidelity of others. It is a blessing when this great truth is set up; for then the sinner begins to bend to the authority of the word of God, and feels that His throne may shake before one jot or tittle of that word will fall

away. Many a hard battle he will have with the devil before this be granted; many a fall and many a blow from Apollyon's sword; but then the love of the Lord Jesus comes in here; and, dear fellow-sinners, if there be one present in such affecting circumstances, that love *will* draw you from Satan's power. You say, "I am unclean," and so you are; but He will put you into the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness; and if you tell Him that your sins are "red like crimson," He will show you that the blood of His cross cleanseth from sin of every dye. And then, if you doubt again of the sufficiency of the sacrifice, or of Emmanuel's ability to save, He will show you that He who was the Man of sorrows, is the Man who is Jehovah's fellow too, and thus He will answer every question, and remove your every doubt. What but the spreading forth of these glorious truths was the means of the Reformation? And what will be the means of converting a single soul, but just the same truth, that Christ hath died to save sinners?

There are many who would stop short of this, and yet who like to come to get their feelings moved, Sabbath after Sabbath; while week after week finds them back again at their worldliness and mammon worship. They always take care that the truth will never reach so deep into the heart as that the citadel shall be taken. Oh! that you would now simply say, "Lord, I perish, save thou me." When that cry ascends, an answer comes; and, ah, then there is a bond formed, which neither time, nor death, nor hell, can ever rend: and when He ties the eternal knot, believe it, nor death nor hell can break it. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" What! shall persecution? No, persecuted believer, even you may raise the song, "Who shall separate?" For why? Will not the Lord save and guard His own truth? The saints may be imprisoned, ministers silenced or banished, God's people may be *hung up* for the truth's sake, but the truth itself will not be hung up or stifled. No, it will spread, it will run, it will be glorified in times like these. The truth of Christ, and the saints' union to Him, will bloom on the gibbet, and spring up into beauty and renown from their open graves. What! think you they will bind Emmanuel's truth? Will they fetter His love? Will they limit His glorious sovereign grace? Will they draw a bolt before the great Breaker? Ah, no! He hath opened the two-leaved gates, and now devils, and death, and tribulations, are like captives at His chariot wheels. The Breaker is ascended on high; He is on the throne now, and if any of you are receiving Him into your hearts, you will soon get the reward of His chosen; you will have your feet on the neck of the old serpent soon. Oh! then, now, when He is passing by, will you not quickly join yourselves unto Him? Our time for repentance will soon be over; all our meetings will soon be over; and when *the great meeting* comes, and when we stand face to face in the presence of the Lord, and all you have ever heard comes fresh into your memory, what will be the feelings of many a gospel hearer then?

Observe, it was not the crowds that attracted the notice of the Lord on the day when he passed through Jericho; the individual who got good from Him was a poor blind man. Fellow-sinners, *you* have no knowledge of who is this night present to bless us. It is Jesus of Nazareth. *You* have never discovered Him, but this blind man did. Bartimeus had heard of Him, and, doubtless, said within himself, "Well, if I lose this opportunity, I may never have another; I can't see Him, I can't go to Him, but I'll cry." And so he did cry, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me." The disciples did not like this, it was against their ideas of the Lord's dignity. The procession was too fine to be disturbed by the cries of a beggar.

And how much like this is the present state of things. Our congregations are in too good order to be troubled by anxious souls! Propriety would not allow it! Oh, my dear friends, if you begin to seek the Lord, many will cast cold water upon your anxiety. They will say, "What! are you going to be serious? "For I believe that there are multitudes who would rather see their friends going on to the brink of the precipice of perdition, than seeing them becoming grave, and solemn, and heavenly-minded, condemning a careless world by their holy words and lives. Better that an anxious soul should meet with enemies than with cold-hearted professors who are full of the spirit of the world. Let all such precious, and it may be, hidden ones, look much to the High Priest

who sitteth in the heavens. This will please Him better than anything. If any poor sinner is saying, "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me," He will hear that cry. He did not attend to the crowd that followed Him. He stood still. Ah! this is what He does at all times. He *waits* to hear the cry of the penitent. Call upon Him; do it secretly; He knows what you are thinking, and He says, "What wilt thou that I do unto thee" Bartimeus said, "Lord, that I may receive my sight." Oh, that you would offer up this prayer, and then, not only would you receive your sight, but you would receive pardon, you would receive justification, and indwelling of the Holy Ghost, deliverance from the world, deliverance from Satan's yoke.

