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James Wright of Bristol :a memorial of a



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Yours ever affectionately
James Wright"

JAMES WRIGHT

OF BRISTOL

A MEMORIAL OF A FRAGRANT LIFE

BY

ARTHUR T. PIERSON

AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE OF GEORGE MÜLLER," ETC.

"And the house was filled with the odour of the ointment"

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INTRODUCTION

A little while after I came to reside in Bristol in February, 1873, I became acquainted with beloved Mr. Wright: this was shortly after his marriage with Miss Müller. Their eighteen years' life at Brougham Villa, till in 1890 Mrs. Wright was called to her eternal rest, was a beautiful picture of quiet retiring godliness of sterling quality, not often to be equalled. They were specially suited for each other, and a fragrance of Christ was ever found by all who were privileged to share in any measure that home life. He himself has more than once spoken to me of the eighteen years spent there as among the happiest years of his life. Yet during that same period I have since then ascertained he passed through severe trials in connection with Ashley Down work. But whatever trials had to be faced outside that home, there, in the intensely deep conjugal love, in the special suitability of wife to husband and husband to wife, he ever found that which soothed, comforted and sustained his noble spirit in his services to his Lord.

From time to time they admitted to their hospitable home servants of Christ—one of them, Mr. Macrea of India, wrote me after Mr. Wright's death:

"AMALLAPURAM, GODAVARI, India, February 21st.

"We arrived here yesterday morning only to receive a note telling of your bereavement—and ours. Of all

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

When the request was made that I should undertake to prepare a brief biography of the beloved James Wright, one of my most serious misgivings had reference to the lack of available material, covering that part of his life history which preceded his formal assumption of his duties as Mr. Müller's associate.

This lack it would have been practically impossible to supply but for the loving co-operation of various parties, whose contributions are embodied in this memoir and acknowledged by name. But more important than all the help thus afforded has been the painstaking and patient research of the Misses Withy, Mr. Wright's beloved nieces, who were to him as daughters; and especially are the author's thanks due to Miss Eleanor R. Withy, whose careful work has been very largely incorporated, with very little change even in language. In fact, so much aid has been given by others that I feel as though I were rather the editor than the author of this simple record of one of the most beautiful, saintly and unselfish lives, into contact with which it has ever been my privilege to be brought.

ARTHUR T. PIERSON.

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CHAPTER FIRST.

LIFE'S DAWN AND EARLY MORN.

John Milton sagaciously said, that one might "almost as well kill a good man as kill a good book; for he who kills a man, destroys a reasonable creature, made in the image of God; but he who destroys a good book, kills reason itself—strikes the image of God, as it were, in the eye."

For similar reasons, the reverse is true: that to produce a good book is to bestow blessing upon mankind; and if that book be a biography, all such records of noble and heroic characters and careers make the dead to live again, giving them a sort of literary immortality by keeping alive, in the memories of men, the remembrance of their beautiful example. Some such high hope has inspired all true biographers in the task they have attempted; and when the writer is conscious that he brings to his work no exalted genius, he often comforts himself with the reflection that the charms of the life he chronicles will more than make amends for his own defects, as the sublimity of his theme and the grandeur of the occasion often compensate for the lack of eloquence in the orator.

When, on the twenty-ninth day of January, 1905, James Wright, of Bristol, passed away, earth gave up,

and Heaven received, a saintly spirit. The records of that life, however brief and inadequate, may help to fix in the memory of those who knew him, and to portray, for those who did not, the beautiful features of his personality, and perpetuate for all who read them, the benign influence which that life exerted.

All biography properly begins with a sketch of the *parents*, and in fact of more remote ancestors. Past family history has a subtle, though often untraceable connection with the present; its roots reach through the soil and reappear in new shoots, so that traits are essentially reproduced, after generations have passed. This may be one reason why, in Holy Scripture, children are known by that significant name, "*seed*." The word suggests the close resemblance between the grain, sown in the soil, and the crop, gathered in the harvest—"after its kind." It is too much to affirm that *character* is an inheritance, but it is certainly true that *aptitudes* are transmitted. How responsible therefore is parenthood, since parental and ancestral character may have a moulding and shaping influence, so great and so far-reaching upon offspring yet unborn!

In the case of the subject of this memoir, unhappily for both the writer and the reader, the materials are comparatively few and scant, from which to construct any full, correct and trustworthy estimate of these ancestral influences. Of even his boyhood and youth there are no satisfactory records. Of this formative period of his life we can get but faint glimpses, for no immediate relatives survive, from whose recollections of him might have been sketched the years of his minority, though no more than an outline drawing without colour. In this respect, as in some others, James Wright



JAMES IRELAND WRIGHT.



JAMES WRIGHT WHEN ABOUT
THREE YEARS OLD.



MRS. RACHEL WRIGHT.

reminds us of Elijah who first bursts upon the reader of Biblical history, a man, fullgrown, already equipped for his work, and standing before Jehovah, an obedient servant, in the presence of his Master, ready to receive and obey His orders.

We naturally yearn for some more complete and satisfactory memorials of these partially hidden years of early life. Lord Macaulay, when he gazed at that gigantic vine, at Hampton Court, remarked that he would like to go to Spain, and see the parent stock, from which that huge growth was only a shoot; and those who, in later years, beheld the exceptional beauty of Mr. Wright's character, and of the life he led, would be glad if the annals of that life could start, where the Biblical narrative does, "in the beginning." But this book must lack its "Genesis."

Some facts have been ascertained, however, as to his early history. James Wright was born in Bristol, England, March 16th, 1826. He was the second son of James Ireland Wright, and Rachel, his wife. He had one brother, Wilson, and four sisters.

At the time of his birth, his parents were both members of the Society of Friends; and his father, a man of earnest Christian character, was an occasional preacher, though not apparently a "recorded" minister of that body. Of his mother, who died in his twelfth year, James seemed to have but dim recollection, save of an invalid, reclining on a sofa. His brother, Wilson, many years his senior, was very clever, and popularly known as the "handsome young Quaker." He was somewhat reserved, and with him James appears to have had not much close companionship, though occasionally he unbent, and they had their frolics together. Of his youngest sister, however, James was exceedingly fond, though, like other children,

they had their childish quarrels, and the elder sister had, at times, to separate the combatants.

Even when quite a youngster, James began to show that marked fondness for music which so characterized the after years, mellowing into a devout love of "psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, which he sang with such grace and melody in his heart unto the Lord, as he matured in godliness. Those who knew him as the sweet singer may easily imagine his boyish delight, therefore, when he became the happy possessor of a toy drum and a fiddle; though it is open to an honest doubt whether his possession of them imparted equal delight to his elders!

This love of music was a wholesome trait, in moulding character. The esthetic tastes have their place in a symmetrical character. They not only contribute to grace but to virtue. A modern skeptic pathetically confesses, "I have lost my taste for poetry, also almost for pictures and music: my mind seems to have become a kind of machine for grinding general laws out of large collections of facts"; and he further says, "The loss of the esthetic is a loss of happiness, and may possibly be injurious to the intellect, and more probably to the moral character, by enfeebling the emotional part of our nature." On the other hand, as Peter Bayne reminds us, "Luther loved nature and the open air. He had an ear for the birds and an eye for the clouds. There was a *lyric element* in his mind that found exercise also in his flute playing." Utility should not swallow up beauty, nor severely practical duties obscure ornamental graces.

At an early age, James Wright was sent to a Friends' school, at Thornbury, in Gloucestershire, kept and taught by John Moxham.

Remembering Wordsworth's famous poetic maxim,

"The child is father of the man,"

even a few faint glimpses of school days are of value. One of his schoolfellows, at Thornbury, bears witness, which can easily be credited, that James was "the most generous lad in the whole school," sharing for instance with the other boys, as far as they would go, the oranges that were sent to him.

The master, Moxham, must have been rather a quaint disciplinarian. One day, having heard young James carelessly say of the weather, "It is horrid cold!" he curtly remarked, "James Wright, thou come to me, after dinner"! The lad obeyed the summons, only to be summarily dismissed with the words, uttered with Spartan brevity, "*Thou go to bed*"! There he soon found himself, having ample leisure for reflection, and he probably concluded thereafter not to indulge in the master's hearing, in impatient and irreverent criticism on the weather, for which the wise Creator is responsible.

With the beginning of Mr. Wright's character and life, as a disciple of Christ, all who knew and loved him will be supremely concerned; for here lie the very springs of that clear and crystal life stream.

He was early turned to God, and his conversion seems to have been due to the loving ministry of his sister, Rachel. It is quite as important to know that, even in boyhood, his piety was of a pronounced and positive type, and aggressive; he, like his Master, was not content to "abide alone," but sought to win others. A lady friend remembers, when herself but a child, overhearing a conversation between her mother and one of his aunts, from which she gathered that, while as yet only a lad himself, he had been used of God to lead one of those aunts into

liberty and peace. How significant a forecast of his after life of godly influence that, at the outset of his career as a disciple, he had learned both the privilege and the sweetness of winning souls, and that the highest blessing is found only when good received is imparted.

In estimating the influences that shape character, not even the gentlest touch is lost in the plastic period when the whole nature is open to impression. On Sunday afternoons, in the nursery, the child had been wont to look at the pictures in Josephus' "Antiquities of the Jews," when as yet his little tongue could get no nearer the author's name, than "*Joepuck*"; and it may be that these innocent recreations of the Lord's Day, in Hebrew History, with his nurse, may have turned the current of his young mind into Biblical channels. It is certain that he always felt a growing interest in the Jews.

Of his pursuits and occupations in boyhood's days few records remain. All that can be done is to "gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost."

Like most other lads, he was fond of playing cricket, which undoubtedly helped to develop a stalwart frame. He learned also, by dint of persevering effort, to swim in a river, and in this useful and practical art, he came to be an expert. In this accomplishment he fairly revelled, indulging in it until within a few years of his death, when prudence dictated increasing caution as to venturing beyond his depth.

As a young man, he found peculiar fascination in games of chess, and for some time, he used to indulge frequently in this recreation with a friend. Subsequently both these players came to the conclusion that too much valuable time was spent over the chessboard. They felt that in the fascination of the game lay its snare, and

that a man's best moves, on the larger board of life may be "checkmated" by undue devotion to such games. They wisely determined that, for them, the safer way would be to economize time and thought for better things; and accordingly they renounced the chessboard altogether.

Possibly it was in such lesser matters as these that a sensitive conscience kept its tenderness, and a surrendered will found the discipline of a prompt obedience. Paul's three questions concerning "all things *lawful*"—that is not forbidden—are all comprehensive: first, "Are they expedient"? second, "Are they edifying"? and third, "Do they bring me under their power"? (1 Cor. vi:12; x:23). While yet in youth, James Wright settled forever all questions as to doubtful amusements or occupations; and kept himself far away from that borderland, where good and evil touch, and where it is perilous to linger because there is but a step between the lawful and the forbidden.

It is no exaggerated overestimate of Mr. Wright, to attribute to him an unusually *intellectual* cast of character.

He had, naturally, a very bright mind, with keen, quick powers of observation, and a retentive memory; and these native faculties which were of a high order, he trained and disciplined by extensive reading which was controlled also by moral guards. Even in his youth and early manhood, he had learned with Francis Bacon, that some books are only to be tasted, and others well chewed and digested; and that some others are to be altogether let alone.

Such a healthy relish for the best books, is always one of the most promising and hopeful signs of mental ma-

turity. Brain, like brawn, needs nutritious food, and should not be filled with "husks." The whole after life of James Wright proved that he had early learned where to find good mental pabulum. Samuel Smiles reminds us, in "Self-Help," that "too much reading is intellectual dram drinking—exciting but not enriching." And of too careless reading it may be said, that it is destructive of the best intellectual and moral character. There is a worthless literature which, for the sake of a brief sensation of excitement, is allowed to give permanent shape to the reader's whole being; just as wooden arches give form to the brick or stone arches that are built upon them: and long after these desultory habits of "light reading" may be abandoned, their effects remain, as the solid arch stands, after the wooden framework is demolished and destroyed.

It is very noticeable also that James Wright read *critically*, in the best sense; his reading was discriminating and thorough, making him master of the books he read. Thus also, by first getting for himself a clear apprehension and comprehension of the books he read, and the author's true meaning, he was able, with ease, to explain what otherwise it might have been difficult for others to grasp. He could teach because he had learned.

Such habits of intellectual thoroughness and conscientiousness qualified his whole life, affecting not only his public teaching, but his private counsel and personal advice. Those who consulted him, in critical cases, felt that he was a *seer*; that his grasp of any matter was firm, his insight penetrating, his judgment clear, and his conclusions safe and sound.

Most important of all the indications of his younger

years was the fact that *spiritual* interests were dominant at a time when most young men are bent on self-indulgence, and too many young disciples are ensnared in worldliness.

