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TALES OF GRACE

OR

THE CONVERSION OF TWELVE PERSONS OF EMINENCE

(WITH PORTRAITS)

By C. KNAPP

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Petrus Valdis (From Luther's Monument at Worms)

PETER WALDO

PETER WALDO, the founder of the Waldenses, was, at the time of his conversion, a wealthy merchant of Lyons. This was in the twelfth century, when merchant-princes were less common than at the present day, and he lived in the fullest enjoyment of his opulence without anxiety, or even thought concerning the future of his deathless soul.

But he was shaken out of his listless condition in the following remarkable manner. One evening, while at supper with a party of friends, one of his companions suddenly fell lifeless to the floor. This striking fatality exerted so powerful an influence over his mind that he resolved to abandon all other occupation, and give his attention entirely to the salvation of his soul. In the language of the Lord, he determined to "seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness."

There was, in those dark days, no evangelic ministry that he might attend, and he knew of no one who could point out to him the "way of salvation." The priests, instead of having "compassion on the ignorant and them that

are out of the way," were themselves densely ignorant and widely "out of the way." But, fortunately, his attention was turned just at this time to the Holy Scriptures, and he applied himself diligently to learn from them the way of life and peace. He read for himself from the Vulgate, in Latin, God's way of salvation and remedy for sin. He also employed learned men to translate the Gospels and other portions of the sacred Scriptures into the language of the people, that every man might read for himself, in "the tongue wherein he was born, the wonderful works of God."

In this happy employ he got to understand clearly the simple gospel of God, and found abiding peace for his soul.

The fruits of his faith soon became manifest. He distributed freely of his wealth to the poor, and sought to gather a company of men, like-minded with himself, who should give themselves wholly to the spread of the gospel among the neglected multitudes around them. For this purpose he had multiplied copies of the Scriptures in the Romance languages (the art of printing had not yet been invented), which from the Gospels and other portions soon extended to the whole Bible. He, with his fellow-laborers, displayed great zeal and devotion in

their most blessed work, and did not, at first, separate themselves from the communion of the Roman Catholic Church. They aimed, it seems, to constitute themselves a spiritual society within the bosom of the Church, though influenced only by truth drawn immediately from the "Scriptures of truth."

A writer remarks: "But an influential union of laymen, associated for the purpose of preaching to the people—a union which made the sacred Scriptures themselves the source of religious doctrine—could not long escape opposition and persecution. The archbishop of Lyons forbade Peter Waldo and his companions to expound the Scriptures and to preach. But they did not think they ought, in obedience to this magisterial decree, to desist from a calling which they were conscious was from God. They declared that they were bound to obey God rather than man, and persevered in the work they had begun.

"The anathema of the pope, however, soon drove Waldo from Lyons. His flock were scattered, and 'went everywhere preaching the Word.' Many of them found an asylum in the valleys of Piedmont, where they took with them their new translation of the Bible. They there united with others of the same faith, and

are known in history as the Waldenses, or Vaudois. Waldo himself, after many wanderings, carrying with him everywhere the glad tidings of salvation, settled at length in Bohemia, where the fruit of his labors was seen, 'after many days,' in the rapid extension in that country of the principles of the Reformation, and where, in the fourteenth century, as many as eighty thousand persons are said to have been put to death 'for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held.' "

This, reader, in brief, is the story of the conversion and after-life of one called out from the rich and learned—the class of whom Scripture says "not many" such "are called." Awakened in the midst of a scene of activity by the sudden cutting off of one of his companions, the rich merchant of Lyons was brought to see the uncertainty in which his own life hung, and his unpreparedness of soul for such a summons. He realized that God might at any moment say to him, as He had said to another rich man long before, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee!" And when awakened, he enquired of the fountain-head of truth, "What must I do to be saved?" And there, in the Scriptures, "which testify of Christ," he discovered the answer of God: "Believe on the

Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." This grace and love of God which then filled Waldo's heart, caused him to employ his energies and means to make known to others what he had found in Jesus; and Waldo then became prominent in that other class of which Scripture says, "They that turn many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars for ever and ever."

Reader, let not this man, living in the "darkness of the Dark Ages," rise up in the judgment to condemn you. He had no brother Andrew to "bring" him to Jesus; no evangelist Philip to "guide" him to the Lamb of God. There was no "messenger with him"—no "interpreter" to show unto him God's righteousness as revealed in the gospel of His grace (John 1; Acts 8; Job 33). *You* have advantages and privileges he did not and could not have at the time in which he lived. Beware lest when these souls, saved in the bygone ages of medieval darkness, sit down in the kingdom of God, you find yourself "THRUST OUT!"

MARTIN LUTHER

MARTIN LUTHER, the son of a poor miner of Mansfeldt, found peace with God in his early twenties. At the age of eighteen, in 1501, he entered the university of Erfurt, where he out-stripped his fellow-students immediately. Even at that time he could easily have passed before men as a true Christian. He appears to have felt his dependence upon God in every thing. His habit was to begin each day with prayer, after which he attended church, and only then did he begin his studies, which he prosecuted diligently all the day without intermission.

It was here at Erfurt, after two years, that Luther for the first time saw a Bible. He discovered it in the university library, and on opening its pages he was filled with astonishment. He had, before this, supposed that the prayer-books of the Church contained the whole word of God. But when he turned over the leaves of this complete Latin Bible, his feelings were indescribable. He read and read again, with ever-increasing wonder, and from that day it was to him *the* Book of all other books the university or even the world possessed. In the



LUTHER STUDYING THE BIBLE.

language of the Book itself, he "rejoiced" at God's word, "as one that findeth great spoil."

During the course of this same year, young Luther was seized with a dangerous illness. Death stared him in the face, and he was brought to see his unfitness for an event fraught with consequences so solemn. He recovered, however, and, resuming his studies, was made a doctor of philosophy in 1505. According to his father's wishes, he applied himself to the study of law, and began to teach in the university. But all this time, his conscience, enlightened by his meagre knowledge of Scripture, incessantly reminded him of the one thing needful, even the salvation of his burdened soul. He resolved, at last, to make this the one great business of his life, and was confirmed in his resolution by two striking events following each other.

One morning a report reached him that one of his most intimate college friends, named Alexis, had been assassinated. Hurrying to the spot, he learned to his horror that the report was true. Deeply affected, he asked himself, "What would become of me if I were thus suddenly called away?"

During the summer of 1505, on returning from a visit to the home of his childhood, he

was overtaken by a violent thunder-storm, a short distance out of Erfurt. Suddenly, there was a flash and a crash—a thunder-bolt had sunk into the ground at his feet. Luther fell upon his knees in anguish; death, judgment, and eternity rose up before him in all their attendant terrors, and he vowed solemnly before God, if delivered from death, to forsake the world and devote himself wholly to His service. This, according to his then popish ideas, meant to enter one of the various monastic orders.

He reached Erfurt in safety, and, true to his vow, he at once prepared to break the tender ties of family and friendship. After a last evening repast with some of his most intimate college friends, he quietly quitted his lodgings, leaving behind him his books and his furniture, and, alone in the darkness, presented himself at the gate of the convent of the Hermits of St. Augustine. Proud of such an acquisition to their ranks, the monks admitted him gladly. Luther, not yet two and twenty, is buried, as he thinks, to the world and all its evils. The ring he had received from the university when made a doctor of philosophy, he returned, and applied himself hopefully to the most menial work about the convent. He was at once porter, sexton, man-of-all-work, and *beggar* for the

monastery. With his bread-bag on his back he was obliged to go from door to door about the town of Erfurt. But what is servitude and beggary to a man who seeks the salvation of his soul, esteems it above all things on earth, and seeks to obtain it by self-mortification and "good works?" This, he thought, was the way to attain to that humility and holiness which he hoped would fit him for heaven, and at last obtain everlasting happiness.

After a time, at the request of the university, he was released from his menial offices, and the young monk gave himself to the study of the Latin fathers, especially the works of St. Augustine. There was a chained Bible also in the monastery, and to this Luther frequently resorted; though, the veil being still upon his heart, he understood nothing of the spirit of it as he read the letter.

It would prolong our narrative beyond bounds to go over in detail what Luther voluntarily endured in the monastery. His vigils, fastings and studies, brought him at last to death's door. But still his burdened conscience found no relief. "I am a lost man," he used frequently to cry. He says, "I confessed every day; but all that was of no use. Then, overwhelmed with dejection, I distressed myself by

the multitude of my thoughts. See, said I to myself, thou art envious, impatient, passionate; therefore, wretch that thou art, it is of no use to thee to have entered into this holy order."

At length, when so reduced by his austerities that one might have almost counted his bones, his case came under the notice of John Staupitz, the superior of the Augustinian order. This good man had himself passed through a course of "will-worship and humility and neglecting of the body" (Col. 2: 23), similar to Luther's, and had obtained peace at last by simple faith in Christ, God's only Saviour. So he understood the poor, half-starved monk thoroughly, and attempted to draw him out of himself and his works to trust in Christ and His atoning sacrifice.

"It is vain," complained Luther, "that I make promises to God; sin is always too strong for me."

"Oh, my friend," replied the vicar-general, "I have vowed to the holy God more than a thousand times that I would live a holy life, and never have I kept my vow. I now make no more vows; for I know well I shall not keep them. If God will not be merciful to me for Christ's sake, and grant me a happy death when I leave

this world, I cannot with all my vows and good works stand before Him; I must then perish.”

When Luther expressed to him some of the legal reasonings of his mind, he said, “But why do you distress yourself with these speculations and high thoughts? Look to the wounds of Jesus Christ, to the blood which He has shed for you; it is there you will see the mercy of God. Instead of torturing yourself for your faults, cast yourself into the arms of your Redeemer. Trust in Him, in the expiatory sacrifice of His death. Do not shrink from Him; God is not against you; it is you who are estranged and averse to God.”

Much more his venerable guide said to him. These instructions, with the Scriptures, which Luther now read in a new light, helped him much in understanding God’s “simple, artless, unencumbered plan” of saving sinners.

The light, however, did not come instantaneously. He still had to pass through much exercise ere obtaining solid, abiding peace. “Oh, my sin! my sin! my sin!” he groaned one day in the presence of Staupitz. “Well, would you be only the *semblance* of a sinner, and have only the *semblance* of a Saviour?” was the wise reply. “Know,” continued the vicar-general,

“that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of those even who are *real* and *great* sinners, and deserving of utter condemnation.”

The young Augustinian obtained settled repose for his conscience in the second year at the convent. He lay very sick and almost in despair when an old monk visited his cell to speak with him. Luther told him all, and the old man repeated this article of the so-called Apostle's Creed: “I believe in the forgiveness of sins.” “I believe,” repeated Luther, “I believe in the remission of sins.” “Ah,” said the aged monk, “you must not only believe that David's or Peter's sins are forgiven; the devils believe that. The commandment of God is that all men believe that sins are remitted to *them*.”

“From that moment,” says D'Aubigné, “the light shone into the heart of the young monk of Erfurt. The word of grace was pronounced, and he believed it. He renounced the thought of meriting salvation, and trusted himself with confidence to God's grace in Christ Jesus.