Take another instance: remember the poor woman who, though diseased, went to Him in the press. She did not hesitate. She was bold. She knew her necessities, and she knew His ability to save. And, oh, if you would follow her example, you would be, like this woman, immediately healed. For the Lord said, "Who hath touched Me" Peter said, "The people throng Thee, and askest Thou, Who touched Me?" The Lord took no notice whatever of this interruption, but went on, "I perceive that someone had touched Me, because virtue hath gone out of Me." Oh, brethren, can He say at this moment, "Somebody hath touched Me 2" Is there anyone who is hardly able, for the crowd, to get within hearing of the word, who is in some quiet place crying out to the Lord? Then virtue is going out from

Him; that sinner is saved. Let me be that woman, that man, that child, rather than the wisest or the greatest of this world's children. Many will sit for hours listening to the preaching of the word; they will never complain of being "kept in," as others would call it, and yet they refuse to spend five minutes *alone with Christ*. Ah, brother, will you not begin to do this? it is being alone with God that is the beginning of salvation to many; that is what the devil is afraid of; the last place he likes a sinner to go to is his own quiet closet, entering in there when none observes, putting in the bolt with a look that shows you are one who has *something real to transact there*, that you have something to do with God. Ah! Satan well knows that in many cases there is virtue going out of Emmanuel then. *Then!* did I say 2 Oh, there is virtue going *always* out of Him; fulness of grace dwelleth in Him.

That fulness is going out at this hour to the poor Hindoos, to the Chinese, the South Sea Islanders, the liaffirs, and the Hottentots, and among the darkened thousands on our Continent. Oh, yes, in these last days of ours, He is drawing all men unto Him. His own ancient people, His beloved Israel, are beginning to look after Him; and some few of them are seeing in Him the promised King of Sion. People of Scotland! where is the Lord who bath been so honoured in this land in days gone by? Have His martyrs not foretold of days of His right hand to come? "The covenants, the covenants will yet be Scotland's reviving!"

Blessed be God, such reviving is not wholly gone from the midst of us. Ah, no. There are green spots yet where His dew descends. Do none of you know this? Don't some of you know what it is to have a fireside that is made happy by faces on which the light of His countenance shines? And how sweet at night to hear the melody of joy and health, and the song of praise, when other sounds are hushed. These families are like a little heaven below. Oh, picture of heaven, indeed, when the voices of parents and children blend in praising the Shepherd of Israel and the King of Sion, when all is love, and peace, and kindness, and not a jarring word is heard, nor an angry look is given. What a blessing such a sight might bring to the stranger that beholds it! I shall suppose some such one coming to take up his abode in such a family, it might be, even for a single night; he marks it all, and feels the beauty of it, and says, "Well, I wish I could be longer there; "or, perhaps, he says to himself as he departs, "I love that holy joy; I will go and put their religion to the trial:" and there, perhaps, begins the return of that wanderer to the fold.

Will none here, in like manner, bethink himself? Do you really believe, my dear friend, that God lives? You know that many people, without being professed infidels, do not in the least believe the children of God, when they say that there is such a thing as going away to be alone with God, making a request according to the will of God, and getting an answer to their prayer.

They think that any idea of that kind is produced by the friction of mere feeling upon the heart; that it is an empty delusion or imagination. Well, but suppose one of you gets a step further than this daring infidelity, and the question is seriously agitated, within you, whether God is or *is not*. This is the hour, it may be, of your first real prayer; you go away into a secret place, whether in your dwelling or in the open field, it matters not; and your first impression is, *there is a God, and I will call to Him*. Satan says immediately, assuming, as it were, the garb of prudence or of common sense, “What 1 who are you speaking to? Nobody hears you, you are speaking to the air! “And then your own evil heart rises up and joins with him. Many a man thinks he believes in God, just because his faith is so purely nominal that Satan has never thought it worth disputing. *His* are prayers that never go higher than the back of the chair he kneels at. But, ah! if he took courage and, resolving to get at the truth, went away to pray, a *thousand voices* would cry within him, There is no God, no God! And some would give up the search here, and swallow the devil’s lie, and be ruined eternally. But then, some would not do this, the awakened sinner would not be so easily put off. He feels, as it were, that there is something *at the other end of the line* that he is casting upwards, and he will not let go his hold. And then, perhaps, *he* remembers something about that word of truth, which is called the lamp of the wanderer’s foot, and so he opens his Bible. Here again, Satan will perhaps meet him, and will likely whisper, “I am sure you have read that book all your life long and never got any good by it; it never then can be the word of God.” Ah I but, my dear friends, Satan’s lie won’t pass so easily now that he has been *proved a liar*; and being resisted, he will perhaps flee. So the man goes on; some word of promise meets him, and, as he reads, he comes to more; and there another light has risen to cheer him onwards, till he finds in Emmanuel matchless fulness for his every need. And then he joins himself to the Lord’s dear people too, and unites with them in the work and labour of love, which they have to finish ere the “night,” which is at hand, “cometh,” and ere they hear the knock of the Judge who standeth before the door.