James Wright learned in his early manhood, that to "seek first the kingdom of God and His Righteousness," is the maxim of the highest wisdom, and brings the largest reward. He instinctively saw and felt that, even in the legitimate love and pursuit of knowledge, there is a possible risk and peril, that intellectual activity may be so absorbing as to crowd out spiritual things, and so hinder the highest progress.

In one of his addresses, in his matured period, it is remembered how he referred to these "risks of thinking." In a discourse on Ephesians II:2, when speaking of the "lusts that war against the soul," he mentioned with much emphasis the fact that there are "lusts of the *mind*" as well as of the "flesh." He dwelt upon the pleasures of acquiring earthly knowledge; and pointed out the fact that, however right in itself, the search for such knowledge may tempt us to neglect higher duties, so that we fail, for instance, to reserve due proportion of time for the study of the Word of God, and prayer, and active service for Christ, so that even the desires of the mind as well as the grosser lusts of the flesh may effectually hinder the soul's interests. Then, with a kindling eye, he added, "Why, in the first half hour in Heaven, I shall learn more of God's works and ways, than I could in a life time here"! The friend who supplies this link of reminiscence, adds, "it was easy to see that the love of knowledge was natural to him."

Mr. Wright was baptised, at Brook Street Chapel, Tottenham, in 1839, soon after the opening of that chapel,

on which occasion he had been present. Young as he was,—but thirteen,—he made so favourable an impression on an unconverted friend, that she spoke of him as “so very good,” and looking back, years after, gave her judgment, that “a more blameless, consistent life could not be.”

Somewhere about 1840, his father, who in partnership with Mr. Henry Hunt, was engaged in the wholesale tea trade in Bristol, suffered a considerable loss of income. Referring to this loss, in later years, his son James said that he “could bless God for it.” The liabilities incurred were all honourably discharged; and the spirit in which this heavy trial was borne by the family, is shown by the following extract from a letter written to James, by Mr. John Withy who, shortly after, married his eldest sister:

“In this heavy affliction, when God by His providence is taking from your dear father and family a large portion of those temporal blessings which they have hitherto enjoyed, what is it so sustains their faith and hope, what is it that enables them with confidence to look to the Lord as to Him who will provide for them all things needful; and even more than this, which enables them to praise His name in the midst of the affliction? You, my dear James, I believe can suggest the answer. They know God as being their reconciled Father in Christ Jesus, as having through the forgiveness of sins adopted them into His family, and as having made them joint heirs with Christ of a glorious, undefiled and everlasting inheritance. And, while they realize the treasure in the heavens that faileth not, as being made sure to them through the infinite love and faithful word of God, they are able cheerfully to acquiesce in all that He appoints,

being confident that so *wise* a God *cannot* err, and so *loving* a God *will* not, though He may, for perhaps some unseen purpose, blight some of their earthly prospects."

The following is the result of a Phrenological Examination by Marriott, in 1838, when James was in his thirteenth year, and it may be curious to note how accurately, or otherwise, this examination of his "bumps" forecasts his character:

"Master Wright is moderately fond of children and attached to his friends. He is mild in disposition and thinks little of himself. Fond of praise. Moderately cautious and conceals his thoughts and intentions. Not sufficiently firm; very just and honourable. Looks upon the best side of things. Not defective in devotional feelings. Pleased with anything wonderful. Possesses a good deal of imagination. Would excel in music. Moderately cheerful. Will not excel in figures, nor will he make a good mechanic. Fond of information. May learn a language. Would be well adapted for a lawyer if he had less conscientiousness. Would make a good surveyor. *Might* be a lawyer. The reflective faculties are excellent, and I have no doubt he will excel in *most* departments of learning. He will like to see anything in its place. He would make a good merchant, being fond of travelling, and possessing almost every faculty for that honourable profession. I should have stated that 13 and 8 lead me to conclude that he will be kind-hearted and generous."

To this period also belong some letters which deserve preservation, as affording a partial and imperfect glimpse at least into the boy's inner life.

The following is an extract from a letter to one of his sisters, when he was twelve years old:

“BRISTOL, December 22nd, 1838.

“What wicked and hard hearts we have, not to be more thankful for all the benefits which our heavenly Father bestows upon us daily; Oh, may my prayer be, that He will in His great mercy take away this stony heart, and give me a new heart and renew a right spirit within me. Do not you, my dear——, find that there are some besetting sins which are harder than all others to lay aside? I always felt a great wish to make anything I am telling appear more wonderful than it really was. This is really my besetting sin. I desire more earnestly that God will set a watch upon my lips. I know how our merciful and just God abhors anything but the strictest truth. I feel it is the great enemy of my soul’s salvation that brings me into these temptations. Oh, may my prayers be still more earnest on this subject, that I may be more and more on my guard against him who seeks to destroy both my present happiness and that which is to come. Oh, dear—— do pray for me, a poor weak and sinful creature, who deserves not one of the least of all the benefits of a gracious Saviour. Be assured that I always remember you and all my other dear friends in my poor feeble breathings; but blessed be God. He hears the prayer of a little child and does not despise its cry. Talk a great deal about the Bible in your next letter. I like your letters so much when you do so. * * * I am thinking how nice it will be to hear Mr. Müller and Craik again; you will think of us tomorrow.”

Another letter was written from school at Thornbury when he was 13 years old, extracts from which we make: “MY DEAREST RACHEL:—

“The examination began last Friday and Mr. Gibson

has finished examining me in my Greek testament, but not in Grammar. I believe he intends getting me another book soon. Your affectionate question to me, dear Rachel, upon the state of my soul, showed your earnest desire for my welfare. It is indeed an important subject as it is through our belief in the blood of Jesus that we are saved. I do not think I could have felt that joy and peace that I have felt, while reading the Bible and praying to Him, without believing on Jesus. My earnest prayer for myself and others is, that if I have any little faith it may be strengthened; and that if God has begun the good work in me, He may perfect it. I have done nothing, nor can I do anything, to save myself; all is through grace, free grace. I know and feel more and more that I am a sinner, deserving the righteous anger of God; and from sorrow for having thus displeased Him, may I throw myself on His mercy, trusting, that for what Jesus has done and suffered, my sins are forgiven. I want very much to be with you to talk about these things, for I cannot put what I want in letters. * * *

On the same sheet were the following lines written to his father:

“DEAR PAPA:—

“Mistress wishes me to give you her dear love and to tell you that the holidays will begin on the 13th of June. I have told this to R. in the beginning of this, but Mistress says I am to tell you, so I have done it. You found out my forget, did not you, soon after I left you with Mrs.—— It was very odd indeed. I must keep such things before my eye another time, for I cannot trust my memory. I went to see old Mr. Gough the other day. He seemed very much to want Jenny. There was

a brood of young ducks crawling or waddling about the floor, for he could not keep them out he said. He was making a pair of shoes with odd fashioned buckles—He said he was the only person in Thornbury that could make them, and so he had to make them; they were an odd shape indeed. We have been out to play cricket twice; it is getting nice and warm now. I hope soon to hear from Clapton, and so for the present must bid you farewell, and remain," etc.

Here is a letter written from school, the year not mentioned, but it is in childish handwriting:

"THORNBURY, 2nd mo.

"MY DEAR SISTER:

"I have thought much about you today, and please to tell Mary that I thought about Bogatzky's Golden Treasury. The text for to-day is 'There is a river, the streams of which make glad the City of God.' I felt very very dull this morning without you, and so I did this evening; but I thought of that pretty hymn you sing, 'Come ye sinners poor and wretched, weak and wounded, sick and sore; Jesus ready stands to save you, full of pity, love and power.' I did indeed feel very weak and poor—but I remembered that Jesus stood ready to help me and then I felt comforted; then I read that text in Bogatzky's and I felt so comforted. * * * Please to give my dear love to Papa and tell him I often think of him, and of thee, dear Rachel, and of Mary and Sally."

The memoranda that follow belong to the year 1843, and are valuable as indications of a developing character in a young man of seventeen. They are found written in pencil on a sheet of note paper, and evince a remarkable maturity both of intellectual and spiritual life:

"It is expedient that I henceforth refrain from reading those tales and fictitious narratives found in Chambers' Journal and by parity of reason the reading of all such narratives whether found in newspapers, etc., or in a more voluminous shape and character; on account of the evil tendency of such literature in the following particulars, viz:—

"First. In leading to and encouraging a practical forgetfulness of that Word of Scripture—

'Ye are *not your own*, therefore, etc.'

"Second. As a consequence of the preceding—

"In leading to a misapplication of energies, and a misapprehension of the value of the time.

"Various causes may be assigned for the peculiar interest with which works of fiction are invested to some minds. Perhaps it is needless to the present subject to enquire either what they are or wherein they consist; but this is certain, from my own experience, that narratives of this description appeal to and favour some latent desires of the old man rather than the new or spiritual, which is created anew after Christ Jesus. The characters introduced in these narratives—their actuating motives, and the objects or ends proposed as the results are not such as a Christian can recognize as of the Lord. Now before the *mind* can thoroughly enjoy such reading it must have, in some measure, become cold towards Jesus; and, as suited to the desires of a soul in such a state such reading favours continuance therein; thus evidently leading to and encouraging a forgetfulness of that Word of Scripture 'Ye are not your own, etc.'

"But again in the second place, this kind of reading leads to a misapprehension of the value of time. For it is

in moments of leisure time that I feel particular inclination to take up such works. They do not form a part of my regular reading, to which it may be I set apart portions of my lesson time—those in regard to the occupation of which I am left more particularly to my own judgment. But it is at odd times, a moment now, and another then, the occurrence of which is entirely uncertain, or at least so much so in regard to time that it would be almost impossible to apportion them to certain pursuits either in reading or otherwise. This way of employing these leisure moments is productive of the following disadvantages, viz: From the fact that these portions of time are uncertain and irregular in their occurrence they are looked upon as comparatively valueless, about the employment of which no particular care is necessary; and thus through an erroneous view of the case I am thrown open to the natural love of pleasure, which thus seeks its gratification in the reading of narratives, which, while indeed it ministers to this object, is productive of no lasting benefit to the mind. Thus moments of value, equal in proportion to that of hours, are so to speak, wasted without compunction. This practice then leads to a misapprehension of the value of time."

"July 16, 1843."

Five years later we glean the following notes from a pocket book (1848):

"Talking with Aunt M — this evening about the Jesuits, and in my regular course of reading this evening read the 64th Psalm. How appropriate to the state of mind produced by reflection on the Jesuit system are such verses as the 2nd, 6th, 8th and 10th of this Psalm."

"I have lost much spiritual strength in past times through what (I think) is a mistaken notion of what is intended by the expression "*waiting*" on the Lord. I have frequently withdrawn from the presence of my fellow creatures for the purpose of "*waiting*" on God in secret—and sitting down, have allowed my thoughts to wander hither and thither, as if I had not to attempt restraining them, but to wait till a holy impulse overcame the unprofitable tendency of my mind. But surely it is not in such an attitude that the Lord promises to meet with us and work in us. There is such a thing as '*girding up the loins of the mind.*'"

"I recollect six or seven years ago — told me that in his intention of going to the Continent as a sort of Missionary or Preacher to "*enquiring*" Christians, he was encouraged by noticing that, when he had gained sensible light or enjoyment from secret devotion and study of Scripture he was *forthwith in imagination* addressing an audience of believers and successfully imparting his acquired treasure. If I had *then* had the same personal experience of the phenomena he described I should have asked him whether he did not invariably find that while following this self-created *shadow* through all its airy workings, and complacently *appropriating* its quickly earned reward of imaginary *applause*, the idea of God's presence would be fading into dimness; that when the spirit, weary and dissatisfied with the gloom of its own work, turned again to seek the sunshine of God's presence, the fruit of its self-willed labour would be found unpresentable to God, and a burden that must be got rid of if the soul is to get on at all. I do believe these fits are *generally*, if not always, *parentheses* in the *true life*

of a Christian who is seeking to live to the glory of God."

"Reflected on the advantages which some suppose the Patriarchs enjoyed in *audible* communications from God. We can scarcely suppose our trial of faith in obeying God's will is greater. How we should earnestly desire to live in the *absorbing* realization of God's presence, desiring nothing but that our works may, through the merits of our blessed Saviour, find constant acceptance, *fearing nothing* but sin against His Holy Name."

"Spiritual progress includes increasing *freedom* from the control of *human* opinion; but in the absence of influential Christian principles the other is most useful as an inferior *restraining power*."