“Luther did not at once perceive the consequence of the principle he admitted; he was still sincerely attached to the Church of Rome, and yet he was, thenceforward, independent of it; for he had received salvation from God Himself, and Roman Catholicism was virtually ex-

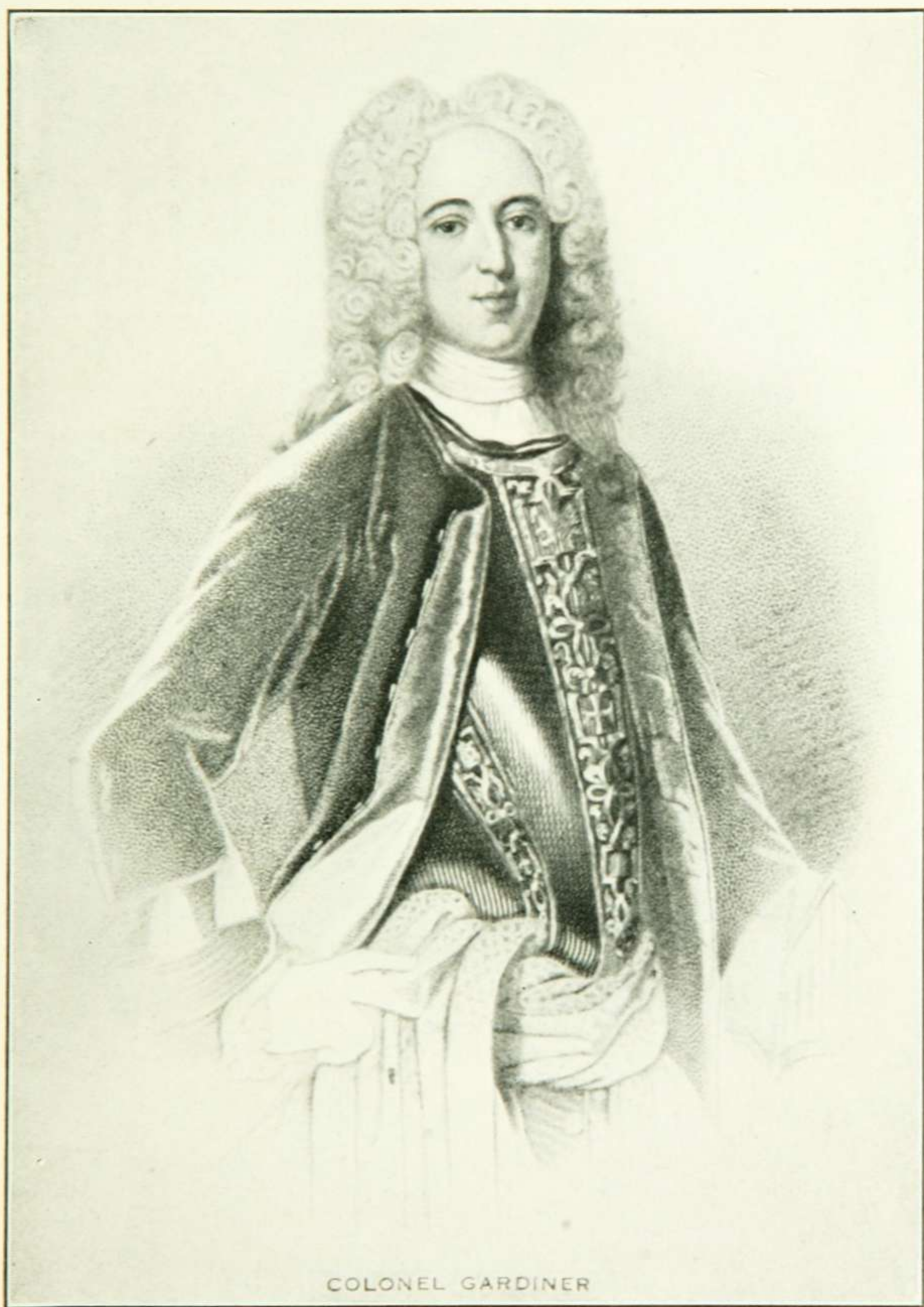
tinct to him. From that hour Luther went forward; he sought in the writings of the apostles and prophets for all that might strengthen the hope which filled his heart. Every day he implored help from above, and every day new light was imparted to his soul."

There is little more to add. It should be remarked, however, that unlike Peter Waldo, Luther did not arrive at an understanding of God's gospel without assistance from man; the former obtained light immediately from the Holy Scriptures, without assistance from others. Scripture itself abounds with instances of these "diversities" of the Spirit's "operations." Christ is the end, aim, and object of all. He is the only Saviour from sin and sin's consequences; and if the sinner but learns this in his soul, it matters little whether he obtained this knowledge from the Scriptures directly, or indirectly by the assistance of others. Our Lord, in His wondrous prayer, mentions those who should believe on Him through His disciples' word (John 17: 20).

Make it your care to believe on Him, dear reader, to the saving of your soul. His word of encouragement to every sin-burdened soul is: "FEAR NOT; ONLY BELIEVE."

COLONEL GARDINER

THE subject of our present narrative, Colonel James Gardiner, was born in 1668, the year of the English Revolution. His youth was one of wild recklessness, and, trained to the profession of a soldier, he fought three duels before reaching his majority. In the first battle fought for his country, in his nineteenth year, he was left wounded on the field. His conduct on this occasion will illustrate in some measure how seared his conscience had become by licentiousness and dissipation, even at that early age. Though dangerously wounded, he had not the slightest thought of repentance or his soul's eternal welfare; his one concern was how to secure the gold he had about his person. Knowing the enemy would soon begin their loot, he gathered a handful of congealed blood and concealed the gold within it. Closing his hand upon the clotted gore, he held it tightly until it had cemented so that he could with difficulty release it. The French appeared the next morning, busy at their ghastly work. Young Gardiner lay faint and utterly exhausted from the loss of blood. One of the soldiers was



COLONEL GARDINER

about to dispatch him, when another intervened, saying, "Do not kill that poor child." To secure himself, he told a deliberate and barefaced falsehood, saying he was a nephew of the governor of Huy, a neutral town near by. So intense were his sufferings while being carried to Huy, that he begged to be killed outright. Even now God was not in all his thoughts, and had he been a beast he could not have been more indifferent concerning death.

On his recovery and restoration to his country, he immediately plunged into still wilder excesses, and no manner of wickedness was too great for his hardened heart and conscience. "The goodness of God" failed utterly to lead him to "repentance." God spoke by saving "his life from perishing by the sword," but blinded by sin and Satan, he "perceived it not." (See Rom. 2: 4; Job 33: 18).

From this time until his thirtieth year the most criminal intrigues, it is said, formed the staple of his existence. So dissolute did he become, that he was notorious among his godless fellow-officers as "the happy rake." But all this time he was anything but "happy," as he afterwards confessed. "On one occasion," a writer says, "while his profligate associates were congratulating him on his criminal suc-

cesses, a dog happened to enter the room, and the young soldier (as he well remembered afterwards) could not forbear groaning inwardly, "Oh, that I were that dog!"

His spiritual awakening occurred in the following remarkable manner: He had made a criminal appointment at twelve, one night in midsummer. The early part of the evening he spent in folly with his debauched associates. The party broke up at eleven, and he had still an hour to wait. To while away the time, he commenced reading a book called, "The Christian Soldier; or, Heaven taken by Storm," which his thoughtful mother had without his knowledge slipped into his portmanteau. The title appealed to his soldierly instincts, and he took it up expecting to derive some amusement from its military phraseology. Its contents, however, made no impression on his mind. But God, who

"Moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform,"

had another way of making Himself known to this depraved sinner. His resources, by which He "withdraws man from his purpose," are infinite. He can speak to man, as the inspired Elihu informs us, "in a dream, in a vision of the night." This He was pleased to do in the

case of this profligate soldier. With the book still in his hand, a strange feeling seemed to take possession of him: serious thoughts, for the first time in his life, were awakened in his mind. Whether, at the time, he was awake or asleep, he could never afterwards determine; but this is what took place in that mysterious midnight hour: "He thought he saw an unusual blaze of light fall on the book which he was reading, which he first imagined might happen by some accident in the candle. But lifting up his eyes, he apprehended, to his extreme amazement, that there was before him, as it were suspended in the air, a visible representation of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross, surrounded on all sides with a glory. He was impressed as if a voice, or something like a voice, had come to him to this effect: 'O sinner, did I suffer this for thee? and are these thy returns?'"

So powerfully did this apparition affect him that he became insensible, and continued unconscious he knew not how long. When at last he opened his eyes, he saw nothing unusual. He arose from his seat and commenced pacing the room, his mind almost overcome with a tumult of new-born emotions. So great was his mental agony that he could hardly keep his feet. He appeared to himself to be the vilest

monster in God's universe, and the sins of his lifetime rose up before him in all their hideousness and enormity. Such a view had he of the majesty and holiness of God that he was only astonished that he had not been immediately struck dead in the midst of his wickedness. He saw himself as being abundantly worthy of eternal damnation, and wondered that God had at all spared him even to become awakened at length to his loathsomeness and guilt, after he had for years "despised the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering" (Rom. 2: 4).

So great did his guilt appear to him that for months he despaired of ever obtaining mercy. It seemed almost a settled point with him that the wisdom and justice of God required that such a monstrous transgressor should, like the sinners of Sodom and Gomorrha, be "set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." His sufferings occasioned by an almost hopeless remorse became well-nigh unbearable. "The pains of hell gat hold upon him," and he now abhorred the licentious pleasures which had shortly before been his chief delight. This "godly sorrow, which worketh repentance," arose, as he afterwards testified, not so much from the fear of hell "as from a sense of

that horrible ingratitude he had shown to the God of his life, and to that blessed Redeemer who had been in so affecting a manner set forth as crucified before him.”

At last, peace came (as all true peace must ever come) by faith in the blood of Christ shed upon the cross. And *faith* came through the reading of that remarkable passage in Romans: “Whom God hath set forth a propitiation **through faith in His blood**, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare at this time His righteousness (justice), that He might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (chap. 3: 25, 26). That same justice which he at one time imagined must require his condemnation, he now saw to be vindicated, aye, glorified, in the saving of his soul through the substitutional sufferings of Jesus Christ, crucified for his manifold sins and unrighteousnesses. “Then did he see and feel the riches of redeeming love and grace in such a manner as not only engaged him, with the utmost pleasure and confidence, to venture his soul upon it, but even swallowed up as it were his whole heart in the returns of love, which from that blessed time became the genuine and delightful principle of his obedience, and ani-

mated him with an enlarged heart to run in the way of God's commandments."

"And indeed," adds his biographer, "when I consider how habitual all those criminal indulgences were grown to him, and that he was now in the prime of life, and all this while in high health too, I cannot but be astonished to reflect upon it; and that he should be so wonderfully sanctified in body, as well as in soul and spirit, as that, for all the future years of his life, he from that hour should find so constant a disinclination to, and abhorrence of, those criminal sensualities to which he fancied he was before so invariably impelled by his very constitution that he used strangely to think, and to say, that Omnipotence itself could not reform him without destroying that body and giving him another."

Until the day of his death, a period of twenty-six years, Colonel Gardiner adorned the doctrine of God his Saviour in all things, doing "works meet for repentance." He fell at the battle of Preston-pans, in defense of the house of Hanover.

Little need be said by way of comment on this marvelous tale of grace. God "who is rich in mercy" saves whom, and by what means soever, He will. The cross enables Him to right-

ously show grace to the most guilty. And divine justice, which otherwise must have condemned the sinner to everlasting shame and misery, is in the gospel in the sinner's favor. The justified believer sings in his happy heart:

“Righteousness now counts me free!”

It is written, “The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God,” and the Scripture cannot be broken. Read in 1 Cor. 6 : 9, 10 a detailed list of characters who by the righteousness of God and the holiness of heaven must forever be debarred from the inheritance of the saints in light. But, all glory to the grace of God, there is salvation from this state of sin and guilt. The apostle says of the washed, sanctified and justified Corinthians, “AND SUCH WERE SOME OF YOU.”