Oh, are you all “watching unto prayer,” beloved? I think some at least, are surely doing this. I am sure there were some who rose early this morning, perhaps “a great while before day,” to plead with the Captain of the Lord’s host that He would come forth this day in the midst of us,” conquering and to conquer.” *Persevere*, beloved in the Lord, “in due time ye shall reap if ye faint not.”

We would entreat every one of you to imitate the example of those who went round the city of Jericho. They were to compass it seven times; once would have done as well had the Lord appointed it so, but He teaches His people *perseverance* by these means; and then, at last, when Jericho did fall,

what was the occasion of it? Nothing but the blowing of trumpets of rams' horns—a weak breath. Oh, how the foolishness of man is used to work the purposes of the Lord! In the same way can He make a single sentence, pronounced by a little child, effect what no persuasion or eloquence could accomplish. When the wall of Jerusalem was to be rebuilt, every man went and builded opposite his own house. You that are a husband, begin this night; when you go home, speak to your wife tenderly and solemnly; beseech her to begin to consider "the things that belong to her peace," and do not give up for one refusal. I confess that I often feel tempted to do this. I often say, "I'll give up preaching, why continue it?" And so, when you go home, you may be tempted to say, "It's all very well for the minister to tell me to speak to my household, but it is useless to attempt it." My dear friend, remember

the blowing of the rams' horns. And let another take a servant apart, and the brother his sister.

When the Lord does give the word, *great is the company* of them who publish it. Everyone will then speak to his neighbour, and the friend to his friend; or you, dear children, to your companions at school. Why not begin at once to seek to convince them and lead them to Jesus, imploring the Lord your Shepherd to work by you. He can do much by the testimony of a little child, saying simply what it knows of the evil of its heart, and of the faithfulness of Jesus. Such a testimony makes those around begin to inquire, What am I? Am I saved? What ground have I to hope if these things are true?

The moment a man trusts God's promise, he is a child of God. The moment he takes the Lord at His word, and believes His testimony concerning His Son, that moment he is safe. I remember being struck with an anecdote told of Napoleon Bonaparte's review of his troops.—In passing, we might ask, Where are Bonaparte and his armies now. So passes the glory of the world!—During the review, the emperor's horse became restive; in trying to quiet him, his hat fell off; a young *lieutenant* happened to pick it up, and when he restored it, Bonaparte said, "Thank you, *captain*." The young man took advantage of the word, and immediately said, "In what regiment, sire?" "The Guards," answered Napoleon. The young man did not wait; he went and took his place. The other officers said, "What right have you here?" He said, "I am a captain of the corps." "What, who made you that? Where is your uniform?" Ah! he had *the emperor's word*, and he wanted and needed no more. Brethren, imitate this little incident in the more solemn matter of your soul's salvation. Are you a sinner? Are you in the ranks of the condemned, fallen men of this world? Oh! do you hear the Lord's voice telling you that you may be saved, and saying, "I will be a Father unto thee, and thou shalt be my son" "or

daughter? Do you doubt Him? Will you not answer, “Surely thou art our Father?” Do not raise questions; do not ask disbelievingly, What will be done with my evil heart? *Leave all that to Him*, and go quickly, go confidently, yes, *rejoicing go*, and take your place among His children, and your portion with His people, and be to Him a son, and be sealed after that ye have believed, with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of the inheritance, the first-fruits of the purchase of that glorious possession reserved for you in the heavens.