"It is of the greatest importance to be aware of *Satan's* devices. A slothful habit formed from mere carelessness may be a mighty instrument in his hand. Such things we are too apt to consider as *trifles* which do not warrant a particular reference to God for assistance. But I am persuaded we are as weak to meet these little hindrances in dependence on our *own* strength, as a man stricken with palsy is to rise and walk. *Satan* has complete power over us as long as we deceive ourselves with the belief that his evil suggestions and enticements are unworthy, too trifling for serious resistance; or that the *contest*, once begun, is of too little importance to justify our seeking God's help!"

"Great difficulty all day, as also during some days past, in concentrating my thoughts on the *work* in hand—and

in realizing that my trivial occupations could be worthy of the interference of God's power to enable me to acquit myself properly."

"Psalm LXIX, 1. '*Save me, O God, etc.*'

The *essence* of every *prayer* of *Faith* in difficulty. Our only safety *any* moment from *any* evil from within or without is in God."

"I am dissatisfied with my present small attainment in holiness—and desire to *press on*— but feel that at *every step* God Himself must supply the power to will and to perform. *Withdrew immediately* after dinner for prayer, so as to avoid getting my spirit disordered by the desultory personal conversation which one is so apt to indulge in at odd moments of time. Felt the benefit of taking this course—but even while on my knees was beginning to admire myself for having acted with a little decision. Condemned and confessed the sin of this self-complacent spirit. Oh, how subtle are the ramifications of evil within the heart—what occasion for ceaseless warfare—but because this contest is not cognizable by the senses, is taken no account of by the world and is not carried on *in the sight of even God's children*, we cannot expect support or aid from any of the *natural* sources of enthusiasm. *Faith* alone is the victory here—in the Lord—in the sight of our God—then our labour is not in vain."

"The Path of Duty is quite single: if our eye was as single, there would *never appear* to be a *choice* of ways in the most trivial *occasion* of life. If the "strong wind" of doubts and fears—if the "whirlwind" of passion and

unchastened thoughts had ceased, and given place to a "great calm," then the "still small voice" would be always heard, giving definite and unerring counsel."

"Begin somewhere—it matters comparatively little where—and *fix* the thought and use *such confirmed* position as the *worm* when crawling that keeps one part of his body stationary while and by which he propels the other, so let the mind dwell fixedly on a thought, and *advance* by regular, connected and *consequent* steps."

CHAPTER SECOND.

THE DAY ADVANCES.

In the development of Christian character, two habits hold the first rank in importance: Bible study and secret Prayer. Accordingly it is no surprise to find that James Wright, before he had attained his majority, had laid these foundations and was carefully building thereon.

The lamented J. Hudson Taylor used to say, "Do not have your concert first, and then tune your instruments; but begin the day with the Word of God and Prayer, and so first get into harmony with Him"; and he practised what he preached, for he was wont to rise at four in the morning to secure an hour for this tuning process, while as yet the world was asleep and the many sounds of busy life did not confuse his hearing and make difficult to recognize the imperial heavenly note which was to determine the harmony.

A modern writer who was erratic and unsafe in his teachings, but had learned many lessons in devoutness, has left a similar testimony: "Five minutes spent in the companionship of Christ, every morning—aye, two minutes, if it is face to face, and heart to heart, will change the whole day, will make every thought and feeling different, will enable you to do things for His sake that you would not have done for your own sake or the sake of any one else."

Such communion with God and His truth must be *habitual* and not occasional, if it is to make much impression on character and life—the tree must be "planted" by the irrigating channels if its leaf is to be unwithering

and its fruit perennial. Hence, again, Jeremy Taylor said, "If thou meanest to enlarge thy religion, do it rather by enlarging thine *ordinary* devotions than thy *extraordinary*"; and this same "modern Chrysostom" added, "The body of our prayer is the sum of our duty: and as we must ask God for whatsoever we need, so must we labour for all that we ask."

Rev. J. A. Vaughan, M. A., also says: "The best of all is that at any time, and in any place, you can draw the curtain of the sanctuary of thought around your heart, and catch one moment with God. A hallowed solitude even in a crowd is a wonderful secret of a quiet mind, a heavenly wisdom and a holy walk."

James Wright shone most conspicuous as a man whose life moved about the Word of God and the throne of grace. With him the Scriptures and Prayer were inseparable. In the Word of God he found the warrant and inspiration for supplication and intercession; and in Prayer he found insight and interpretation as to the Scriptures.

Three results followed: first, a rapid growth in holy living; second, remarkable spiritual wisdom; and third, large capacity for service to others.

If most of those who knew him well were asked what in him most impressed them, the common answer would be, his singularly *wise walk* with God and before men. He is well trained who is taught in God's university. James Hamilton quaintly said that "the Christian on his knees sees further than the mere philosopher on his tip-toes." And Rev. J. R. Miller, whose devotional works so enrich our English literature, writes:

"We do not know how much the blessing and saving of others depend upon our prayer for them. We do not

know how often men's failures, defeats, and falls are due to our having ceased to pray for them. We stand between God and needy lives, and are bidden to give ourselves no rest, but to cry continually to Him for those about us."

It was hoped that, in examining the papers left behind by Mr. Wright, there might be found some comparatively full records of his inner experience, from which to obtain at least some faint reflections of his true self, and spiritual history. But careful search fails to reveal any such relics, save a few fragmentary paragraphs, covering only about three months, from March to June, 1845. This brief personal "diary" is here embodied in the narrative for whatever aid it may afford, in understanding the secrets of his beautiful and serviceable life.

For instance, we find, under date of March 10, 1845, a hint of how he laid out his time, in his plans for the day.

1. To give at least one hour to *prayer, etc., before going to bed* to-night.

2. Ditto, before commencing temporal engagements to-morrow morning.

* * * * *

10. Get time for *prayer and reading the Word* in the day.

* * * * *

12. Prayer and reading *immediately* on reaching home. My letter of resignation a special subject, and the study of *evidences*. (The following day he records his "remarks on the imperfect execution of this 'plan'").

1. I sat *drowsily* before my Bible for about half an hour, and my prayer was unenergetic, got into bed about twelve o'clock and (2), was only up just in time to appear in the breakfast room for *family* prayers.

10. Dinner time came without my having found time for *prayer, etc.*, and on my way saw a copy of *Spenser's* works in a window—after a little mental altercation and I fear unfaithfulness, bought it on my return.

12. More comfort in prayer with a sense of my dependence on *Divine* help.

(Again the next day among his plans for the day's engagements he writes:) To get time for *prayer* at least three times,

1st. On arising.

2nd. Before dinner.

3rd. On coming home the *first* thing.

Subjects for prayer at the above times, specially *morning* and *evening*:

(1st). My position with regard to *Friends*.

(2nd). The expediency of the study of the *Evidences* of *Christianity*.

(3rd). For wisdom to decide on the comparative practical importance of mental culture (specially in *Mathematics* and *Poetry*) considered in relation to my occupations in temporal business.

(4th). For grace to conduct myself aright in meeting dear ———

Further remarks on March 11th, 1845.

Woke not until seven o'clock, lay in bed three-quarters of an hour, and so was up no earlier than yesterday.

Indecision in selection of things to be done in the morning and want of energy in calling on customers, made me *busy* till three o'clock, and so no time for prayer before dinner. Read *Spenser* this evening when I ought to have been writing. Through the *grace* of God, enjoyed a measure of *uprightness* of heart in confession and *prayer* this evening, but felt somewhat *hurried*.

March 12th.

Up again *too late for prayer* before breakfast, and hurried during the morning too much for prayer before dinner. The account of the blessing of God on the Ministry of ——— *exhilarated* me this evening. In walking home this evening I pondered on the necessity of waiting much on God to know *what to avoid*, and what to do. My regular reading was VI Numbers which afforded *harmonious* considerations. My prayer (very imperfect and unenergetic) was for the blessing, the want of which would naturally be felt during reflections of this kind.

Thursday night twelve o'clock 3/13/45.

1. To arise at six o'clock to-morrow.

2. To have one hour's prayer and reading—special subjects.

Remarks:

1 & 2 Not attended to so far as regards the *morning* and *noon*, for the same reason as yesterday. But this evening it occurred to me that I had not made this a subject of *prayer*, and *accordingly did so*. May I be more earnest in so doing, and I shall yet overcome my terrible inclination to listless slothfulness.

Saturday night eleven o'clock 3/15/45.

At prayer on the *three times* make special reference to my connection with "*Friends*"—to ascertain whether it is my duty to *act* yet. I have only *prayed* about twice this week in reference to this. The Lord increase my faith!

March 15th.

Again my *total* failure in this respect was a cause of confession and renewed prayer this night before going to bed.

March 16th/45. 10 o'clock P. M.

March 17th. This is my 19th *Birthday*.

Again overcome by *sloth* this morning, and thrown back by this throughout the day. At prayer this evening read the 7th Numbers. The last verse particularly induced prayer for grace to *endeavour* to keep up spiritual intercourse by appointed means of stated prayer and reading the Word. My connection with "*Friends*" was a subject of prayer, on the ground that God having manifested Himself as the liberal giver of wisdom, I may, casting my soul on Him, and as soon as I am conscious of an upright heart, proceed to exercise my judgment on the matter, and if this leads to action, act; looking to God to order the consequences. "My soul wait thou only upon God," etc.

Clifton, nine o'clock Tuesday evening, March 18th.

I arose this morning at seven o'clock, and consequently secured half an hour's prayer. This is *a beginning*. The Lord give me grace to fulfill my resolution this evening and in His strength *to go on*.

Amongst other entries in this evening's "plan" for the next day occurs the following:

"Take care not to indulge in levity and attempts at *wittiness* (at the *Desk* in the afternoon)."

(Next day he writes—) This was not so fully attended to as I hoped. *Courage!* my soul.

Clifton, Saturday, March 22.

In walking home this evening, my prayer was that the ordinary circumstances of the evening might furnish occasion for the manifestation of the Spirit of Christ. I just stopped at home before going on to fulfil my last planned intention, and was told by Mary that she and R. and S. wished to give me a sovereign, as a birthday present, to be disposed of as I might wish. I promised to think of it, and did so; and, acknowledging in this little

circumstance an answer to my prayer, I wished that it may go to the rent of Bethesda as that has been a good deal on my mind lately owing to its deficiency.*

Clifton. Tuesday eleven P. M., March 25.

The remarks Mr. Craik made last evening on I Peter 4:10 stirred me to pray for light on this point as to my "gift," what it is, etc. My *late* rising was a subject of humiliation and prayer that I may overcome this slothful tendency through God's grace.

Called at ———'s in the morning. He fixed to see me this evening. Did so, and approved of my letter (resigning his membership with "Friends") which I am to address to the B. M. M. and leave for him at his office. *God's* name be praised that I have been *helped* so far.

One entry in his "plan" for the twenty-seventh of this month reads as follows:

To consider my duty in reference to taking in "*Punch*" and the "*Shilling Magazine*."

Two days later he writes:

Discontinued taking in "*Punch*" today.

Clifton. Monday, eleven P. M. March 31.

Languid to-day in discharge of *admitted* duties. Thus satisfied with my *station*, fancying I have not time enough for reading and mental improvement. Strongly rebuked to-night while retired for prayers, this train of thought possessed my mind. I am so insignificant, and helplessly dependent on heavenly grace, that my utmost attainment in knowledge or action turned to the best advantage

*In one or two previous extracts, reference is made to his connection with the *Friends*, and his exercise of mind relative thereto. His wish, as to Bethesda here referred to, is explained by his half-formed purpose to transfer his connection to the Brethren.

could be but the fulfilling of some *minute* part of God's amazing scheme; and with *perceptions* so imperfect, and *conceptions* (even when stretched to the utmost confines of speculations) confined to a span—how can I judge for myself as to what *sphere* or circle of circumstances would be best for me. *No*, let me know that *God* has called me to walk in my present path, and I cannot do better than throw heart and soul into my proceedings, “Looking unto Jesus.” I prayed for this grace and for dear S——— this evening.

Further extracts *from* Diary:

Clifton. Tuesday 11 P. M. April 1/45.

I fell to self-examination this evening, in the order pursued or marked out in I Cor. X's *early* verses. Enabled to *praise* God for His Goodness in clearing my way in answer to prayer in *three* special instances:

1st. In regard to my long delayed letter to Dear———

2nd. In giving me a considerable degree of certainty in my *temporal* occupation, and thirdly in arranging so easily matters connected with resigning my membership amongst Friends.

My letter was read to the Monthly Meeting this morning—accepted—and Dr. A——— and J. E. appointed to see me in the course of the month.

Copy.

Letter of Resignation to the Society of Friends.

March 27th, 1845.

Dear Friends,

Before I was aware, that according to the regulation of the “Society of Friends,” I still retain my “membership,” I had (in what I considered obedience to the command of Christ) observed the ordinances of Baptism and

the Lord's Supper—and as I still believe them to be of Divine institution—and consequently in force at the present time—I deem it my duty to discontinue my connection with the Society, since it would be inconsistent *voluntarily* to continue a profession involving principles in accordance with which I am unable to act.