HUGH LATIMER

THE circumstances under which the conversion of Hugh Latimer was brought about were most novel, and the story is one of the most interesting on record. To understand or appreciate it rightly, however, some knowledge of his previous life is necessary. In brief it was this:

His early youth was spent in following the pursuits of yeomanry (hence, probably, his "Sermon on the Plough"), and his conduct appears to have been most circumspect. He happily escaped, it would seem, the vices so common to youth in his and our own day. He entered the University at Cambridge in his fourteenth year, and being full of boyish fun and vigor he interested himself as much in the amusements of the college as in its studies. He was still a youth when a marked change took place in his conduct (at just what age is uncertain), and he exchanged the games and festivities of his gay college companions for a life of severe asceticism. This sudden transition was brought about as follows: He was dining together with a company of fellow-students, when



MARTYRDOM OF LATIMER AND RIDLEY

one of the party quoted Eccl. 3 : 12, from the Latin Vulgate, "There is nothing better than to be merry and to *do well!*" "A vengeance on that '*do well!*'" exclaimed an intemperate monk present; "I wish it were beyond the sea." The embryo bishop (Latimer) was startled. "I understand it now," said he; "that will be a heavy *do well* for these monks when they have to render to God an account of their lives."

After this young Latimer threw himself heartily into the practices of ascetic superstition, and like Luther, became distinguished for his austerities. Like all of his kind, he learned to attach the greatest importance to matters of a most trifling character. For example: the missal states that water must be mingled with the sacramental wine, and Latimer, while officiating as a priest, would be distressed in conscience for fear he had put in too much or too little water! He soon became notorious for his devotion in ascetic ritualism, and was accordingly rewarded with the office of cross-bearer to the university. This appointment he held for seven years, and it was his delight to parade in the midst of chanting priests and gorgeous processions of monks and laymen. More religious, his friends thought, he could not be;

yet his soul, alas, was still immured in the darkness of superstitious ceremonies. He worshiped he knew not what; and even Luther in his German monastery could hardly have equaled this English yeoman's son.

The University was at this time in a ferment over the publication of the Greek New Testament, with a Latin translation by Erasmus. The enemies of the Reformation were in a tumult. "Who will meet these new doctrines and champion our cause?" they asked in dismay. The University Cross-bearer was the one to whom they expectantly looked for help. A writer says: "This young priest combined a biting humor with an impetuous disposition and indefatigable zeal. He followed the friends of the word of God into the colleges and houses where they used to meet, debated with them, and pressed them to abandon their faith. On occasion of receiving the degree of Bachelor of Divinity, he had to deliver a Latin discourse in the presence of the University, and chose for his subject, 'Philip Melanchthon and his doctrines.' Latimer's discourse produced a great impression. 'At last,' said his hearers, 'Cambridge will furnish a champion for the church that will confront the Wittenberg doctors and save the vessel of our Lord.' "

Among the young priest's hearers that day was Thomas Bilney, who had, some time before this, found peace for his soul in Christ, and had gone over to the cause of the Reformation. He easily detected the untenableness of Latimer's arguments, and longed to win him to the truth. After reflection and prayer, he conceived a most novel plan by which to bring the gospel to his notice. He sought an interview with Latimer at his college residence. "For the love of God," he said, "be pleased to hear my confession." Latimer was delighted. "Ah," he thought, "he has come to recant. My discourse against Melanchthon has opened his eyes; he may still be saved to the church."

He at once prepared to hear the heretic's confession of recantation. The record says: "Bilney, kneeling before his confessor, told him, with touching simplicity, the anguish he had once felt in his soul, the efforts he had made to remove it, their unprofitableness, and the peace he had felt when he believed that Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. He described to Latimer the Spirit of adoption he had received, and the happiness he experienced in being able to call God his Father. Latimer listened intently. His heart was opened, and the voice of the pious Bilney

penetrated it without obstacle. From time to time the confessor would have chased away the new thoughts which came crowding into his bosom, but the penitent continued; and his language, at once so simple and so sincere, entered like a two-edged sword.

“At length the penitent rose up, but Latimer remained seated, absorbed in thought. Like Saul on the way to Damascus, he was conquered, and his conversion, like the apostle’s, was instantaneous. He saw Jesus as the only Saviour given to man; he contemplated and adored Him. His zeal for the superstitions of his fathers he now regarded as a war against God, and he wept bitterly.”

Bilney sought to console him as best he could. “Brother,” said he, “‘though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.’”

The work in the confessor’s soul was as complete as it was sudden.

His friends were filled with the deepest astonishment at the change wrought in him, and the enemies of the gospel were in dismay. The new convert’s one object now was to make Christ known everywhere, as the only Saviour for lost sinners. With Bilney he entered the gates of Cambridge prison and told the prisoners of Him who came to proclaim liberty to the captives

of Satan, and the opening of the prison-house of condemnation to ruined sinners. They went outside the town to the lazar-house, and there told of that blessed One whose shed blood can cleanse away the foul leprosy of sin. They even invaded the mad-house, and the shriekings of the maniacs were hushed at the sweet and soul-subduing sounds of the gospel of peace. Later in their lives they testified before princes the gospel of the grace of God ; and in the end, both sealed their testimony with their blood.

So runs the story of the Spirit's work in the soul of Hugh, afterwards, bishop Latimer. His conversion reads like a realistic commentary on the text, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; **THE FLESH PROFITETH NOTHING.**"

JOHN NEWTON

JOHN NEWTON was born on the twenty-fourth of July, in the year 1725. His mother was a pious, gentle woman, and it was her heart's desire to bring up her son "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." With this object in view she stored his memory at an early age with portions and chapters of Scripture, besides many hymns and poems. But she died when he was seven years old, and his father, who was a sea-captain in the Mediterranean trade, married again soon after her death.

He thus passed into different hands, and, though well-cared for in other respects, his Christian mother's instructions were not replaced. He was allowed to run with ill-bred and profane children, and very soon followed their pernicious ways. He was soon after sent to a boarding-school in Essex, where he remained until his tenth year, when his father took him with him to sea. This continued till 1742. "At this period," he writes, "my temper and conduct were exceeding various. At school, or soon after, I had little concern about religion, and easily received very ill impressions. But I



James Oglethorpe
John Newton

was often disturbed with convictions. From a child I was fond of reading. Among other books Burnet's 'Christian Oratory' often came in my way; and though I understood but little of it, the course of life therein recommended appeared very desirable, and I was inclined to attempt it. I began to pray, to read the Scriptures, and to keep a sort of diary. I was, presently, religious in my own eyes; but, alas, this seeming goodness had no solid foundation, but passed away like a morning cloud, or an early dew! I was soon weary, gradually gave it up, and became worse than before; instead of prayer, I learned to curse and blaspheme, and was exceedingly wicked when from under my parents' view. All this was before I was twelve years old."

About this time he had a dangerous fall from a horse, and was nearly thrown upon the stakes of a newly-cut hedge-row. This alarmed him somewhat, and led him to break off for a time from many of his sinful practices, but he soon relapsed into his former condition of indifference. He was again aroused by a providential escape from death by drowning. He, with an intimate companion, had agreed to go on board a man-of-war, but he was detained, and the boat left without him. It was accidentally up-

set, and his companion was drowned with several others. He says, "I was invited to the funeral of my play-fellow, and was exceedingly affected to think that by a delay of a few minutes (which had much displeased and angered me, till I saw the event), my life had been preserved. However, this likewise was soon forgotten."

He writes as follows concerning his last attempt to establish for himself a righteousness after the flesh, before his final relapse into that state of infidelity and degradation which, after six years, ended in his genuine conversion to God.

He says: "My last reform was the most remarkable, both for degree and continuance. Of this period, or at least some part of it, I could use the apostle's words: 'After the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.' I did everything that might be expected from a person entirely ignorant of God's righteousness, and desirous to establish his own. I spent the greatest part of every day in reading the Scriptures, meditation and prayer; I fasted often. I even abstained from all animal food for three months; I would hardly answer a question, for fear of speaking an idle word. I seemed to bemoan my former miscarriages very earnestly, sometimes with tears. In short, I became an ascetic,

and endeavored, so far as my situation would permit, to renounce society, that I might avoid temptation. I continued in this serious mood (I cannot give it a higher title) for more than two years, without any considerable breaking off. But it was a poor religion; it left me in many respects under the power of sin, and, so far as it prevailed, only tended to make me gloomy, stupid, unsociable, and useless."

At this period he fell in with the second volume of Lord Shaftesbury's "Characteristics." No immediate effect, he says, was produced on his mind by their subtleties, but it acted like a slow poison, and prepared the way for all that followed.

He made a voyage to Venice in a vessel in charge of a friend of his father's, and the importunity and opportunity to sin proving all too strong, he again lapsed rapidly into a state of open sin and wickedness. He was alarmed for a time by a remarkable dream (which our want of space forbids relating), but the impression soon wore off, and then followed that long course of debasing wickedness, detailed by him in a series of letters called, "From the Service of Sin," etc.* He makes mention of an infidel

* May be had from the publishers of this book. Paper covers, 20 cts. ; cloth, 40 cts.

ship-mate at this time who became his intimate companion. He says of him, "He was a person of exceedingly good natural talents and much observation. He was the greatest master of what is called the free-thinking school I remember to have met with, and he knew how to insinuate his sentiments in the most plausible way. His zeal also was equal to his address; he could hardly have labored more in the cause if he had expected to gain heaven by it." This miserable man, he relates, was afterwards overtaken by a storm on a voyage from Lisbon, and, though the vessel and crew escaped, a great sea broke over the decks and swept him into eternity.

Newton was made a midshipman in the navy, but he was soon degraded by his misconduct, and publicly stripped and whipped. This enraged him so against the officer in command that he determined, if possible, to take his life. He says it was the hope of living to effect this that prevented him from taking his own life. His conscience became utterly seared, and he was given up to such moral blindness that he firmly believed that after death he should cease to be.

The ship in which he sailed was bound for India on a five years' voyage, but at his urgent

request, he was exchanged at Madeira and put on board a vessel bound for Guinea. His services on board this ship ended with his engaging to work for a slave dealer on the west coast of Africa, and he was landed on the island of Benanoes, as he says, "with little more than the clothes upon my back, as if I had escaped shipwreck."

Here he was completely in the power of his employer, and for the most part of a year was degraded to the position of a slave. He says, speaking of this time, "I have seen frequent cause since to admire the mercy of the Lord in banishing me to those distant parts, and almost excluding me from human society, at a time when I was big with mischief, and, like one infected with a pestilence, was capable of spreading a taint wherever I went."

His master finally transferred him to another trader, with whom he fared somewhat better. He wrote his father frequently, begging him to find means to take him away. A ship sailing to this locality was accordingly instructed to bring him home, and on this vessel he lived as a passenger for about a year, while she cruised along the coast gathering a cargo of gold, ivory, dye-wood, and beeswax. He says, "I had no business to employ my thoughts, but sometimes

amused myself with mathematics. Excepting this, my whole life when awake was a course of most horrid impiety and profaneness.”

About the beginning of January, 1748, they set sail for England. The voyage, as it was then made, was perhaps more than 7,000 miles. On account of the trade winds, they first sailed westward toward the coast of Brazil, then to the banks of Newfoundland, and thence directly to England. On the voyage home, Newton took up and commenced to read a copy of “Thomas à Kempis.” As he read, the thought would force itself upon him, What if these things are true? He determined to banish these thoughts from his mind, so closed the book and joined in some vain conversation with his companions. He retired to his berth, but was startled out of his sleep by a violent sea which broke over the vessel and filled the cabin where he lay. He supposed that the ship was sinking and attempted to reach the deck. He was met on the ladder by the captain, who asked him to bring a knife. He returned for the knife, and the person who ascended in his place, was immediately washed overboard. A dreadful storm had overtaken them, and for four weeks their disabled vessel was tossed and drifted about at the mercy of the winds and waves. Death stared

them constantly in the face, and Newton's free-thought failed and forsook him utterly. Like Jonah, he realized himself to be in the grip of God's mighty hand.