I remain,

Your Friend,

James Wright.

The first of these matters has been a subject of prayer for eight months, the second six months, and the third *one year*. "Bless the Lord, oh, my soul."

Clifton. 11 P. M. April 3.

In prayer this evening asked for teaching about my place among the children of God,—that I may know how to minister to others and be ministered to as a good steward of the manifold Grace of God. Also for ———, that he may be kept in *peace*, and *soon* obtain another situation; also for ——— and ———, that they may be upheld by the Grace of God—and that the latter's joy may *continue*, or if otherwise that it may redound to her soul's good.

Clifton. Sunday evening, 10½ P. M. 4/6/45.

Conversed with ——— in going to Chapel this evening. Was struck while in the meeting with the fact—that our *lives* are one *universal* opportunity for serving God in some way or other. How humbling to think of our *unfaithfulness*—involving as it does the failing to make use of so many glorious occasions for "laying up in store a good foundation against the time to come." But we do not remember practically to "lay hold on eternal life," as we should. ("*Wait on the Lord!*") Prayed this even-

ing for teaching and grace to know and to fill aright my place among the saints. For ——— and ——— that they may have grace to "*walk uprightly*" and know God as the "*Sun and Shield*" of such. Psalm 84. 11th verse.

Clifton. Monday 11 P. M. 4/7/45.

In prayer this evening asked the Lord for teaching and grace to come to a right conclusion about learning Hebrew. Also remembered dear ——— and ——— in their *need* of grace—*equal* in measure, though different in kind.

Clifton. Tuesday. 10½ P. M. April 8.

Prayed for guidance to a right place of service among the body of professed Christians, and remembered ——— and ——— thanking the Lord for the measure of answer to prayer in the case of the latter ——— (N. B. I prayed for grace to overcome my slothfulness in the morning).

Clifton. Wednesday. 11 P. M.. April 9.

Started this morning to see D. E. off by train—and as I only just got out of bed in time to dress had no time for *prayer*. Breakfasted in town and got no time for retirement during the day. Felt the bad effect of this in a languid, undecided, *inactive* state of mind this evening, feeling more disposition to exchange words than to go into my room. I felt happy at Chapel and so this state of mind after surprised me. Mr. Müller spoke this evening on the 2nd chap. of II Kings. * * * My prayer this evening was hindered—no confidence in asking for *former* petitions, feeling most led into confession. Oh, that I may be kept *upright*.— Since I have been enabled by the grace of God to be a little more watchful, my satisfaction in the discharge of my temporal engage-

ments has been much increased. I have given a more undivided attention to the Book Trade, and get through more work in several ways than I have for long; and I feel even here a danger lest I become engrossed and self satisfied. The Lord keep me *hungry* for the Food which He alone can supply.

Clifton. Thursday. 9½ P. M. April 10.

Late in getting up this morning. Got time for prayer in the middle of the day. Enjoyed considerable *energy* of soul in meditation to-night. My only fear is perhaps my train of thought and reasoning was more *suggested* than *guided* by the *Holy Word of God*. The Lord preserve me from this evil. At all events I believe the effects of to-night's thoughts on the whole will be a salutary one—will humble, and, by God's grace, tend to keep my mind in a right posture of dependence on God.

Clifton. Friday. 7½ A. M. April 11.

Got up this morning at five o'clock. Prayed for—— and his mother's temporal and spiritual blessings. Had doubts about propriety of praying for conversion of sinners, and therefore prayed to be taught upon this subject. Also for —— and —— for *increased faith*. Had much joy afterwards in meditating on John, Chap. II—particularly on the "servants" knowing what the "*governor*" was ignorant of.

Ditto, 10 P. M.

Prayer this evening for —— and his mother. About my temporal occupation, and for —— and —— . My course this day not being so satisfactory as often, gave me ground for confession. I don't think I have prayed sufficiently about my temporal occupation.

Clifton. Monday. April 14th, 9½ P. M.

I believe God helped me much to-day in the discharge of my temporal duties—for which I am thankful. May I be more so and more prayerful. Felt this evening in considering the early part of XX Numbers—that it is very improper to complain, *even in thought* of any position we find ourselves in; so often may it be (according to the Lord's *revealed* mode of acting towards His children) the necessary consequence of our previous conduct. Still must we wait on God, and whatever our circumstances, and however instrumentally brought about—we shall be strengthened to glorify Him.

Clifton. Tuesday. April 15. 9½ P. M.

In prayer this evening I sought *earnestly* grace and wisdom in such wise as to enable me to turn *every moment* to account. Not to be *wasting* time about things, which do not profit; and that passage of Scripture came to me with much force—"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? *By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word.*"

Clifton. Wednesday. 9½ P. M. April 16.

Prayed this morning for teaching on John III:5:

Clifton. Friday. April 18.

Rose late. Languid in the discharge of *temporal* duties. Received this evening an invitation from —— to visit him. May I *wait* on the Lord in reference to this. This evening continued to reflect on the command "*wait on God*" in connection with *active* service, and particularly as bearing on my desire to study evidences of *Revelation*, etc.

(At the end of this entry and several others, both earlier and later, a "plan" for the "following day" was

written out. The first item in this being "Plan (D. V.) for to-morrow prayer and reading *four times*." The next day's entry shows how faithfully he recorded his shortcomings.)

Clifton. Saturday. April 19. 10 P. M.

Restrained from prayer and neglected reading the Word till this evening, and then had not much enjoyment.

Clifton. Sunday. April 20. 9½ P. M.

Had much joy this afternoon in prayer in casting myself on the Lord for the future, especially in reference to my probable journey to *Birmingham*. May the Lord enable me to pray much for grace in this matter, and may I find practically it is our privilege to have *every* step directed of the Lord.

Prayed

1. That my journey and stay at *Birmingham* may be to *God's* glory. See April 9.

2 For wisdom to decide whether or not I shall study the evidences of the authenticity of Scripture.

3 For ——— that her faith may be increased.

4 For ——— that he may be upheld by God's grace.

Clifton. Tuesday evening. 10 P. M. April 22.

In prayer this evening I was much employed in thought about the propriety of considering more fully the subject of evidence of the authenticity of Scripture. Prayed for wisdom to guide me in this matter. Every moment has its proper work which is to be performed.

Clifton. Friday. April 25. 10 P. M.

J——— E——— fixed next Monday week, the 5th, at 10 o'clock to meet him and Dr. A——— at the residence of the latter. I took this morning (after a rather

hasty *mental* argument in reference to the propriety of the step, and somewhat contrary to a former conviction) a season Ticket to the Exhibition of paintings at the Institution. The Lord in His goodness preserve me from losing my taste for heavenly pleasures, for the sake of enjoying a present but trifling recompense. If I have grieved the Spirit, by acting in self will, may I have grace to see it clearly, and to confess and put away this sin watching in prayer against a like temptation.

Clifton. Sunday. April 27.

I have been in a cold state of heart the last day or two. Felt something like a revival this afternoon; and this evening when wishing to go to bed immediately upon entering my room, alleging that I should need to arise early to-morrow, and if I do not get to bed early this cannot be, I was led to think of how much more consequence was spiritual strength than natural; and how a supply of one will overbalance a deficiency in the other. Let me "Seek first the Kingdom of Heaven and His righteousness etc." G. Müller gave me some advice this evening about how to act when on a journey.

(After referring to having given "much time, thought, and anxiety" to some trifling matter he writes)

Clifton. Monday. 11 P. M. April 28.

What very trifles will the heart engage itself upon while Jesus is lost sight of as the *one object*.

Prayer for preserving and guiding grace while at Birmingham.

Birmingham. Monday. April 29. *Midnight.*

Much profitable reflection in coming here this evening, on the nature of the intercourse between *fellow passengers* and the consideration of which led to prayer for

my fellow passengers. Was enabled to cast my cares upon the Lord with some degree of confidence. Arrived at this place at about twenty minutes after 11 P. M.

Birmingham. Wednesday. April 30. 10 P. M.

Our Father who is in heaven has been very good to me this day, *rejoicing* my heart in His Word, although to the eye of nature alone there has been much to try my patience and disappoint me. "Be careful for nothing" etc., was particularly brought to my remembrance in prayer. God, in His providence may be ordering my lot thus to learn more of Him. What a blessed *school*. Oh, may I perfectly learn this *blessed lesson*.

Birmingham, Thursday, May 1, 11 P. M.

A little more success in business to-day; may I be thankful for *this* and still *wait* on the Lord.

Birmingham. Friday. May 2, 12 P. M.

Temporal *success* is perhaps more insidious in its effect on the spiritual frame of a soul than difficulty. The *comparative* (success?) has certainly not made me more prayerful—certainly not more *happy* in soul than before.

Clifton. Saturday. 11 1/2 o'clock. May 3.

Once more at home. When I came into bedroom this evening commenced reading in the Presbyterian Review an article on Wordsworth's Poetry, and read it through. Somewhat self-condemned for thus occupying my time at this time: the more especially as I felt tired and inclined to omit prayer and reading. I was enabled by God's grace, in much weakness and infirmity, to adhere to my plan of not going to bed without having enjoyed these in some measure. This thought struck me that I might *lose sleep* and yet maintain nearness of communion

with God—but that such a frame of heart is impossible provided *prayer* is neglected.

In the “plans” for several days after this he records his failure in keeping his intention to rise early—as for instance:

Arise any time after five o'clock. . . . Arose at eight o'clock

Arise any time after five. Not till eight o'clock

Arise any time after six o'clock. Not till 8½

Clifton. Friday. 10 P. M. May 9.

Prayer: For grace to keep the glory of God before my eye by faith—to the exclusion of *baser* motives; especially in circumstances of ——'s visit. In looking at my *prayer* enumerated first on 4/20/45, I feel grateful to my Father in Heaven for His answer to that petition. I received during that journey blessing from Him, and I am certain this will return in thanksgiving to the God who bestowed it. This evening my fifth enumerated supplication (how *few* and *wavering* have they been) engaged me some time. I feel the temptation to which the natural tendency of my mind exposes me. May the Lord keep me near Him. The twenty-third verse of Numbers XXXI struck me this evening as containing matter for extensive and deep practical meditation. Who are *our* enemies—What is *the* spoil which *we* may take and which having been passed *through* the *fire*, and *purified* by the *water of separation*, is fit for *God's service*, and His *children's use*. “Thy *testimonies* are *very sure*.” “*All these things* happened, etc., and are *written for our admonition*.” “*Ponder* the path of thy feet, etc.” “If any man *lack wisdom*, let him ask of God, etc.”

Clifton, Wednesday, 11 P. M., May 14.

To-day, as for several days past, I have been hindered

in the proper discharge of my duties, by my inveterate enemy, indolence; feeling disposed every *moment* (particularly in the middle of the day) to gratify the lust of the *moment*, instead of acting with reference to "*the end*." The Lord give me more to walk by *Faith*. (In this evening's "plan" for the coming day he records this *Prayer*: For faith to act each moment as deeming it necessarily calculated to "*tell upon*" my future conditon.) Clifton, Monday, 11 P. M., May 26.

For a week or more past, I have suffered in my frame of heart from an unsubdued tendency to seek pleasure in gratifying the desire of the passing moment, without a practical regard to the will of God in the matter. In *this* spirit I have read two of Scott's novels—"Guy Mannerling" and "The Antiquary"; and this afternoon had commenced "Kenilworth," when, during my walk home, I reflected on my course, and I considered however superior in a literary point of view these compositions are; and however useful they may be in informing and exercising the taste, when perused from right motives—yet, on a review of my own experience, the reading of them, in *this particular instance*, has been both a *result* and cause of the continuance of an *unspiritual*, cold frame of heart. The Lord gave me grace to walk straight up to my room to lock up the *two volumes* I had with me, and to give myself to prayer and reflection on the word of God. May the same gracious interference be renewed on my behalf continually. I prayed to-night especially that I may be enabled to watch against this habitual desire to gratify self-will. And confident that all had proceeded from neglect in watchfulness—I would to-night (in consciousness of *my* weakness, yet hoping in the supply of God's grace to sustain me in it) resolve—that from and after

to-morrow morning, the twenty-seventh of May, 1845—I will never leave my room to enter on the business of the day, nor ever retire to rest at night till, after *prayer* and *meditation* on the *Word of God*, I can do so with a pure heart, and a *good conscience*, and faith unfeigned. Always allowing an exception to the above rule in cases, when I feel assured at *the time*, that I shall *afterwards* be able (*in writing*) to make it clear to myself that such an exception was authorized by the providential arrangement of circumstances.

Clifton, Wednesday, 1.30 A. M., June 11.

I failed on the first of the month to keep the important resolution of May 26; and from that to this, with the exception of a few hours intermission, I have been in a cold unspiritual frame of heart. This evening, after a walk in Leigh Woods, on retiring to my bedroom, I was led into a practical train of thought in reference to the condition of my soul; and the end was that when I thought my foot was about to slip, the mercy of the Lord held me up. His goodness constrains me to praise; but oh, how is it wanting in *fervour* and heartiness. Oh, as weakness of body induces additional *care*, so being *morbidly* weak in a spiritual view, may I watch with redoubled care, and pray with redoubled perseverance—that I enter not into temptation.

Clifton, Friday, 1.30 o'clock A. M., June 13.

In company with —— this evening I feel I failed to honor the Lord, and so I determined to take the first opportunity to confess to him my failure.

Clifton, Friday 11.30 P. M., June 13.

—— acquiesced in the remark I made to him about our conduct last evening.

Clifton, Wednesday 12 P. M., June 18.

I profited this evening by the consideration of the nature of "pride" and the *mode* of God's employment for its subjection.

Here the "diary" ends—all remaining pages being blank. Other and later diaries have been found, but are, for the most part, written in a short hand of his own, which is to others undecipherable.

Imperfect as are these scanty memorials of Mr. Wright's inner life, they suffice to reveal the steady growth of character, and are the more interesting and instructive, because he was not yet *twenty years old*. Nothing is perhaps more noticeable than the gradual development of that "*meek and quiet spirit*" which is in the sight of God of great price."

Spinoza, from a purely intellectual point of view, has declared that "there is no greater foe to progress than self-conceit, and the laziness which self-conceit begets." Over the Delphic portal were inscribed these words: "Without the descent into the hell of self knowledge, there is no ascent into heaven." These are feelings after a greater truth, revealed fully only by the Spirit of God, that of all qualities of Christian character, humility easily ranks among the very foremost if indeed it does not lead all the rest. In this it is unique, that it is the one *unconscious* grace. When the face shines with the glory of this grace, the saint is like Moses who "wist not that his face shone."

These fragments of Mr. Wright's diary, show him looking into the perfect law of liberty and continuing to look until he learned what manner of man he was. *Æsop* satirically pictured man as carrying two bags over

his shoulder: the one with his own sins, hanging behind; the other with his neighbor's sins, hanging in front. James Wright learned that his own shortcomings were quite sufficient to occupy his attention. One of the surest signs that the natural life has the control is what Francis Wayland calls "the outward eye," so that, instead of watching our own faults and failings, we are criticising and judging others. Self knowledge, if it be candid and spiritual brings us low before God; and the more we ascend before men, the lower we descend before Him who knows us altogether and sees behind the glamour of a deceptive, delusive show of virtue and popularity.

James Wright was graciously led into the strait gate and narrow way of humility which few find. And from a humble estimate of himself, the passage was easy to that other narrow unfrequented way of meekness and quietness of spirit. It is pride and self complacency that "open the trumpet stop on the great organ of passion." The spiritual egotist is proverbially intolerant. The Pharisee, not the Publican, is impatient with the imperfections of others.

That saintly spirit, Robert Murray McCheyne, in reviewing the experiences of the day, wrote:

"Shall I call the liveliness of this day a gale of the Spirit or was all natural? All was not of grace: the self admiration, the vanity, the desire of honour, the bitterness—these were breaths of earth or hell." And Trench, in a kindred vein, defines meekness, as "that temper of spirit toward God whereby we accept his dealings without disputing; then, towards men, whereby we meekly endure their provocations and do not withdraw ourselves from the burdens which their sins impose upon us."

Another fruit of self disclosure that brings humility

toward God, and forbearance toward men, that develops meekness of spirit is, that it leads to a true self-surrender. When, under repeated failures from self confidence and self will, we are led to dependence on Divine strength and wisdom, and obedience to His will, there comes that higher freedom never found in self guidance. As the beloved Dr. A. J. Gordon loved to say: "Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty"—not liberty for us to do as we please, but liberty for God to do as He pleases in us.

All these great lessons James Wright was learning, when as yet "the dew of his youth" was upon him. And these lessons were never unlearned. Quietly, unobtrusively, he grew toward the full stature of his manhood, and at the same time, toward "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

CHAPTER THIRD.

THE LATER MORNING HOURS.

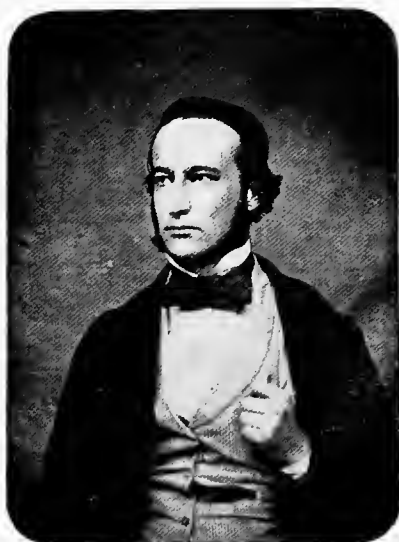
School days are golden. Then life's tasks are assigned to us by others, and the round of daily duty definitely prescribed, largely without our choosing; moreover, there is at times, at least, some sense of rest in work measurably done—brought to completion.

Quite different is the experience of the boy when he leaves behind the school bench, and emerges into public life, in a business pursuit or a professional career. His tasks are now, more or less, self imposed, his work in a larger measure, of his own electing; and now duty never seems fully discharged. As life moves on, the sense of a finished work seems to fade more and more into the dimness of a mere dream land where fancies take the place of facts; and we confront what Coleridge calls,

“The petty *Done*;
The vast *Undone*.”

After leaving school James Wright appears to have become identified with the business which his father and Mr. Hunt carried on, and to have travelled often in the interests of the firm.

In those days, in many parts of Britain, the means of locomotion were primitive. All travel was on horseback or by stagecoach, if not on foot; and, of course, beset with all the delays and discomforts characteristic of such modes of transportation, especially in treacherous and inclement weather. Mr. Wright suffered from



JAMES WRIGHT AT 25.
FROM A DAGUERRETYPE, 1851.

these petty vexations and learned to endure them. He recounted, in later days, how he had crossed Dartmoor, for example, in midwinter, and on the outside of a coach, with no protection for his legs but a sixpenny armful of straw, got from an ostler at some inn, wrapped round his lower extremities to keep out the cold.

His father died, in 1842, at Frederick Place, Clifton, and for a time he and his two remaining sisters who were unmarried—one other having died when seven years old—seem to have found a home with their married sister and her husband, Mr. and Mrs. Withy, who lived a few doors from their previous residence.

It was during this time that James first met, at Bethesda chapel, Miss Ann Willington Hitchins, who afterwards became his beloved wife. She was very delicate in health, and prior to their engagement went, in company with an uncle, on a voyage to the West Indies, in the hope of improving her physical condition. Soon after her return she was affianced to James, and on September 18, 1851, he being then twenty-five years old, they were married at Portland Methodist chapel. This marital union proved exceptionally happy. Although for several years an invalid, she was a true and loyal wife, a help, meet for her husband, tender, affectionate, considerate, sympathetic.

In 1854, Mr. Wright having obtained employment, as clerk, in the firm of Lury and Hoyland, they moved to London, where for the next five years his home was to be found.

Of this period of his life very few important memoranda are available. But, happily, it was not so eventful as to make this lack of information very seriously

a hindrance. He had not yet found his highest life work, that final vocation which was to be the great sphere for the fullest exercise and exhibit of all his gifts and graces. Like Moses, at "the backside of the desert," he was providentially getting ready for that "forty years" of active service which will be forever associated with his name.

The following letters will be of interest in this connection, as supplying in part the lack of fuller records, and showing the high esteem in which as a young man Mr. Wright was already held:

The first is a letter from Mr. Henry Craik, dated Bristol, 30th Sept., 1854.

"My beloved Brother:—

"I was not aware that your leaving for London had been determined on; I feel that you are just one of those we can ill spare. I desire to trace and acknowledge the hand of God in your removal to another place of abode, and I can easily understand how very gracious results may be accomplished by it; but, when I remember your dear and honoured father, and the many years during which I have known you, the consistent course you have been enabled to maintain from your early youth, I feel, and excusably feel, an emotion of regret that one fitted to be increasingly a help and comfort to me has been taken away. Our intercourse has been but little, but I shall miss your countenance and your fellowship at our assemblies. *God forbid that distance should diminish our mutual esteem and regard.*

* * * * *

"Give my affectionate regards to dear Mrs. Wright. I give thanks to God for you both. Neither of you has ever given me anything but comfort; and I say it not to

lift you up but to humble you before the Giver of every good and perfect gift, that your quiet, affectionate and gracious walk will not be forgotten by others amongst us any more than by your very affectionate friend and brother in Jesus,

HENRY CRAIK."

The next letter is from a friend in business, written in 1856:

"I am very sorry that, at present, there is no chance of our being in the same office. It would have been far more agreeable to my own feelings to be with those you respect and like than with perfect strangers.

* * * * *

"I must thank thee *much* for the kind condescension always shewn to me, for which I feel very grateful. My first entry on London was made much easier and safer by the serious and confidential association in Broad Street office, and it will be a pleasure to recall the hours spent with thee, *now* that we are separated."

Mr. Lury, Mr. Wright's employer, evidently thought very highly of his clerk, observing especially what a wholesome moral and spiritual influence he uniformly exercised over all into contact with whom he came.

Subsequently he transferred his business relations to the firm of Messrs. Tregelles & Taylor. So much was he both esteemed and respected that he was offered a partnership in one of these firms. He felt it his duty, however, to decline the offer, however tempting, inasmuch as it would have been necessary, had he entered as a partner into the business, to have borrowed the money; and as it would be contrary to his convictions to incur *debt*, he chose to remain a clerk. Money gains would not compensate for any disregard of conscience.

He had already learned this valuable lesson, also, that all worldly advantages are to be weighed not in a material but moral scale.

It was while in the employ of Tregelles and Taylor that he was invited by Mr. George Müller to join him in the orphan work at Bristol, which marks the next and most important stage in Mr. Wright's life. But, before following his steps to his last earthly home of residence and service, it is well to record another valuable testimony to the godly influence of his life and character while engaged in business in London. It is contained in an extract from a letter, received by him from a fellow clerk after his removal to Bristol:

"I cannot express how much I have regretted your absence, and, although it may seem rather surprising, how *keenly* I have felt the loss of your presence in this office. But it is a fact accounted for by the very deep feeling of esteem and respect you have inspired me with during the time we were thrown together. How true it is that we cannot live to ourselves even if we would, but we *must* by our characters influence those with whom we come in contact either for good or evil. Yours has been good over me. How true it is, too, that our nest *shall* be stirred up, whenever we seek to make ourselves too comfortable on this earth. I like to believe in the workings of a God of love in what many call little things, and it is thus I have so regretted your absence. It is not that we had much converse together, for we had not. Please do not misinterpret this as flattery. I merely wish you to understand that your *quiet influence* did me good and made me happy, so happy that it was taken from me."

Of his private life and work as a Sunday School

Superintendent during these years at Hackney and Dalston Mr. T. Kyffin Freeman kindly furnishes his own recollections. He writes as follows, and gives us some further insight into his life in London, from 1854 to 1859.

"This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory; and his disciples believed on Him."

"As with the Great Master, so with His servants, there is always to be traced a definite time when the call to public service is indicated by some striking incident, and henceforth His servant, having put his hand to the plough, goes forward with his work in 'the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.'

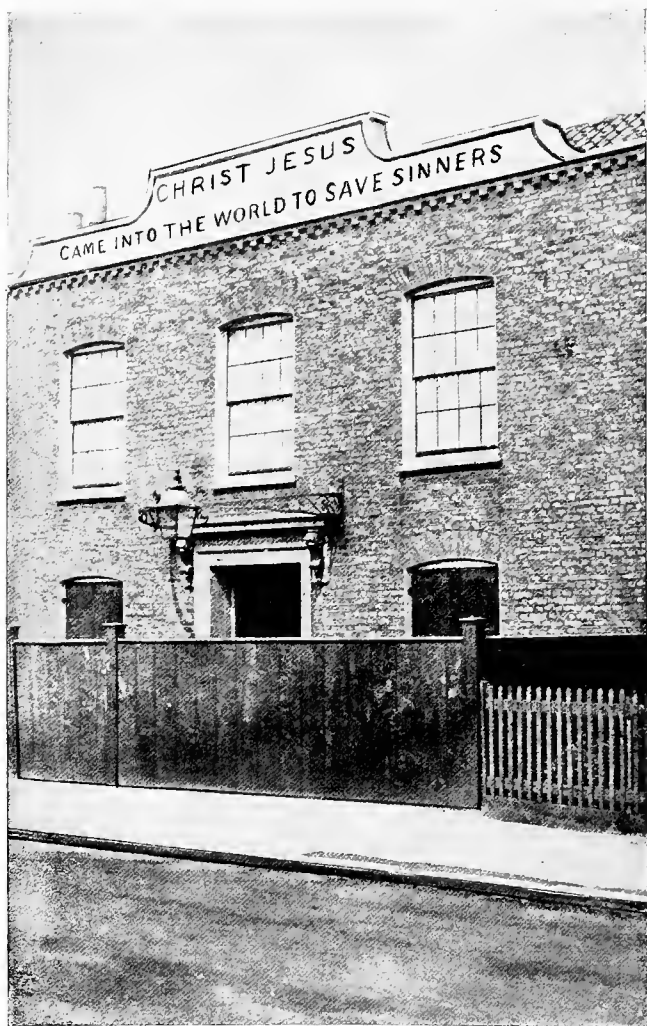
"Following closely upon the record of our Lord's introductory miracle, was the manifestation of His power when 'many believed on His name.'