He then thought upon his many sins, professions and relapses, and great was his misery. He concluded at the first that his sins were too many and great to be forgiven, and many passages of Scripture, such as Prov. 1: 24-31; Heb. 6: 4-6; 2 Pet. 2: 20, etc., returned to memory and nearly drove him to despair. He had on board a New Testament and a volume of Bishop Beveridge's sermons, one of which, on the Saviour's death, affected him much. He was particularly struck with the parable of the fig-tree, also the conversion of Paul, and the reception of the prodigal. Before their arrival in Ireland he had trusted his soul to Christ, whose precious blood had power to cleanse away his every sin. He had much yet to learn, but he stepped from that broken, water-logged ship a new creature in Christ Jesus—saved by the rich and sovereign grace of God.

Reader, this is the man who afterwards wrote for the Christian Church that tenderest of heart-touching hymns, "How sweet the name of Jesus sounds." We see in this case the depths of degradation to which the most refined nature

among men may descend. We learn, too, the longsuffering grace of our Saviour-God who is, adored be His name, "RICH IN MERCY."

"How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ear!
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
And drives away his fear.

It makes the wounded spirit whole,
And calms the troubled breast;
'Tis manna to the hungry soul,
And to the weary, rest.

Dear Name! the Rock on which I build!
My Shield and Hiding-place!
My never-failing Treasury, filled
With boundless stores of grace!

Jesus, my Saviour, Shepherd, Friend!
Thou Prophet, Priest and King!
My Lord, my Life, my Way, my End!
Accept the praise I bring."



JOHN BUNYAN.

JOHN BUNYAN

JOHN BUNYAN, whose conversion we are now about to record, was born in the old English village of Elstow, in the year 1628.

His father, who was a poor brazier and tinker, brought him up to the same handicraft.

Though at heart an atheist, and terribly profane, he was never a drunkard, or of unclean life. "The thing that gave Bunyan any notoriety in the days of his ungodliness," writes his biographer, Dr. Hamilton, "and which made him afterwards to appear to himself such a monster of iniquity, was the energy which he put into all his doings. He had a zeal for idle play and an enthusiasm in mischief which were the perverse manifestations of a forceful character."

This energetic disposition of character naturally gave him a position of prominence among his fellows, and he became a ragamuffin chief and leading spirit in all the idle sports and pastimes enacted on Elstow Green. "The only restraining influence of which he then felt the power was terror," says the above-mentioned writer. "His days were often gloomy through

forebodings of wrath to come, and his nights were scared with visions which the boisterous diversions and adventures of his waking days could not always dispel. He would dream that the last day had come, and that the quaking earth was opening its mouth to let him down to hell; or he would find himself in the grasp of fiends who were dragging him powerless away."

But these influences did not extend beyond the period of his boyhood, and he became hardened, almost "past feeling," as he became older. He several times escaped death in a remarkably providential manner; but this "goodness of God" failed utterly to lead him to "repentance." He married at an early age, and it appears that his wife was the daughter of a godly man. She possessed two small books which her father had left her on his death-bed, as her only legacy; these were, "The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven," and another, called "The Practice of Piety." These books young Bunyan read, and they were the means of creating within him a desire to reform his godless life. So he attended church twice a day regularly, and read the responses from the Prayer-book and sang, as he saw the rest of the congregation doing. So thoroughly did he fall under the

blinding influences of superstition at this time that, as one remarks, "Had he seen a priest, though never so sordid and debauched in his life, his spirit would fall under him, and he could have lain down at the feet of such and been trampled upon by them—their name, their garb, their work, did so intoxicate and bewitch him." He adored the altar, worshiped the surplice, and deified the individual who served at the former and arrayed himself in the latter. But this ritualism, as is ever the case, was powerless either to reach his heart or change his life, and he continued in his old course of sin and blasphemy.

One Lord's day, however, in the midst of his usual afternoon diversions, a voice, as if from heaven, seemed to say, Wilt thou leave thy sins and go to heaven, or have thy sins and go to hell? "His arm," one writes, "which was about to strike a ball, was arrested, and, looking up to heaven, it seemed as if the Lord Jesus was looking down upon him in remonstrance and deep displeasure, and at the same time the conviction flashed across him that he had sinned so long that repentance was now too late." He thought, "My state is surely miserable; miserable if I leave my sins, and but miserable if I follow them. I can but be damned, and if

I must be so, I had as good be damned for many sins as few."

So fully was he persuaded that repentance was for him impossible, that he deliberately decided to have his fill of "the pleasures of sin" while life should last, and then suffer forever the fearful consequences. "For a month or more he went on in resolute sinning, only grudging that he could not get such scope as the madness of despair solicited.

"One day as he was standing at a neighbor's window, cursing and swearing, and 'playing the madman after his wonted manner,' a woman of the town protested that he made her tremble, and that truly he was the ungodliest fellow for swearing that she ever heard in all her life, and quite enough to ruin the youth of the whole town. The woman was herself a notoriously worthless character, and so severe a reproof from so strange a quarter had a singular effect on Bunyan's mind. He was silenced in a moment. He blushed before the God of heaven; and as he there stood with hanging head, he wished with all his heart that he were a little child again, and that his father might teach him to speak without profanity; for he thought his bad habit so inveterate now, that reformation was out of the question."

From that day he ceased to swear, and his whole outward life was so reformed that his fellow-townsmen wondered greatly. He commenced to read the Bible, and became greatly interested in the historical parts of it. But this was only another attempt of Satan to deceive him—now by *legalism*, as at first by *ritualism*. He says, “I did set the commandments before me for my way to heaven; which commandments I did also strive to keep, and, as I thought, did keep them pretty well sometimes, and thus I should have comfort; yet now and then should break one, and so afflict my conscience; but then I should repent, and say I was sorry for it, and promised God to do better next time, and there get help again; for then I thought I pleased God as well as any man in England. Thus I continued about a year; all which time our neighbors did take me to be a very godly man, a new and religious man, and did marvel much to see such great and famous alteration in my life and manners; and, indeed, so it was, though I knew not Christ, nor grace, nor faith, nor hope.”

But one day, after he had removed to Bedford, as he was passing down the street, he noticed a few poor women in conversation in a doorway. He drew near, and listened a while to

their talk. They were speaking of the new birth, and the work of God's Spirit in their souls, and their personal experiences of the saving power of God's grace through Christ. He stood amazed, and realized that they possessed something of which he was entirely ignorant.

He then began to perceive that salvation is not from anything that comes from man, or that man can do, but that it is from God, and that to possess it he must have to do with God Himself—that it was something new he must possess in his soul which none but God can give, a forgiveness of sins which none but God can administer. These poor women were basking in the sunshine whilst he, with all his doings, was shivering in the cold.

But long, weary years of doubt and despondency yet passed before Bunyan learned to look away from self to find in Christ and His finished work the way to God and peace. The pride of heart which hinders men from seeing their truly lost condition was very strong in him, and it took long to break it up. Luther's "Commentary on Galatians" fell into his hands one day, and brought him a flood of light. "His happiness," one writes, "was now as intense as his misery had been. He wished he were fourscore

years old, that he might die quickly, that he might go to be with Him who had made His soul an offering for his sins.”

After this he was again assailed by temptations of Satan, and another season of agony was passed; but finally he was relieved by the text, “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” He says, “I saw, moreover, that it was not my good frame of heart that made my righteousness better, nor my bad frame that made my righteousness worse, for my righteousness was Jesus Christ Himself, ‘the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever.’ ”

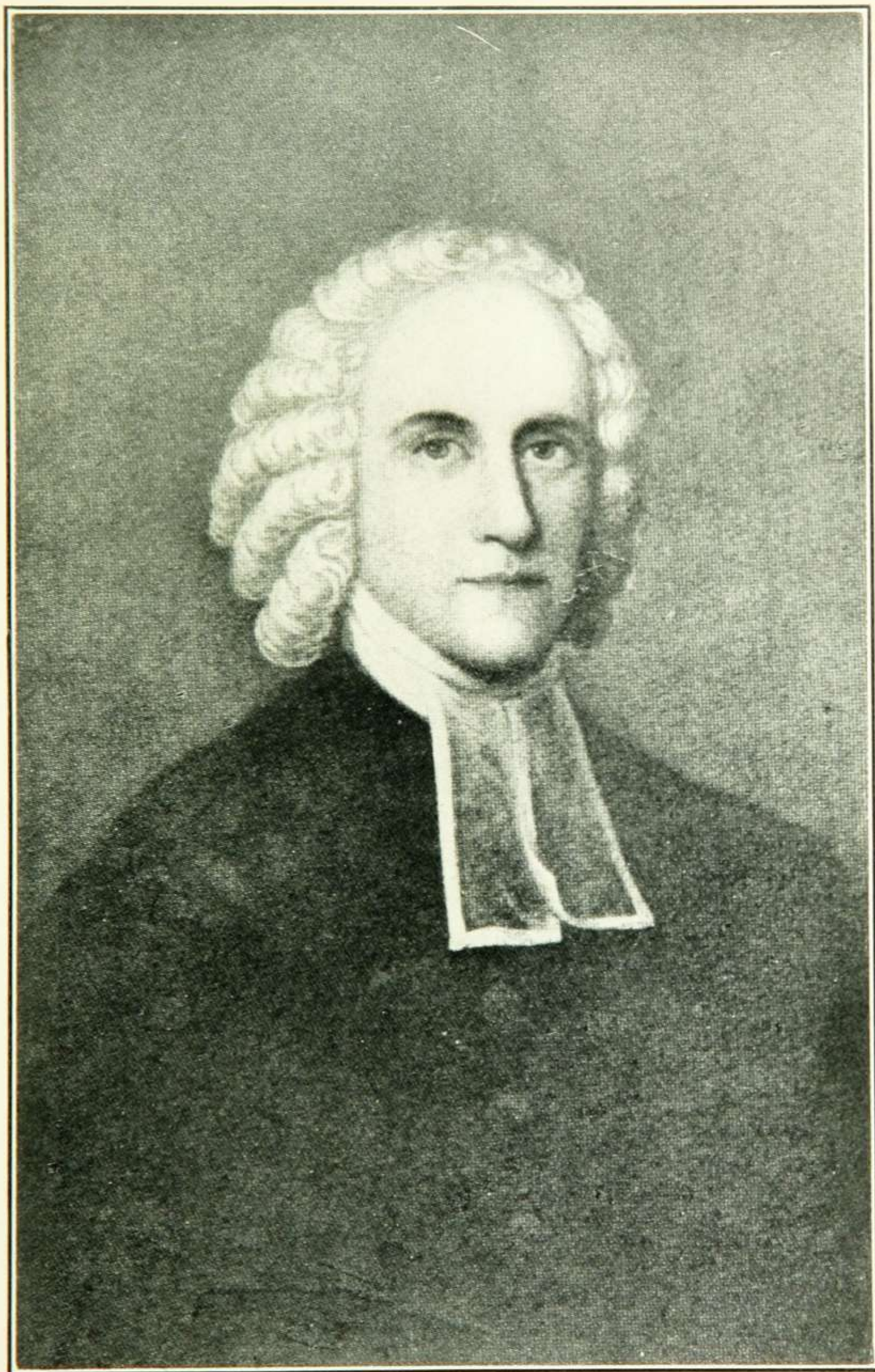
This, reader, is the story of the conversion of the author of the immortal “Pilgrim’s Progress.” Learn from it, as he at last learned, that salvation is by “JESUS ONLY.”

JONATHAN EDWARDS

JONATHAN EDWARDS, one of the early presidents of Princeton College, was born in the year 1703, at East Windsor, Conn.

He has left a very full account of his thoughts and feelings at the time of his conversion, and it is so well told that we give the story in full as he has left it.

“When I was a boy,” he says, “some years before I went to college, at a time of remarkable awakening in my father’s congregation, I was very much affected for many months, and concerned about the things of religion and my soul’s salvation, and was abundant in religious duties. My affections were lively and easily moved, and I seemed to be in my element when engaged in religious duties. But in process of time my convictions and affections wore off, and I returned like a dog to his vomit, and went on in the ways of sin. But God would not suffer me to go on with any quietness; I had great and violent inward struggles, till I was brought wholly to break off all my former wicked ways, and all ways of known outward sins, and to apply myself to seek salvation in a manner that I never



JONATHAN EDWARDS

was before; I felt a spirit to part with all things in the world for an interest in Christ. My concern continued and prevailed, with many exercising thoughts and inward struggles; but yet it never seemed proper to express that concern by the name of terror.

“From my childhood up my mind had been full of objections against the doctrine of God’s sovereignty. But I remember the time very well when I seemed to be convinced and fully satisfied as to this sovereignty; yet I never could give an account how or by what means I was thus convinced, not in the least imagining at the time, nor a long time after, that there was any extraordinary influence of God’s Spirit in it; only that now I saw further, and my reason apprehended the justice and reasonableness of it. But I have often, since that first conviction, had quite another kind of sense of it than I had then. Often since I have had, not only a conviction but a delightful conviction. The doctrine has very often appeared exceedingly pleasant, bright, and sweet, but my first conviction was not so.

“The first instance that I remember of that sort of inward, sweet delight in God and divine things, in which I have much lived since, was on reading those words: ‘Now, unto the King

eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen' (1 Tim. 1: 17). As I read the words there came into my soul, and was, as it were, diffused through it, a sense of the glory of the divine Being—a new sense, quite different from anything I had ever experienced before. Never any words of Scripture seemed to me as these words did. I thought within myself how excellent a Being that was, and how happy I should be if I might enjoy that God, and be rapt up to Him in heaven, and be, as it were, swallowed up in Him forever! I kept saying over these words of Scripture to myself, and went to pray to God that I might enjoy Him, and prayed in a manner quite different from what I used to do, with a new sort of affection. But it never came into my thoughts that there was anything spiritual or of a saving nature in this.

“From about that time I began to have a new kind of apprehension and idea of Christ and the work of redemption, and the glorious way of salvation by Him. An inward, sweet sense of these things at times came into my heart, and my soul was led away in pleasant views and contemplations of them. This I know not how to express otherwise than by a calm, delightful abstraction of the soul from all the con-

cerns of this world; and sometimes a kind of vision, or fixed ideas and imaginations of being alone in the mountains or some solitary wilderness, far from all mankind, sweetly conversing with Christ, and wrapped and swallowed up in God. The sense I had of divine things would often of a sudden kindle up an ardor in my soul that I know not how to express. As I was walking and looking up on the sky and clouds, there came into my mind a sweet sense of the glorious *majesty* and *grace* of God, that I know not how to express. I seemed to see them both in a sweet conjunction—majesty and meekness joined together; it was a sweet, and gentle, and holy majesty; and also a majestic meekness—a high, great, and holy gentleness.”

We omit what immediately follows this section of the narrative, as it refers chiefly to his experiences as a believer. His closing remarks, however, are interesting, as they show his deep sense of the holiness and sovereignty of God—attributes little admired, even if believed in, by the professing people of God to-day.

“The holiness of God has always appeared to me the most lovely of all His attributes. The doctrines of God’s sovereignty and free grace, in showing ‘mercy to whom He would show mercy,’ and man’s absolute dependence on the

operations of God's Holy Spirit, have very often appeared to me as sweet and glorious doctrines. These doctrines have been much my delight. God's sovereignty has ever appeared to me a great part of His glory. It has often been my delight to approach God and adore Him as a sovereign God, and ask sovereign mercy of Him.

"I have loved the doctrines of the gospel; they have been to my soul like green pastures. The gospel has seemed to me the richest treasure, the treasure that I have most desired, and longed that it might dwell richly in me. The way of salvation by Christ has appeared glorious and excellent, most pleasant and most beautiful. It has often seemed to me that it would in a great measure spoil heaven to receive it in any other way."

How true these words, dear reader! Heaven would indeed be spoiled if it could be gained in any other way than by faith in Christ. "Therefore it is of faith, *that it might be by grace*" (Rom. 4:16). Salvation by faith necessitates its being by the sovereign grace of God; for faith is a gift, and "a man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven" (John 3:27). Reader, hast *thou* faith?

What a contrast the conversion of this amiable, gentle man presents with some of those

previously recorded. God's heavenly grace appears to have fallen on his soul like the gentle dew of a summer's night; while with others it fell, after a long-felt drought, in a sudden down-pour of blessing, amid the thunder and lightning and tempest of God's wrath against sin, and the fierce opposing conflicts of the unseen powers of hell. But in every instance of real conversion it is the Spirit's work giving a knowledge of sin and glimpses of God's holiness, coupled with a sense, more or less distinct, of the work of redemption wrought out by Christ upon the cross.

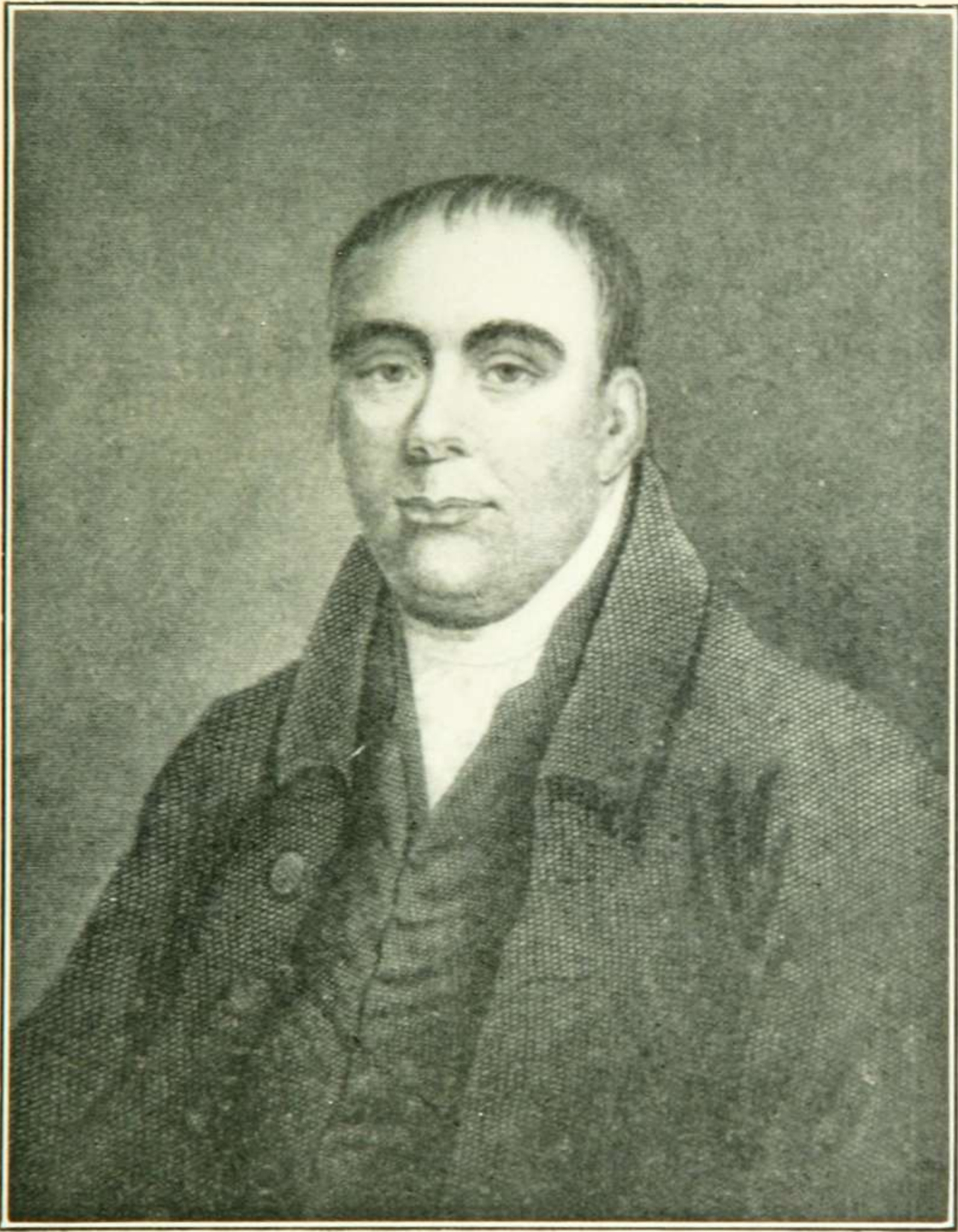
As the wind, unseen, and seemingly capricious (though held in the "fists" of God), "bloweth where it listeth," sometimes as the gentle zephyr, and again as the wild fierce hurricane, "SO IS EVERY ONE THAT IS BORN OF THE SPIRIT."

ANDREW FULLER

THE conversion of Andrew Fuller is best told in his own words. He says :

“ I was at times the subject of such convictions and affections that I really thought myself converted, and lived under that delusion for a long time. The ground on which I rested that opinion was as follows: One morning, I think about the year 1767, as I was walking alone, I began to think seriously what would become of my poor soul, and was deeply affected on thinking of my condition. I felt myself the slave of sin, and that it had such power over me that it was in vain for me to think of extricating myself from its thralldom. I walked sorrowfully along, repeating these words: ‘ Iniquity will be my ruin! Iniquity will be my ruin!’ While poring over my unhappy case, these words of the apostle suddenly occurred to my mind: “ Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace.’

“ Now the suggestion of a text of Scripture to the mind, especially if it came with power, was generally considered by the religious people with whom I occasionally associated, as a promise coming immediately from God. I therefore so



I am Affec^d Yrs
And. Fuller

understood it, and I thought that God had thus revealed to me that I was in a state of salvation, and that therefore iniquity should not, as I had feared, be my ruin.

“The effect of this impression was that I was overcome with joy and transport. I shed, I suppose, thousands of tears as I walked along, and seemed to feel myself, as it were, in a new world. It appeared to me that I hated my sins, and was resolved to forsake them. Thinking on my wicked courses, I remember using those words of Paul: ‘Shall I continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid!’ I felt, or seemed to feel the strongest indignation at the thought.

“But, strange as it may appear, though my face was that morning, I believe, swollen with weeping, before night all was gone and forgotten, and I returned to my former vices with as eager a gust as ever. Nor do I remember that for more than half a year afterwards I had any serious thoughts about the salvation of my soul. I lived entirely without prayer, and was wedded to my sins just the same as before, or, rather was increasingly attached to them.

“Some time in the following year, I was again walking by myself, and began to reflect on my course of life, particularly upon my former hopes

and affections, and how I had since forgotten them all, and returned to all my wicked ways. Instead of sin having no more dominion over me, I perceived that its dominion had been increased. Yet I still thought that must have been a promise of God to me, and that I must have been a converted person, but in a backsliding state. And this persuasion was confirmed by another sudden impression, which dispelled my dejection, in these words: 'I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins.' This, like the former, overcame my mind with joy. I wept much at the thought of having backslidden so long, but yet considered myself now as restored and happy.

"But this also was mere transient affection. I have great reason to think that the great deep of my heart's depravity had not yet been broken up, and that all my religion was without any abiding principle. Amidst it all, I still continued in the neglect of prayer, and was never, that I recollect, induced to deny myself of any sin, when temptations were presented. I now thought, however, 'Surely I shall be better for the time to come.' But alas! in a few days this also was forgotten, and I returned to my evil courses with as great an eagerness as ever.