"In the case of this servant of God, James Wright, I have a vivid recollection of his first public pronouncement, at an assembly of Christians worshipping at St. Thomas' Rooms, Hackney. Known as the 'Brethren,' they were not unworthy of the name, for there was an intensity of love to Christ and to His people which bound them together in holy fellowship, when on the first day of the week they 'came together to break bread' in sweet remembrance of the Risen Redeemer. Liberty of ministry was an interesting feature of the simple worship, and a few Sundays after Mr. Wright, his wife and two sisters had been recommended to us from Bristol, he read with much precision and pathos a few verses bearing upon the subject matter of the meeting and for about ten minutes commented upon the Scripture he had read. Though it is fifty years or

more since then, I can in memory see his striking face, indicating great feeling and much firmness, while his eye sparkled with joy that he had such a message from the Throne to deliver to us.

"From this date he became to us a teacher of Divine truths that we all rejoiced in, and though at St. Thomas' Rooms' Meeting there were veterans in the Gospel, henceforth as a follower of our Lord, he manifested His Glory, and the disciples believed *in* him as a teacher sent from God. It may be interesting to note here that at the time mentioned we had, as co-worshippers, the brethren, Henry Heath, formerly co-worker with Robert C. Chapman at Barnstaple, and subsequently teacher of the church at Brochaires Green, Woolpit; William Thomas Berger, colleague with Hudson Taylor in the starting of China Inland Mission, George Pearse, for many years labouring in France, and R. Cope Morgan (Morgan and Scott) identified with God's Revival in Ireland in 1857-8, and ever since personally and through 'The Christian' an active participator and chronicler of evangelistic work.

"Though James Wright had been educationally trained in the School of the Society of Friends at Thornbury, and subsequently had worshipped with that community, he did not inherit their abstinence from *vocal* worship. On the contrary, I have known few men that had such a divine passion for praise in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs—a veritable David in his love for extolling the Lord thus. A critical ear, coupled with a sweetly melodious voice and a proficient knowledge of music, led him, shortly after he joined us at Hackney, to suggest a weekly meeting at his residence for practice of psalmody, and I have be-



BRETHREN'S MEETING ROOM, PARAGON ROAD, HACKNEY,
WHERE MR. WRIGHT ACTED AS SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT.

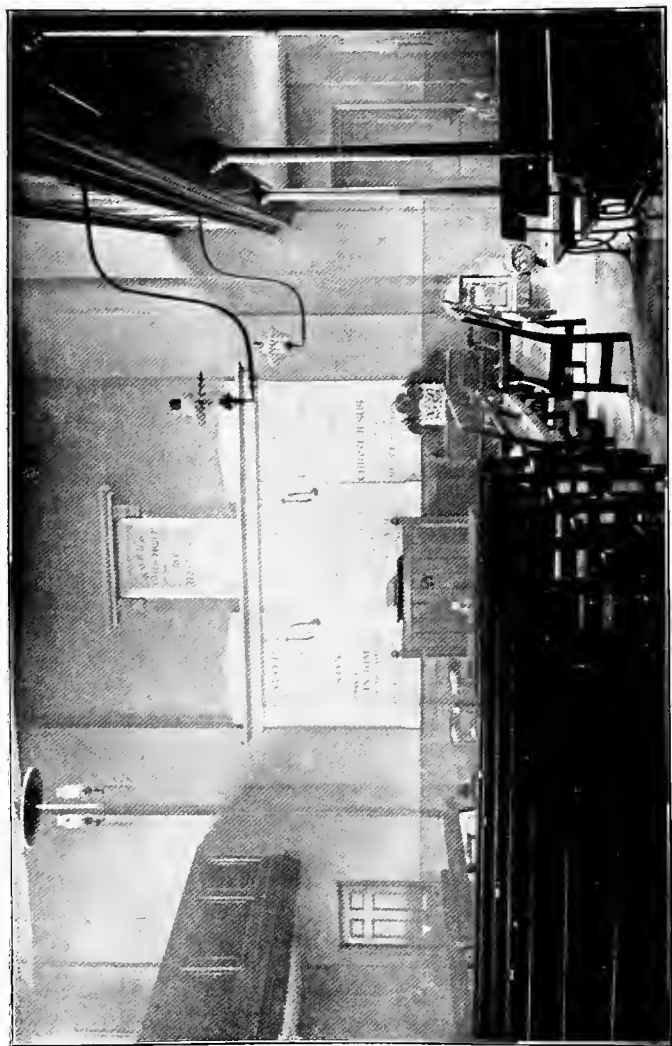
fore me the Tune Book, 'Curwen's Service of Song,' that he suggested as more devotional than Dr. Rippon's and the Union Tune Books which had hitherto been our choice. Our friend, in avoiding tunes that necessitated repetitions in the last lines of the verses, and also those extravaganzas of slurs and runs in hymn singing that characterized the earlier part of the nineteenth century, was a pioneer of that higher class of devotional music that led subsequently to the publication of the 'Psalmist,' by Vincent Novello, and, more recently, the 'Bristol Tune Book.' The class that he thus trained was not an ordinary choir, for we were all young Christians whom he inspired with a love for hymns of the highest order; his theory being to select the choicest of them in our book, and then to choose and practise tunes that seemed to wing their praise to the Father and to the Son. It was verily a "means of grace;" and, as to his countenance as he led the class—I can only compare it to the expression that imagination suggests as being on the face of the sweet Psalmist of Israel when he sang with his harp accompaniment 'JEHOVAH is my Shepherd, Thou art with me, Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over, I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.' Henceforth the vocal worship in the public meetings was not only distinctly of a higher order of musical melody, but the saints sang 'the high praises of God' with their mouth, and 'according to His excellent greatness.'

"The removal of the Brethren's Meeting to the Paragon Road Chapel afforded opportunity for the establishment of a Sunday School, and it was characteristic of our friend, that a few weeks after they had settled in

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their new home he invited all who had the interest of spiritual work amongst children to meet for prayer on the subject. This was responded to mainly by those who had rejoiced in his leadership as musical instructor, and, after several meetings and much prayer for guidance, the Sunday School was commenced February 3, 1856, our friend being recognized by all as marked out to be the Superintendent. Henceforth a bond of affection and respect was formed that had weighty and happy results that eternity only will make manifest. A divine relationship in service to the Great Master was established that has been of the highest importance, for the school became the training arena of Christian athletes, and a spiritual class for Bible students whose lives ever since then have been devoted to the extension of Christ's Kingdom. The writer has been singularly favoured in his association with many Sunday Schools since the Paragon Road School was established, but he has not been able to recognize in any of them the delightful Christian comradeship that Mr. Wright brought about by his loving and judicious leadership.

"Passing by much that was worthy of being chronicled in connection with the Sunday School work, there was one incident that I recall as indicative of his humility of spirit and his conspicuous wisdom. A vacancy occurred in the teachership of the infant class, and, no one offering for the post, he decided to fill the position and to vacate the active responsibility of the superintendency, putting the latter upon the writer. His insistence on this change of service, though startling to all of us, soon commended itself to our judgment, for the infant class became a veritable moulding



CUT OF INTERIOR OF PARAGON ROAD MEETING HOUSE, SOMEWHAT MODIFIED SINCE MR. WRIGHT'S DAY.

department of Sunday School tuition; for who of us that have been parents would not assert that, beyond all question, the whole life of the man or woman is formed in the *earliest days of infancy and childhood*? Gentleness and firmness with great precision soon brought the class to a perfect state of discipline, and, this secured, he carried out a system of Bible instruction that has had lifelong influence on many. Using a box of movable letters, the little ones learned as he put up the words, the first text which was the beginning of what he called his 'School of Divinity'—'All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.' This was perfectly committed to memory by every child and was explained. The second text, 'His name shall be called Jesus for He shall save His people from their sins,' was dealt with on the same lines the following Lord's Day; but, during the week, he had printed on cardboard the first text as it appeared in the box of letters. The children were thus grounded methodically in the Scriptures, and their memories were permanently charged with the whole of the texts, and I may say, never to be forgotten. There were at least twenty texts thus learnt.

"He inaugurated Monthly Teachers' Meetings held by rotation at the teachers' houses, and, after a social tea and the routine business we had helpful devotional exercises, the prayerful reading and study of Scripture always forming an important feature in our worship.

"The happiest Christian intercourse that I then had, or have ever since had, was alas terminated by the call to Bristol. Our dear friend one Lord's Day afternoon told me of a letter received during the previous week from Mr. George Müller asking him to consider for

Divine guidance the work of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution, and whether he should not join Mr. George Muller, in connection, I think with the Foreign Missionary Branch. Our beloved brother with that humility of spirit that ever characterised him asked my brother and myself to pray that he might be guided in his decision. Thus with rare wisdom, knowing that our being occupied in supplicatory prayer would the better prepare us for the trial of separation, he made us his partners in the proposed new service for the Lord."

The readers of this biography will, we are confident, desire that the correspondence relating to engaging in the orphan work at Bristol, and which belongs to the years 1858-1859, shall be completely preserved in this memoir, as it has such intimate association with what was really the great work of Mr. Wright's life.

The first letter from Mr. Müller, inviting him to join him at the Orphan House, is missing; but on the 5th of November, 1858, he wrote apparently in reply to a request from Mr. Wright for fuller information, as follows:

"21 Paul St., Kingsdown,
'Bristol, Nov. 5, 1858.

"My dear Brother:—

"I was glad to receive your letter, and would have replied to it at once, had not the pressure of my engagements been so great. I will now gladly, as fully as possible, give you further information:

"1. I desire your help for certain parts of my correspondence.

"2. The books and tracts which are issued gratuitously or by sale, are read first. I find increasingly that I

have neither time nor strength for this, and yet I do not feel happy that that should be sanctioned by me which I do not know. I desire you, therefore, to read instead of me, after having given to you the principles on which to form the judgment, as to suitableness or unsuitableness; so that I only need to have my attention drawn by you to the unsuitable passages, to form the judgment that the tract or book is unsuitable. This would greatly allow of an increase of good books and good tracts, which are not now introduced, simply because I have no time for reading *much* in this way.

"3. Besides these two principal points for occupying your time, I desire your help in advising and counseling the teachers, both in the Orphan Houses and Day Schools, and as far as time allows, and as you gain their confidence, to lend them in every way you can a helping hand. If you felt equal to it, and happy in doing it, also now and then examining the children; yet this is no "*Sine qua non*." But, at all events, to correct the written examinations, which I might from time to time give to the children, i. e., once a year, would be desirable. In order, however, that you might be the more efficient for this position, it would be necessary that you attend for, at least, one month, a College for training teachers in London, all expenses of which, of course, I should bear.

"4. The three masters of the boys, Mr. L—— and Mr. H—— in turn take the family prayer at the two Orphan Houses, at half past 8 in the morning, and at half past 5 in the afternoon; here also you would have to give your share. You have an opportunity to speak for about 10 or 15 minutes, if you like, or you may read a portion of the Holy Scriptures.

"5. In addition to these four specific parts of work, you would be my assistant in general, as to oversight, counsel, correspondence, accounts, seeing persons for me, etc.

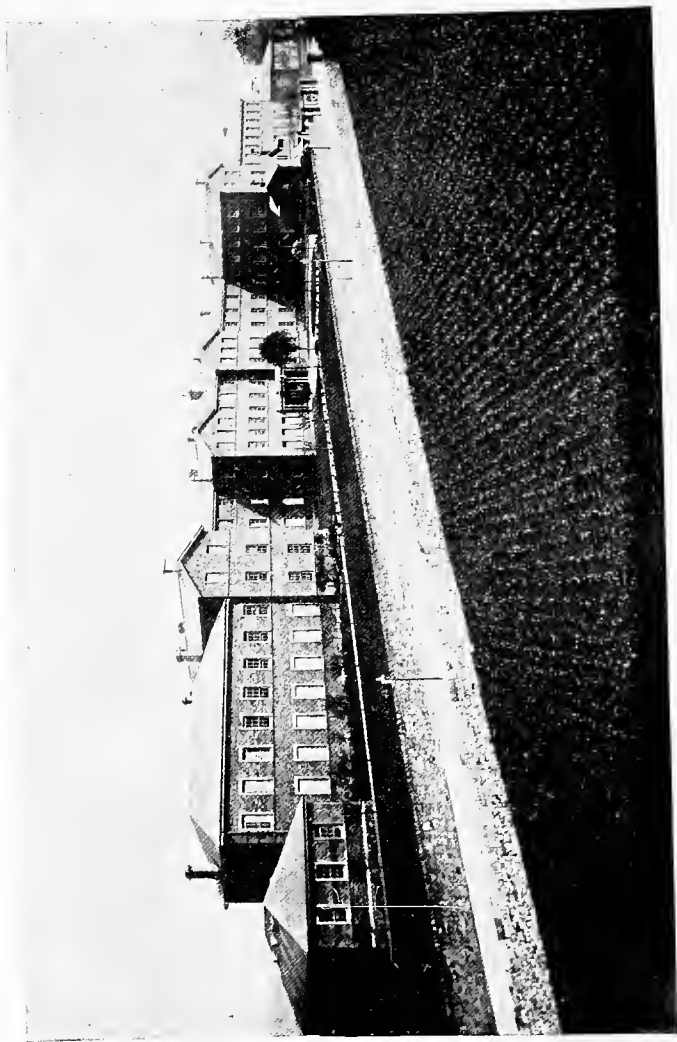
"6. Your ordinary hours would be from 10 o'clock in the morning till 6 o'clock in the evening, having your dinner at 1 o'clock and your tea at 5 o'clock with me and the teachers at the Orphan House. The Lord's Day you would have entirely to yourself. But while these are the ordinary hours, any time you had occasion to leave sooner, or to come later, if you would mention it to me, there would be of course no hindrance if the work does not positively forbid it. Sometimes, however, especially when the Report is being sent out, the hour in the evening would be later.

"7. You would have a small but high office to yourself. So has Mr. L—— and Mr. H——. As to the time of your giving up your present situation, should you see it right to become my helper, I will leave it to yourself, considering the well-being of the Firm by which you are now employed. You may come in 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6 months. Later, however, than May 5th, i.e., 6 months from this, would be undesirable so far as my amount of work is concerned. It would best suit me if you could come in 2 or 3 months. After you have further weighed these matters and prayed over them, I shall be happy to hear from you again. In the meantime I shall help you by my prayer for guidance, God helping me.

"With Christian love to dear Mrs. Wright and your dear sisters,

"Yours affectionately in our Lord,

"GEORGE MÜLLER."



NEW ORPHAN HOUSE No. 3, ASHLEY DOWN. MR. WRIGHT'S ROOM WAS THAT WITH LIGHT BLINDS ABOVE THE TREE.

To this letter Mr. Wright sent the following reply :

“5 Alma Road,
“Dalston, Nov. 22, 1858.

“Beloved Brother:—

“I thank you very much for your letter of the 5th which so fully details the various ways in which you judge I may be helpful to you in the Lord’s work. The more I look at these the more I feel how unequal to the position I am, in virtue of any merely *natural* resources ; but in the light of God’s testimonies I see that this fact should not make me hesitate. If it be the Lord’s will that I should enter on this path, He will not send me at my ‘own charges.’ After prayerful reflection on the path itself, and the previous exercises of my soul for years past, I am confirmed in the assurance that the Lord is saying to me by your invitation, ‘This is the way, walk thou in it,’ and therefore, though I cannot (as I had hoped to do) in this letter state the precise time that I shall be released from my present engagement, yet, in the spirit of that word, ‘I made haste and delayed not to keep Thy commandments.’ I desire to say at once that I thankfully accept your proposal ; and that, judging by the work before me at Messrs. Tregelles and Taylor, which I feel bound to finish, especially the yearly balance, I think I may reckon on being disengaged by the middle or end of January next. I suppose a portion of the correspondence you refer to will be with Missionary brethren. This I look forward to as a sweet privilege. In the examination of tracts, etc., I have had a *little* preparatory training here, the brethren having devolved upon me the care of the little Tract Association that is supported amongst us. In the prospect of being called upon to help in the School

examinations, I especially feel my lack of the technical knowledge so necessary, and am truly glad that I shall have the opportunity of qualifying in some degree at a Training College. As probably some of those now engaged in the Orphan Houses have attended similar institutions, I should be glad to know which you consider the best, and if possible, what particular branches of instruction it will be most expedient I should give attention to, as the time (a month) seems short. * * * I purpose (the Lord willing) to write again so soon as Messrs. T. & T. tell me distinctly when they will be able to release me (which I have told them I should be glad to know as soon as convenient) and meanwhile, I remain,

“With Christian love to Mrs. Müller, Miss Müller, and Miss Groves, in which my dear wife joins,

“Yours affectionately in the Lord,

“JAMES WRIGHT.”

Mr. Müller wrote again in reply to this letter.

“Bristol, Dec. 7, 1858.

“My Dear Brother:—

“I am only now able to reply to your last of Nov. 22nd. 1. The time that you mention, middle or end of January, would suit me well, or even somewhat later.

“2. When I proposed your going to a Training College, I did not mean that you should study there, though, of course, you would seek to be benefited even in this way, by your being there; but rather that you might learn the mode of teaching and ordering and governing a School; in a word, to get a practical knowledge of the working of a school in a short time. If your house is on hand until March 25th, you might, perhaps, so order your arrangements as to allow as much time for

this object as is needed; but from four to six weeks would be quite enough for the object I desire you attend such an institution; other knowledge needed, if it should be so, you would make up privately.

“With Christian love to Mrs. Wright,

“Yours affectionately in our Lord,

“GEORGE MÜLLER.”

The Homerton College was the one decided on, and in March Mr. Wright wrote the following letter to Mr. Müller:

“5 Alma Road,

“Dalston,

“12th March, 1859.

“Dear Brother:—

“I have now attended the Homerton College Training Schools regularly for two weeks. At first, by Mr. Unwin’s advice, I began with the Upper Boys’ School, and watched the course of instruction there during the first week. Last Monday I went into the lower, or Juvenile Boys’ School, and have continued during this week in it, or one or other of the four class rooms connected with it. *Here* I have gained more of what will be practically useful to me, than I did in the other school—*that* has been recently somewhat disorganised by a change of teachers, and the present Master has hardly brought the school into working order—*this* is in an excellent state of discipline. The Master (Mr. D——) is a most efficient *teacher* and *manager* of children; his control is not disputed for a moment; and yet it is exerted in such a happy manner that it wins rather than alienates the children’s hearts.

“I have been particularly struck with the patient labour he bestows upon the dull and backward children, and

the quicker and more forward children in a class lose nothing by having to wait for their companions for different points of view in which he presents a truth; and the variety of illustrations he uses to make it clear to the slower apprehensions make it still more apparent, and less likely to be forgotten by the others. I feel so much interested in this school that I shall be glad, with your approval, to continue attendance in it for another week. * * * Having let our present house from Lady Day, I shall be occupied the early part of the following week in packing and removing our furniture. As, however, the house we have taken at Bristol will not be ready for us for a week or two later, it will not be necessary that we should go down there then; and I could, if necessary, re-commence attendance at the H. C. Schools about the 25th inst., when I might observe for a little the methods of instruction in the infant schools; and, if you think well, I should like the following week to inspect (just as a visitor) the Boys' Classes in the Borough Road School, where I believe the system differs considerably from that adopted at Homerton; the former subdividing the school into a greater number of small sections; the latter relying more on the *simultaneous* method.

"Waiting a line or two of counsel on these points, I remain, with Christian love to your household, in which my dear wife joins,

"Yours affectionately,

"JAMES WRIGHT."

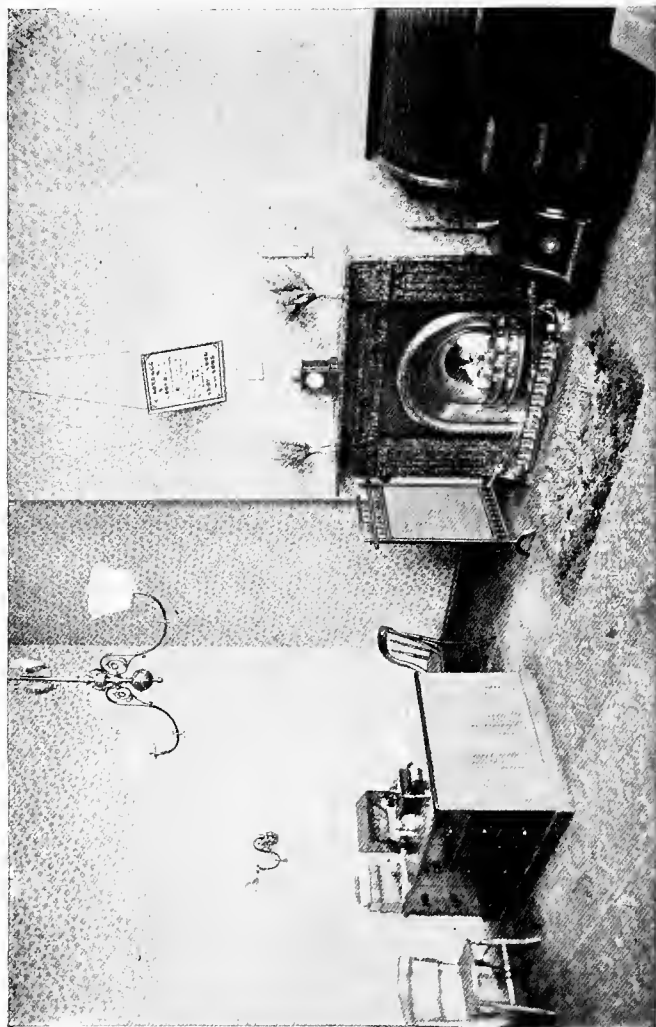
(Mr. Müller's reply.)

"21 Paul Street, Kingsdown,

"Bristol, March 18, 1859.

"My Dear Brother:—

"I must entirely leave to your own judgment the time



MR. WRIGHT'S ROOM AT NO. 3 ORPHAN HOUSE.

of attending at Homerton, as well as what classes. If you are able to manage to go to the Borough Road, I have no objection, as it may be helpful. So far as it regards the time of your coming here, at least, there is no objection to it. * * * I am glad your dear sister is somewhat better.

"With our Christian love to you and Mrs. Wright,

"Yours affectionately,

"G. MÜLLER.

"Please to let me know one week before you expect to come to the New Orphan House, that your room may be ready."

One of Mr. Wright's sisters, who were living with him at 5 Alma Road, Dalston, was at this time very ill, and her brother-in-law, Mr. Withy, sent the following note of sympathy:

"I have thought much of you, dear James, in reference to your change of service, especially in relation to the engrossment of your time and thoughts with present cares, when you would have desired undistracted opportunity for reflection and prayer with reference to the future. None of us would have planned for you such a way of entrance into this new service; we should have said that quietness and freedom from present trouble was best as a preparation for it; but the Lord judged otherwise. He would accustom you beforehand to *trial of faith*, as the surest way of strengthening faith for future trial. He is thus arming you for the conflict, the fight of faith on which you are entering, leading you to realize where your strength lies, and teaching this lesson, how needful it is to be on the watch and not to put off the armour, seeing that we know not *when*

or *whence* trial may come. There are special lessons for us all in this. May we have grace to discern them."

Mr. Wright does not seem to have gone to Bristol till April, 1859. That this step had not the approval of one of his relations, at least, is evident from the following extract from a letter written in November, 1858:

"I do not expect that my opinion in opposition to such a step will have much weight, but still I shall feel best satisfied to express it, believing that it will be accepted kindly. I venture to look on the opening and conducting of so large and expensive an institution without any certain means for its support, and in dependence only on prayer and charity, as almost tempting the Almighty, and proceeding on unwarranted expectations of His miraculous interposition by exciting the disposition in so many persons, and for so many years, to contribute freely to its support. I may be accounted very faithless, but it seems to me that we have no right to expect our Heavenly Father to work miracles for this particular object, and if so, that He will show in His own time the futility of the expectation. We know that new things are often warmly supported, but that after a time zeal grows cold, or the public turn to some other new thing. How lamentable and distressing would it be to those concerned if the precarious supplies for this great establishment should fail, and in what perplexity and embarrassment would it involve the managers. G. M. is probably an elderly man, and if he should be taken off, or anything adverse be permitted to occur, what would be the situation of the younger coadjutors? I may be wrong in my views, but I cannot avoid being

very doubtful at least of the prudence or propriety of thy incurring such a fearful responsibility."