“One morning, I think in November, 1769, I walked out by myself, with an unusual load of guilt upon my conscience. The remembrance of my sin, not only on the past evening, but for a long time back; the breach of my vows and the shocking termination of my former hopes and affections, all uniting together, formed a burden which I knew not how to bear. The reproaches of a guilty conscience seemed like the gnawing worm of hell. I thought, ‘Surely this must be an earnest of hell itself!’ The fire and brimstone of the bottomless pit seemed to burn within my bosom. I do not write in the language of exaggeration. I know now that the sense which I then had of the evil of sin and the wrath of God was very far short of the truth; but yet it seemed more than I was able to sustain.

“In reflecting upon my broken vows, I saw there was no truth in me. I saw that God would be perfectly just in sending me to hell, and that to hell I must go unless I were saved of pure grace, and, as it were, in spite of myself. I felt that if God were to forgive me all my past sins, I should again destroy my soul, and that in less than a day’s time. I never before knew what it was to feel myself an odious, lost sinner, standing in need of both pardon and purification; yet, though I needed these blessings, it

seemed presumption to hope for them after what I had done. I was absolutely helpless, and seemed to have nothing about me that ought to excite the pity of God, or that I could reasonably expect should do so, but everything disgusting to Him and provoking to the eyes of His glory.

“I was not then aware that *any* poor sinner had a warrant to believe in Christ for the salvation of his soul, but supposed there must be some kind of qualification to entitle him to do it; yet I was aware that I had not these qualifications.

“The resolution I took at that time, seems to resemble that of Esther, who went into the king’s presence *contrary to law*, and at the hazard of her life. Like her, I seemed reduced to extremities, impelled by dire necessity to run all hazards, even though I should perish in the attempt. Yet it was not altogether from a dread of wrath that I fled to this refuge; for I well remember that I felt something attracting in the Saviour. ‘I must—I will—yes—I will trust my soul, my sinful, lost soul, in His hands. If I perish, I perish!’ However it was, I determined to cast myself upon Christ, thinking, peradventure, He would save my soul; and if not, I could but be lost.

“In this way I continued above an hour, weeping, and supplicating mercy for the Saviour’s sake—(my soul hath it still in remembrance, and is humbled in me); and as the eye of the mind was more and more fixed on Him, my guilt and fears were gradually, and insensibly, removed. I now found rest for my troubled soul.”

It is striking how in this and previous cases of conversion we have considered, the soul was first, and sometimes repeatedly, led to believe itself secure, but *always apart from Christ*. This is, we believe, a common delusion of the day in which we live. They all partake, more or less, of the features of those classes, promising but fruitless, mentioned in the parable of the sower: the stony-ground and the thorny-ground hearers. They make an apparently hopeful beginning, but in time of trial or pressure fall away. They endure, and even seem to make progress, for a time; but Christ not being at the root and bottom of their reformation, they return, like the washed sow, to the mire and filth of sin. Evangelists and missionaries meet such cases constantly in their work. Time, in every case, must prove the reality of one’s profession. And, thank God, where Christ is re-

ceived by faith, the soul has real and lasting power over sin.

Has the reader, at some time or other, made a profession, and, like these persons whose conversion we are recording, failed utterly? Do not despair, dear soul, however often you have "tried." Remember:

"It is not try, but *trust*."

Aye, trust in *Jesus*, not in your efforts. When you do (as these men finally were compelled to do) cast yourself unreservedly upon Christ and His merits, you will find, as they and all others have found, that *He* will not fail. He will not, like your depraved and fickle heart, deceive you.

Learn now, as all must learn who would be saved from sin and hell, that "OTHER FOUNDATION CAN NO MAN LAY THAN THAT IS LAID, WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST."



ADONIRAM JUDSON

ADONIRAM JUDSON

BEFORE narrating the circumstances which led up to Judson's conversion, it will be found profitable, we believe, to look somewhat at his natural disposition of character, as manifested in his early youth.

He is described as "possessed of an acute intellect, with great powers of acquisition and unflagging perseverance." His disposition was amiable, though this was in a great measure spoiled by his inordinate love of pre-eminence. His father unwisely encouraged this foolish weakness by telling him that he expected he would some day become a great man. One says: "His plans were of the most extravagantly ambitious character. Now he was an orator, now a poet, now a statesman; but, whatever his character or profession, he was sure, in his castle-building, to attain to the highest eminence. After a time, one thought crept into his mind and embittered all his musings: Suppose he should attain to the highest pinnacle of which human nature is capable; what then? Could he hold his honor forever? What would it be to him, when a hundred years had gone by, that America had never known his equal? He did not wonder that Alexander wept when at the

summit of his ambition. He felt very sure that he should have wept too."

When about fourteen years of age he had a serious illness, which interrupted his studies for a whole year, and gave him plenty of time to think. He spent many days and nights reflecting on what his future course of life should be. On one of these occasions his thoughts took a religious turn. Why should he not be an eminent divine? As he thought on this subject, "his mind instituted a comparison between the great worldly divine, toiling for the same perishable objects as his other favorites, and the humble minister of the gospel, laboring only to please God and benefit his fellow-men. There was (so he thought) a sort of sublimity about that, after all. Surely the world was all wrong, or such a self-abjuring man would be its hero. Ah, but the good man had a reputation more enduring! Yes, yes, his fame was sounded before him as he entered the other world; and that was the only fame worthy of the possession, because the only one that triumphed over the grave. Suddenly, in the midst of his self-gratulation, the words flashed across his mind, 'Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Thy name, give glory.'

"This put a sudden check to his thoughts; not

that he had the slightest inclination for this ideal kind of greatness, but it awakened feelings in his soul to which he had hitherto been a stranger, and he did not like to confess what his heart and conscience told him to be true, that he had no desire to become a real Christian. This would have interfered too seriously with his ambitious plans of self-aggrandizement. Though he was perfectly aware of the vanity of all earthly fame and greatness, had not his father said that he was destined some day to become a great man? So, at all hazards, a great man he resolved to be!"

"The transition from this state of mind to infidelity," a writer says, "was very easy. French infidelity was at this period sweeping over the land like a flood. At Providence College there was a young man who was amiable, talented, witty, exceedingly agreeable in person and manners, but a confirmed deist. A very strong friendship sprang up between the two young men, founded on similar tastes and sympathies, and Judson soon became, at least professedly, as great an unbeliever as his friend.

"During a part of his collegiate course Judson was engaged in teaching at Plymouth, and on closing school set out on a tour through the northern States, and thence to New York.

“After seeing what he wished of New York, he pursued his journey westward, and visited the house of an uncle, a Christian minister. The uncle was absent, and the conversation of the young man who occupied his place was characterized by a godly sincerity, a solemn but gentle earnestness, which addressed itself to the heart; and Judson went away deeply impressed.

“The next night he stopped at a country inn. The landlord mentioned, as he lighted him to his room, that he had been obliged to place him next door to a young man who was exceedingly ill, probably in a dying state, but he hoped that it would occasion him no uneasiness. Judson assured him that beyond pity for the sick man, he should have no feeling whatever. But it was, nevertheless, a very restless night. Sounds came from the sick chamber—sometimes the movements of the watchers, sometimes the groans of the sufferer; but it was not these which disturbed him. He thought of what the landlord had said; the stranger was probably in a dying state. And was *he* prepared? Alone, in the dead of night, he felt a blush of shame steal over him at the question, for it proved the shallowness of his philosophy. What would his late companions say to his weakness? The clear-minded, intellectual, witty E—; what would he

say to this? Still his thoughts *would* revert to the sick man. Was he a Christian, calm in the hope of a glorious immortality? or was he shuddering upon the brink of a dark, unknown future? Perhaps he was a 'free-thinker,' educated by Christian parents and prayed over by a Christian mother. The landlord had described him as a *young* man; and in imagination he was forced to place himself upon the dying bed, though he strove with all his might against it. At last morning came, and its light dispelled all his 'superstitious illusions.'

"As soon as he had risen he went in search of the landlord, and inquired as to his fellow-lodger. 'He is dead,' was the reply. 'Dead!' 'Yes, he is gone, poor fellow! The doctor said he would probably not survive the night.' 'Do you know who he was?' 'Oh, yes; it was a young man from Providence College—a very fine fellow; his name was E——.' Judson was completely stunned. After hours had passed, he knew not how, he attempted to pursue his journey. But one single thought occupied his mind, and the words, dead! lost! lost! were continually ringing in his ears. He knew the religion of the Bible to be true, he felt its truth, and he was in despair. In this state of mind he resolved to abandon his scheme of traveling,

and at once turned his horse's head toward Plymouth."

Judson's soul was now thoroughly aroused. He saw infidelity in its true light, and renounced it forever. After a few months, during which the plowshare of conviction did its painful, though necessary, work in his conscience, he relied entirely upon Christ as his only and all-sufficient Saviour.

His life-plans were now entirely reversed; and abandoning his schemes of literary and political ambition, he asked, like the converted Saul of Tarsus, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" And nearly forty years of toilsome and devoted service among the idolatrous Burmese was God's answer to his prayer. He did indeed become "a great man," though not as the world reckons greatness.

What, after all, can infidelity do for one in the darkening hour of death? And worldly fame and honor—what is it worth when weighed in the scales of eternity, or even assayed by the test of time?

O reader, make Christ your Saviour and treasure this day, and then, like the "most happy" apostle, say, "WHAT THINGS WERE GAIN TO ME, THOSE I COUNTED LOSS FOR CHRIST."



MARTIN BOOS

MARTIN BOOS

MARTIN BOOS was ordained as a priest of the Roman Catholic church in the year 1781. His conduct from his earliest youth had been irreproachable, and he entered upon the duties of his office as conscientiously as his character was unspotted. He was a close student, and completed his theological and literary studies with success. He tells us, twenty years later, what "immense pains" he took to become a really good and righteous man.

"For years together," he says, "even in winter, I lay on the cold floor; I scourged myself till I bled again; I fasted and gave my bread to the poor; I spent every hour I could spare in the church or the cemetery; I confessed and took the sacrament almost every week; in short, I gained such a character for piety, that I was appointed prefect of the congregation of the ex-Jesuits. But what a life I led! The prefect, with all his sanctity, became more and more absorbed in self, melancholy, anxious, and formal. The saint was evermore exclaiming in his heart, 'Oh, wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me?' And no one replied, 'The grace of God through Jesus Christ our

Lord.' No one gave the sick man that spiritual specific: 'The just shall live by faith;' and when I had obtained it, the whole world, with all its learning and spiritual authority, would have persuaded me that I had swallowed poison, and was poisoning all around me; that I deserved to be hung, drowned, immured, banished, or burned."

He continued this "fair show in the flesh" during a period of seven or eight years, when it pleased God to open his eyes in a way we should have little expected.

He says: "In 1788, or 1789, I visited a sick person who was respected for her deep humility and exemplary piety. I said to her: 'You will die very peacefully and happily.'

" 'Why so?' she asked.

" 'Because you have led,' I replied, 'such a pious and holy life.'

"The good woman smiled at my words, and said, 'If I leave the world relying on my own piety I am sure I shall be lost; but relying on Jesus my Saviour, I can die in comfort. What a clergyman you are! What an admirable comforter! If I listened to you, what would become of me? How could I stand before the divine tribunal, where every one must give an account even of her idle words? Which of our actions

and virtues would not be found wanting if laid in the divine balances? No; if Christ had not died for me, if He had not made satisfaction for me, I should have been lost forever, notwithstanding all my good works and pious conduct. He is my hope, my salvation, and my eternal happiness.' ”

The young priest was astonished. He had gone to the bedside of this dying woman to console her, if possible, while he himself knew not that true consolation found only in Christ, and not in religious rites and ceremonies. He had found instruction when he sought it not, and his astonishment turned to shame as it dawned upon him that he, with all his learning, was ignorant of that which this simple-hearted woman knew so well.

Fortunately for him, he did not refuse to be taught by so weak an instrument. The dying woman's testimony made an ineffaceable impression on his soul, and, in course of time, he was led to reject the whole system of teaching that we are saved “by works of righteousness that we have done,” and rested his soul entirely on the merits of “Jesus Christ the righteous.” How perfectly vain are man's efforts in the matter of his soul's salvation seen to be! And, not only are his efforts altogether vain, but his

fancied righteousnesses are as "filthy rags," and his boasted wisdom is "foolishness with God." Martin Boos possessed a goodly measure of all three, but learned at last, at the bedside of a dying woman, to count his acquirements dross and dung as a means of securing a fitness to stand before the judgment-bar of God.

Nothing, reader, that you can do, will avail aught towards the settling of the great account between your soul and God. To enter into His rest you must "cease from your own works," and rely alone on the finished work of Christ accomplished at Calvary's cross, ages before you were born.

"Oh, now believe that all is done,
Trust not in something you might do—
The finished work of God's loved Son
Alone will He accept for you."

God accepts that work and accepts us only on the ground of what has been once and forever done, and not because of anything that we have done, are doing, or may hope to do.

With faith, cast thyself on the Saviour and His work, and thou shalt be for eternity "ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED."



JOHN WESLEY

JOHN WESLEY

“Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?”

THIS is the significant inscription placed under one of Mr. Wesley's portraits at his own direction. It refers, doubtless, to his deliverance “from the wrath to come.”

It is our purpose in this little paper to narrate briefly the circumstances connected with the deliverance” of the spirit of this “just man made perfect.”

Though born of pious parents, Wesley appears to have had little anxiety of soul until after entering Christ Church College, Oxford, in his seventeenth year. Here his mother wrote him, exhorting him, “in good, earnest resolve to make religion the business of your life; for after all, that is the one thing that, strictly speaking, is necessary.” His father, too, encouraged him to read a book called the “Imitation of Jesus Christ,” written in Germany by a monk named Thomas à Kempis, about the year 1450. This book, as might be expected, instead of helping him, only made him the more miserable. He wrote his mother telling her that, after all his efforts to be good, he felt himself becoming worse, and that he found it impossible to do all

the things which the author of the "Imitation" said we ought to do. He begged her to spend every Thursday evening in earnest prayer for him.

At the age of twenty-two he was chosen fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford. Here he resolved to form no new acquaintances, excepting those who would help him to lead a holy life. He had become a clergyman, and determined to give himself up entirely to the great work of becoming holy. He partook of the Lord's supper weekly, gave alms to the poor, and spent his time only in that which he believed to be useful and good.

In August, 1727, he returned to Epworth to be his father's curate. He still read Thomas à Kempis, and thought seriously of shutting himself up like a monk, and spending his life in seclusion in one of the dales of Yorkshire. But in November, 1729, he returned again to Oxford, where, with his brother Charles and others, he set about with renewed earnestness to save himself by fasting and good works. The little band appointed John to draw up a set of rules for their use. These rules were extremely strict, as he supposed that the more they did of those things which they naturally disliked, the more acceptable to God they would become.

Other young men joined themselves to them as time passed, and they were called the "holy club." *But one* of their number appears to have obtained peace with God. Ten years later in looking over the letters of these young men, Wesley said, "I found but one among all my correspondents who declared, what I well remember at that time I knew not how to understand, that God had shed abroad His love in his heart, and given him 'the peace that passeth all understanding.' But who believed his report? Should I conceal a sad truth, or declare it for the profit of others? He was expelled out of his society as a madman, and being disowned by his friends, and despised and forsaken of all men, lived obscure and unknown for a few months, and then went to Him whom his soul loved."

In October, 1735, the Wesleys sailed for Savannah, Georgia, to preach to the English settlers and Indians of the new colony. With them on board were twenty-six Germans, who struck John Wesley as a most extraordinary people. They all appeared to love and fear God, and were always happy and cheerful. He learned that they came from Herrnhuth, Saxony, and were going to America as missionaries. Their deportment made Wesley feel somewhat un-

comfortable, for he beheld in them something to which he felt himself to be an entire stranger. To relieve his conscience he began to deny himself more than ever. He ate nothing but a little rice and a bit of biscuit, and left his comfortable cabin berth to sleep on the floor. One day, however, the value of all this "abusing of the body" was put to the test. A storm arose suddenly; great waves swept the vessel's decks, and they were known to be in very great danger. The sailors and English passengers were terribly alarmed—the Wesleys among them. The Germans, however, did not manifest the least alarm, and were singing throughout the storm. "Wesley was more perplexed than ever about the Germans, and yet when they tried to explain to him the cause of their joy and peace, he did not like to hear it, and thought they talked foolishly."

On landing at Savannah, Wesley, thinking the Germans, called Moravians, such a wonderful people, went to one of their number named Spandenberg to ask his advice as to how to begin his missionary work. "My brother," said Spandenberg, "I must ask *you* one or two questions. Do you know whether *you* are a child of God?" His question astonished Wesley, and he knew not what reply to make. Seeing

he did not reply, his faithful questioner said: "Do you know Jesus Christ?" "Yes," said John, "I know He is the Saviour of the world." "True," said Spandenberg, "but do you know that He has saved *you*?" "I hope He has died to save me," Wesley replied. "Do you know it for yourself?" asked the Moravian. "I do," said Wesley; but he writes in his journal, "I fear they were vain words."

Wesley did not succeed as a missionary in the new colony, and after two years set sail for England. During the voyage home, he thought sadly of his misspent past. He wondered why it was, that after spending fifteen years in quest of peace, it should still seem as far from him as ever, after all that he had done. He records in his journal that on January 8th, 1738, whilst still on the ocean, he was convinced of the pride and unbelief of his heart, adding, "God save, or I perish!" On January 24th, he writes in his journal as follows: "I went to America to convert the Indians! But, oh, who shall convert me! Who, what is he that shall deliver *me* from this evil heart of unbelief! I can talk well—nay, and believe myself, while no danger is near, but let death look me in the face, and my spirit is troubled."

On February 1st he landed in England, and

wrote in his journal the following: "It is now two years and almost four months since I left my native country, in order to teach the Georgian Indians the nature of Christianity; but what have I learnt myself in the meantime? Why, what I least of all expected, that I, who went to America to convert others, was never myself converted to God." He adds much more, showing how thorough and deep was his repentance, over which all heaven rejoiced (Luke 15).

Soon after this, Wesley met a Moravian in London, named Peter Böhler. Peter could not speak English, neither could John understand German, so they conversed in Latin. Peter proved from Scripture that the believer's sins were all forgiven, and that all true Christians might have the certain knowledge of this blessing. Wesley was quite amazed at this, and at first disputed it. He said that he had faith, yet dared not say his sins were forgiven. At last, however, he said, "If this be true, it is quite clear I have not got faith." He wrote afterwards that though he thought he had true faith, it was, after all, only the faith of devils (Jas. 2).

He obtained peace at last under the following circumstances: "It was on Wednesday eve-

ning, May 24th, that the word of life was spoken by the voice of Christ to John Wesley. He had gone 'very unwillingly' to a meeting in Aldersgate Street, where someone read aloud Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans. Wesley had not been fond of Luther; he had spoken of him as 'a wrong-headed German, who made too much of faith, instead of teaching that we are to be saved by faith and works together.' But now, as he listened to the one reading aloud, Wesley says, 'While he was describing the change God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, and in *Christ alone*, for salvation, and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death. I then testified openly to all there what I now felt first in my heart.'"

So, after fifteen years of fruitless toil—"which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship, and humility, and neglecting [punishing, or, not sparing, *marg.*] of the body; not in any honor [yet] to the satisfying of the flesh," (Col. 2: 23)—this "exceedingly zealous" fellow of Lincoln College, clergyman, and would-be converter of American Indians, finds peace for his troubled soul by faith in "Christ alone."

Why, it may be asked, was Wesley all those years in finding peace? Read in God's own Word the answer: "Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; as it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed" (Rom. 9: 32, 33).

Christ, an only and all-sufficient Saviour, *without works*, was to him as to the Jew of old, "a stumblingstone." But he at last, through grace, believed on Him and was never confounded or put to shame.

Remember, reader, the cause of his fifteen years' failure: HE "SOUGHT IT NOT BY FAITH."



Miss Caroline Fry.

CAROLINE FRY

CAROLINE FRY, before her conversion, had become a pronounced deist. The chief instrument used in effecting in her this unhappy condition of mind was a man "of literary reputation, of venerable age, courtly and high-bred." In his sarcastic wit, it is said, he spared nothing human or divine. He became a frequent guest at the table of the relative with whom Caroline resided, and she fell completely under the influence of his fascinations.

"If his insidious flattery," one writes, "failed to make any impression on her delicacy, artlessness, and purity of thought and feeling, there was that in which the influence of his corrupt companionship did not fail: she was too innocent for his immorality, she was just ready for his irreligion. Never, perhaps, at the early age of nineteen and twenty, in a heart of such simplicity and uncorruptness and real ignorance of evil, was the enmity of the fallen nature so developed. Here, in the bosom of a simple girl, brought up in all the virtuous regularity and real religious observance of a secluded country life, a stranger to all that is morally evil—with a mind solidly instructed, and unused

to any manner of evil influence by books or company; hitherto a stranger to sorrows, wrongs and fears, that tend to harden the ungracious heart; in this unvitiated, unworldly bosom was manifested at that early age, clear and strong to her memory as if it was of yesterday, a living, active hatred to the very name of God! She persuaded herself there was no God, and thought she believed her own heart's lie; but if she did, why did she hate Him? Why did she feel such renovated delight when His name was the subject of the profane old poet's wit? 'No God' was probably with her, as it usually is with other infidels, the determination of the heart, and not of the judgment. Thus, while she thought herself above all religious doubts, she seized delightedly on every manifestation of infidelity in those around her, and laughed with the utmost zest of gratified aversion at every profanation of the holy Name."

In the family where she resided there was everything against the encouragement of anything like serious thought or reflection, "except," as one has said, "the restless, unsatisfied, unhappy state of her own mind, displeased with everything around and within her; weary and disgusted with the present, and gloomy and hopeless of the future, without a single sorrow

but the absence of all joy." So miserable was she at times that she would give expression to her feelings thus: "God, if thou art a God, I do not love Thee; I do not want Thee; I do not believe in any happiness in Thee; but I am miserable as I am; give me what I do not seek, do not like, do not want, if Thou canst make me happy. I am tired of this world; if there is anything better, give it me."

Could ever a heart be more miserable? Yet this was the apparently gay, thoughtless deistical girl who made merry over blasphemy and jested concerning the existence of a personal God! Truly, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jer. 17: 9).

Destitute of any other object of affection at this time, Miss Fry attached herself with extreme devotion to the daughter of a clergyman in a neighboring parish. This young woman was singularly beautiful, but a painful disappointment had caused her to become morbidly melancholy, and she bitterly denounced the world, with all its ways and vanities. She wished to leave it, she said, and spoke much of death, eternity, and God. "I do not remember," said Miss Fry, "that she ever spoke of Christ, of atoning merit, or redeeming love; I believe she knew them not. She talked of the world's

emptiness, levity, and injustice. I do not remember that she ever spoke of her own sin. I believe her religion was purely sentimental.” (See Rom. 2: 1–11.)

As might be expected, Miss Fry never unbosomed herself to this friend in regard to the dissatisfaction *she* felt with her deistical views. She did sometimes complain to her of her impetuosity and lack of self-control, and expressed the wish that she might possess that composure and calm philosophy manifested by her friend on all occasions. Her friend therefore wrote her, telling her it was her religion that enabled her to remain calm and self-possessed on every occasion of trial, and not philosophy, as Miss Fry supposed.

This stung her to the quick. The assertion that something moral or spiritual, and not a mental habit of character, was what she lacked, and the possession of which gave her idolized friend the advantage over her, aroused her whole moral being and wrought deep conviction in her soul. On first perusing the letter, she gave way to a paroxysm of grief and indignation—grief to think that her infidelity should be thus tacitly condemned, and indignation that she should be catechized by her friend on a subject relating directly to God, whose existence she

professed to deny or gravely doubt. She determined that her religious friend should not be allowed to persuade or influence her in regard to her belief.

She tried to compose herself on three successive days to answer the letter, but could not. "Before the third night arrived, the struggle was over; the battle had been fought and won; the 'strong man armed' was vanquished; the banner of Jesus waved peacefully over the subdued and prostrate spirit of the infidel despiser of His Word, the conscious hater of His most precious name. 'Lord, save me, or I perish,' has been, and is, from first to last, the sum of her religion, and dated from that most wondrous night, the first in which she knelt before the cross; in which she prayed; in which she slept in Jesus.

"Being now at peace with God, she made up her quarrel with all things. The zest of life returned; she no longer quarrelled with her destiny, or felt distaste of all her pursuits, or grew weary of her existence without any reason. The void was filled; she never after wanted something to do, or something to love, or something to look forward to; the less there was of earth, the more there was of heaven in her vision; whenever man failed her, Christ took

her up. She had no more stagnant waters, long as her voyage was through troubled ones; she was, with all the leaven of her old nature that remained, essentially a new creature to herself."

It must not be supposed that these new principles of her life were anything of the nature of those of her cynical friend, who had been the unconscious instrument of her conversion. "It was not to a mere religiousness," the same writer says, "earnest and pharasaic, that she emerged out of her heart-chosen infidelity; it was to a faith in our Lord Jesus Christ as the one Mediator and High Priest, and to a simple-hearted trust in Him as all her salvation. The bare truth that religion is the one thing needful stung her to the quick; but the seeds of other truths were in her mind, though hated and disbelieved. And these sprang up, now that the fallow-ground was broken, and produced those fruits of humble trust in the Saviour of sinners, devout love to His holy name, and an earnest zeal to consecrate to His praise a life that had been redeemed by His mercy."

This, largely in the well-chosen words of another, is the singularly interesting account of Caroline Fry's conversion, and we believe its republication at this time to be most opportune, when evolution and other refined forms

of scepticism and infidelity are taking such a hold upon the minds of the young women of the land, especially those engaged in study or teaching.

What, young woman, can your "advanced thought" do for you? Can it satisfy or fill your heart in life and lighten your darkness in the inevitable hour of death? Alas, no! And you will be compelled some day to confess it; and you will, some day, pray to that God, whose existence or Word you now deny and doubt, with that self-same bitterness and misery of soul with which Caroline Fry, in the period of her darkness, prayed to Him.

God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—as revealed in "the Scriptures of truth," can alone satisfy those strange, mysterious longings of the human heart. Cast thyself, then, unreservedly on His grace in Christ, and let Him satisfy and fill thine empty, weary heart, for it is written: "HE SATISFIETH THE LONGING SOUL."



O FOR a thousand tongues, to sing
 My great Redeemer's praise;
 The glories of my God and King,
 The triumphs of his grace.

My gracious Master, and my God,
 Assist me to proclaim,—
 To spread, through all the earth abroad,
 The honors of Thy Name.

Jesus!—the Name that charms our fears,
 That bids our sorrows cease;
 'Tis music in the sinner's ears,
 'Tis life, and health, and peace.

He breaks the power of cancell'd sin,
 He sets the pris'ner free;
 His blood can make the foulest clean;
 His blood avail'd for me.

He speaks,—and, lis'ning to His voice,
 New life the dead receive;
 The mournful, broken hearts rejoice;
 The humble poor believe.

Hear him, ye deaf; his praise, ye dumb,
 Your loosen'd tongues employ!
 Ye blind, behold your Saviour come;
 And leap, ye lame, for joy.

As an appendix to the foregoing narratives of "Conversions," we add the following notes on the inspired record as to the grace of God and its effects on one that "was a sinner."

And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that JESUS sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at His feet weeping, and began to wash His feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment. ✨ ✨ —Luke 7:37, 38.

(Read to end of the chapter.)

IS it not singular that perhaps the most remarkable history of a woman given in the Bible should give neither her name nor the place of her abode? It only shows how little store God sets by posthumous fame, or all the honors this world can bestow. But before the image of this nameless woman the world has stood in mute admiration for nearly two thousand years—as a living monument of the Saviour's compassion and a sinner's hope.

And the challenge of Jesus to Simon, "Seest thou this woman?" has been ringing through all the ages of the past, and hundreds of thousands have beheld her and rejoiced in the glorious truths illustrated in this nameless woman with a power and pathos the world can never match.

We have space only to point out the most obvious lessons this wonderful picture teaches.

“SEEST THOU THIS WOMAN?”

She is a sinner. So great a sinner that she answers to no other name—“the woman that was a sinner.” The common name to ordinary sinners became a proper name when applied to her. So notorious a sinner was she that the Pharisee wondered that Jesus allowed her to come into His presence. Yea, according to Jesus’ own estimate, she was worse than ordinary sinners, for she was five hundred pence in debt, while some are only fifty. The Pharisee considered her very touch polluting, as of one with leprosy.

Now, here is a test case for sinners. If Jesus saved such as she, none need despair. If His gospel is only for good, respectable people, this woman has no chance. If it is only for Pharisees, she can’t be saved. If Jesus pays only fifty-pence debts, this five-hundred-pence sinner has no hope. Her tears are all in vain if the gospel of Christ was rightly understood by Simon. But Simon did not understand the gospel as well as the “woman that was a sinner.”

But, in the second place,

She was saved.

Her sins, which were many, were forgiven,—all forgiven, five hundred though they were! A big debt, but Jesus “paid it all.”

The gospel of Christ is a gospel for sinners, and not for Pharisees; therefore the woman was

saved and the Pharisee was not. Jesus said, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Simon knew the woman, but he did not know Jesus. He knew she was a sinner, a great sinner; but he did not know the greater Saviour who was sitting that day at his table, with power to forgive sins and to save the chiefest of sinners.

But a most important question is,

How was this woman saved?

That she was a great sinner, she did not deny. That she was saved, Jesus says Himself. Now, it is a vital question with every one of us, How was this woman saved?

Negatively:—

Not by works;—she had none. She was a notorious sinner, a woman whose name was cast out as vile. The Pharisee, who had the good works, was *not* saved; while the sinner, without any good works, *was* saved.

Not by baptism, or the Lord's Supper;—she had never been baptized, and the Lord's Supper had not yet been instituted; and yet she was saved at that time, and the Pharisee, who had been circumcised and kept the Passover, was not saved.

Not by going to church;—she was insulted in the Pharisee's house, and could not have lived in the Pharisee's church.

Then *how* was she saved? Jesus answers, Himself:

“Thy faith hath saved thee.”

It is not thy good works, nor thy baptism, nor thy church-membership, not even thy repentance, nor thy love, nor thy confession, but “thy faith hath saved thee.”

Let that settle the question forever. It is the fiat of Jehovah, the word of the Author of salvation Himself. Let no blasphemous tongue suggest another way. Let no impious hand put anything else where Jesus put faith alone.

Ever since Cain, men have sought other ways to be saved—Cain’s way, not God’s; so did this Simon; so do men yet. But no man has ever yet been saved (or ever will be) who was not saved like this woman —by *faith in Christ*.

There is only one way, and “I am the way,” said Jesus. The woman went that way; so did Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; John, Peter, and Paul; and every one who ever reached heaven went that way.

The woman *believed* He was a Saviour; the Pharisee did not. The woman went *to Him* for salvation; the Pharisee did not. The woman was saved; the Pharisee was not.

The history is a short one, but its consequences are not all told yet; they are eternal. This is only the beginning; the fulness of it will be told in the Father’s house above.

The proofs of her faith.

This woman showed the reality of her faith *by her repentance* for her sin. Was there ever a more genuine sorrow for sin than she exhibited? She had been a great sinner; she knew it, felt it, and, voiceless in her sorrow, she had no language but tears, bitter tears, to tell that sorrow. Simon had none.

Then, also, *by her love*. "Love laughs at locksmiths," they tell us; hers laughed at the sneers of the crowd, at the etiquette that excluded her from Simon's house—an unbidden, unwelcome guest. No wonder Jesus said, "She loved much." Behold her there!—kissing the feet she had bathed with her tears: presuming not to kiss the immaculate lips Simon refused to honor, she esteemed it honor enough to kiss His sacred feet, which had brought her salvation. What but love, too deep for language, would ever have found such a voice as that! "Ceased not to kiss" the weary feet that had trodden the thorny way of sin for her lost soul!

Blessed woman! As we gaze on thee there at His feet, we are humbled by the lack of our own gratitude and want of love for that adorable Master. Thy memory is a benediction to this sin-cursed earth. "God's sacred gallery would not be complete without thy nameless picture; the song of the redeemed would be wanting without the note of thy voiceless love in Simon's house."

Then, *by her sacrifices*, she showed her faith. She brought her treasure, like Mary of Bethany (perhaps *all* her treasure), the precious ointment with which to anoint her Lord and Saviour. Hers was a love that knew no idol but Jesus, that withheld no offering from His service. The rich Pharisee could not give even common oil to anoint Christ's head; this poor woman could pour the most costly ointment on His precious feet.

I am sorry to say, Simon has more followers to-day than the woman that was a sinner. Not many prove their faith by sacrifices for the Master. Many of His professed followers bestow more on every lust of the flesh than in the service of the Lord.

Finally, *by her noble confession*, she showed her faith. She believed in Jesus, and she was not ashamed to manifest it. She made that confession under circumstances which would try the courage of many; but she never faltered. She could not help it. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

Paul tells us, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

Jesus says, "Whoso confesseth Me before men, him will I also confess before My Father and the holy angels."

She confessed Him here, and for nineteen hundred years He has been confessing her yonder before His Father and the holy angels.

My brother! seest thou this woman?—nameless here, but with a new and an immortal name yonder, among the angels of God!

Penitent sinner! seest thou this woman, voiceless here, save with tears of penitential joy? Now, with the tongue of a seraph, she sings the new “song of Moses and the Lamb.”

Trembling sinner! seest thou this woman, that was a sinner here, weeping bitter tears?—now washed in the blood of the Lamb and clothed in white raiment, and following Him to “fountains of living water,” all tears forever wiped away from her eyes by the hand of God Himself!

Pharisee! seest thou this woman, made righteous in Christ, without any righteousness of her own? “Verily, I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.”

Skeptic! seest thou this woman?—abandoned by men, but not by God; her sins, which were many, forgiven; her sorrows, which were heavy, removed. “Be not faithless, but believing.”

E. O. G.

Trying to Enter by the Wrong Door.

A MAN who had been long anxious about his soul obtained peace with God through a gospel address by Robert M'Cheyne. At the close of the service he went to the minister to tell him the good news. The joy of the Lord so filled his

soul, and caused his face to glow, that Mr. M'Cheyne simply asked: "How did you get it?" And the friend replied, "All the time I have been trying to enter by the SAINT'S DOOR, but while you were speaking I saw my mistake and entered in at the SINNER'S DOOR.

This is what many are doing. They desire to enter by the *saint's door*, instead of the *sinner's door*. They try to give up this, that, and the other sin and bad habit. They vow and resolve that they will act differently in the future from what they have done in the past. In other words, they are seeking to *better themselves* and make themselves fit for God's presence. All the while they are turning their back on the door by which they are to enter. The Lord Jesus did not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. He came to seek and to save that which was *lost* (Luke 19: 10.) So long as you seek to *do*, or bring some meritorious thing for salvation, you will find a closed door. Come as you are, come to Jesus with your sins, and accept the sinner's Saviour. YOUR NEED IS YOUR CLAIM. Come to Christ as a *sinner*—not as a saint.

And him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.—John 6: 37.



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