Mr. Wright evidently replied at once to this letter, as a second letter from the same relative was received about a week later, thanking him for his "kind Christian letter," and adding at the close, "I fear I have not expressed my sense of thy courteous and forbearing reception of my free remarks, sufficiently, but I have forcibly felt it. * * * *We* shall not, I trust, be less cordial friends, for taking occasionally different views, and I hope with thyself ever to regard the upright motive and sincere intention, though leading to the same great object by different paths."

Another relative wrote in a very different strain:

"I must not conclude without expressing the interest I feel in thy proposed change of occupation, and much as I am sure thou wilt be missed in thy present post in many ways, I trust a field for yet wider usefulness may be opened before thee; and that, faithfully filling thy position there, thou mayst be made a blessing to many and be thyself richly blest."

Mr. Wright's leaving Hackney caused great regret to his friends there, to whom he and his wife had much endeared themselves, as is evident from the following letters:—

"My Beloved Brother:—

"The news conveyed in your letter gave me true sorrow of heart. I had congratulated myself that you and your dear wife, together with your sisters, were permanently settled amongst us, and I was looking forward, if the Lord should deem it well to give me more strength of body, to avail myself more of the privilege of intercourse with you; but, however I may experience your

loss, I cannot but feel glad on your account that our God has so graciously opened the way for your associating with so dear and esteemed a brother as Mr. Müller in his work. May the presence of the Lord go with you, and abide with you and all yours, beloved brother, and may He accomplish 'all the good pleasure of His goodness in you and the work of faith with power, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of Our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.'

"'How sweet the thought *exceeding* sweet' in this separating world, that in 'a little while' we and all the redeemed shall enjoy unhindered fellowship with our living Head and each other, throughout the countless ages of eternity."

From a couple in humble life, given verbatim:

"My Dear Brother and Sister:—

"We don't like the thoughts of your leaving Hackney we shall lose a much valued Brother and Sister it is well for us and you that we know that solid comfort is only to be found in Christ but we must tell you that your presence at Hackney has given us much joy and you have never once grieved our Spirits or the Spirit of Christ which is in us May it ever be yours in this changeable world to find in Jesus quietness assurance and rest many thanks to you for the kindness you have shewn to us and that the presence of the Lord may go with you is the prayer of your poor Brother and Sister yours in hope of eternal life."

CHAPTER FOURTH.

THE NOONTIDE OF LIFE.

In God's economy service always demands a servant prepared for his work; and the work always waits for the workman to be made ready. We are often in a hurry; He, never; for haste is waste, and sometimes even worse disaster.

James Wright had been unconsciously in training for the great sphere into which, in 1859, he was introduced. He was now in his thirty-fourth year, that significant age, when his divine Master closed his earthly career, and he was a mature man, not only in body, but in soul and spirit. He had been taught many lessons in God's school, and had proved an apt pupil, and when he entered upon his work, there was manifest in him a marked fitness for it, in every respect—a foreordained fitness such as may be expected where the Lord makes his choice, Who divideth to every man severally as He will.

Mr. Wright, as has been seen, had found the wisdom of deliberately apportioning to devout Bible study the best and freshest and quietest part of the whole day—the early morning, as Dean Burgon strongly recommended to Oxford students, adding the emphatic caution, “let what will, go undone, but never abridge that half hour.” He had learned the secrets of access to the throne of grace, and was a man of faith and prayer.

All this had led up to a true self dedication, like that of Miss Frances E. Willard, whose statue is the only memorial of a *woman*, found in the Capitol at Washing-

ton—and who on her birthday, solemnly wrote: “I give myself to the Lord, for the fulfilment in the highest degree, in spirit, soul and body, of the declaration, ‘a habitation of God, through the Spirit.’”

There is a surprising similarity in the experience of all really godly souls—nor is it surprising, either, when we remember that in their common school, there is always the same Schoolmaster. He who taught General Charles Gordon his four rules of life: “absolute self forgetfulness, absence of all pretension, indifference to the world’s applause, and acquiescence in the Will of God,” gave Andrew Murray his kindred five rules: “Lie at God’s feet, search His Word, watch His Providence, note the changes of your spiritual life, wait for Him and then wait on Him.” It was the same great Teacher from whom James Wright learned to be devout, humble, conscientious, spiritual, unselfish, prayerful, trustful, obedient.

Our record of his life now reaches the decade of years between 1860 and 1870, the first ten of blessed association and partnership between him and Mr. Müller.

On returning to Bristol, to take up this new work on Ashley Down, Mr. and Mrs. Wright found a home at Highbury Villa, Sydenham Hill, Cotham, whence he went to and fro daily. His wife, not at all strong, obliged for nine months to lie on her back, did not take part in the orphan work, Mr. Müller being at this time assisted by his own wife and daughter, and sister-in-law, Miss Lydia Groves.

Mr. and Mrs. Wright, however, frequently lodged and entertained missionaries and other guests, and a prayer meeting was held in their house on Saturday evenings; and Mrs. Wright had a monthly working class for the benefit of missionaries in Penang, the articles

made being sent there for sale. She and her husband went with Mr. Müller and family to the seaside in summer, the work then not being so onerous as in later years, allowing of their taking rest together.

Albeit Mr. Wright had never children of his own, he was always fond of the little ones, and a good entertainer of them. His nieces, for example, can testify to the pains he took to interest and amuse them, when invited for an evening to his house, some times showing them magic-lantern views in his drawing room. Through all his forty-five years at Ashley Down, he was as a fond father to those thousands of orphans.

He was habitually, yet unpretentiously, *unselfish*. Charles Kingsley significantly said :

“If you wish to be miserable, you must think about yourself; about what you want, what you like, what respect people ought to pay to you, what people think of you; and then to you nothing will be pure. You will spoil everything you touch; you will make sin and misery for yourself out of everything which God sends you; you will be as wretched as you choose.”

Robert Louis Stevenson, likewise says :

“The history of our kindnesses alone makes this world tolerable. Were it not for that—for the effect of kind words, looks, letters, multiplying, spreading, making one happy through another, and bringing forth benefits, I should be tempted to think our life a practical jest.”

All manner of unselfish ministries seemed natural to Mr. Wright. When, in 1863, scarlet fever entered the home of the Withys, and four of the children were ill at the same time, he and his wife urgently invited the remaining two, who had not caught the disease, to make their home their own for the time, thus in a time of

much anxiety relieving their parents of much care; and such acts of thoughtful consideration for others and of self-oblivion were common occurrences, too unheralded ever to have a written history.

In the spring of 1870, while repairs were going on in their own house, Mr. Wright and his wife were invited to stay with their aunt, Miss Louisa Wright, 24, Berkeley Square; and it was during this visit that his wife was attacked by illness which proved fatal. On May 22nd, after but a few weeks of sickness, she passed away, leaving her devoted husband alone. But he was not desolate. From this, as from other subsequent sorrows, his heart rebounded, from the deep secret of faith in the Father's unspeakable wisdom and love. On the very day of his great bereavement he wrote the following letter to his friend, Mr. T. Kyffin Freeman, of Hackney:

"My Dear Brother:—

Though unable (as I could have desired) to write to you to acquaint you of my dear wife's illness, I have little doubt that some report has reached you, and I hope, therefore, that you will not feel the shock of entire unpreparedness when you learn that she who "did me *good* and not evil all the days of her life" is no longer by my side. She slept in Jesus at twenty minutes after five *this* afternoon.

All the circumstances of her five weeks' illness were full of *mercy*, but I have no time now to enter into detail.

Kindly inform all the members of your dear family, Mr. Heath and other dear friends around you who knew



ANNIE W. WRIGHT, TAKEN 1868.



JAMES WRIGHT, 1872.



LYDIA WRIGHT, 1872.

and loved the dear departed one. With Christian love to yourself and dear Mrs. Freeman,

Yours in Jesus,

JAMES WRIGHT."

Several friends sent letters of condolence, testifying to the love and esteem in which Mrs. Wright was held, and the sweetness of her Christian character. She had been a devoted wife, and had greatly endeared herself to all her friends. Naturally cheerful, she was always bright, even when laid aside.

Mr. Wright never returned to his former residence at Sydenham Hill, but accepted his aunt's invitation to make her house his home, where he continued to reside, with her and his two sisters—to whom she had also offered a home after their removal from London—until his marriage with Miss Lydia Müller in 1871.

The twenty years, between 1871 and 1890, were probably among the happiest and the most useful of Mr. Wright's whole life. He was at life's full noon. There was in his character a singular ripeness, which reminds us of fruits that wear, even in summer, the autumnal fullness and bloom.

After the death of his cherished wife he went, for change and rest, to Aberystwyth, on the Welsh coast, with his two sisters and a niece. The following year he became engaged to Lydia, the only child of Mr. Müller, and on November 17, 1871, they were joined in marriage, at Bethesda Chapel, her father himself officiating. The wedding, as might have been foreseen, awakened interest so profound and general that the place was thronged.

This marriage union added much to the peace and joy of dear Mr. Müller's life. If it took from him his only

daughter, it gave him a beloved son. He had known James Wright from boyhood; he had watched his growth as a consistent and spiritually minded disciple; for more than ten years he had been so closely associated with him in the work of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution as to be his "right hand." It gave him the greatest satisfaction to entrust to the care of such a husband his darling Lydia. Soon after the engagement, he had said to Mr. Wright's married sister, Mrs. Withy, and her husband, that "there was no one in the whole world to whom he would rather entrust his dear daughter."

As to the wife herself, she was a rare woman, with a certain radiant spirit. Her timidity was as marked as her gentleness; her modesty only equalled by her merit. So lowly was her estimate of herself that, even after she had consented to be Mr. Wright's wife, she expressed to a friend her grave doubts as to her fitness, and, to the last, she was always self-distrustful. But never did her husband share her doubts. From first to last his heart safely trusted in his "Lydia," and she filled all the place that it is possible for a wife to fill in her husband's love and life.

She proved, what a true wife always should be, not only his counterpart, but his counterpoise; her individuality had full play, as it should—otherwise how could a "balance wheel *balance* anything?"

After a brief "honeymoon" in the Isle of Wight, the newly married couple settled down at Brougham Villa, St. Matthew's Road, Kingsdown, where their home continued to be until, a second time, Mr. Wright was bereft of a wife, in January, 1890. It was here that were passed those "eighteen years of unbroken and unmarred



10 BROUGHAM VILLA, ST. MATTHEW'S ROAD, MR. WRIGHT'S HOME
FROM 1871 TO 1890.

felicity" to which he could never refer without deep emotion.

Here it was also that so many visitors and guests found a home of rest. They were not forgetful to entertain strangers, but given to hospitality. Many a servant of God, in passing through Bristol, enjoyed the privilege of sojourning in that home where they found a living illustration of the beautiful fourfold motto:

"The Beauty of the House is order;

"The Blessing of the House is contentment;

"The Glory of the House is hospitality."

"The Crown of the House is Godliness."

One of these guests gratefully gave to Mr. Wright's little home at Kingsdown the name of "The Haven of Peace."

During these years Mr. Wright went daily to the Orphan Houses, his wife twice a week going with him. A frequent guest at his house, who was always welcomed there when in Bristol, and saw "behind the scenes," writes:

"I witnessed the untiring labours of this faithful and devoted servant—devoted first to God, and afterward to Mr. Müller. He carried on the *immense* correspondence for nearly fifty years, and took the management of the work at Ashley Down as none but himself could have done. * * * I feel I hardly knew such another indefatigable labourer."

From 1875 onwards, during Mr. Müller's frequent absences on his missionary tours—some of which spanned many months—the entire burden of the work fell on his son-in-law; yet he neither failed nor fainted. So marvellously was he helped of God that he always came to his work and went from it bright and radiant, and

no stranger would have guessed how heavy was the load he was carrying. He had long been wont to cast all care upon Him who careth for us, and in after years he loved to sing:

"I'll cast my burden at His feet,
And *bear a song away!*"

A friend, writing with reference to this period of accumulated responsibilities, says: "What especially struck us all was that, though so heavy a responsibility was resting upon him (Mr. Müller being away), he was always so bright and *happy*—full of kindly interest in everything; but there was always a word in season, so that though socially a happy time, there was always the fragrance of higher things; a few words on some text, etc. There was one especially pleasant time, when, during a long visit to Scotland (which they called their "second honeymoon"), he and his wife spent a long day with us at Aberdeen, as we were staying there. While sitting in a beautiful park there, Mr. Wright was pouring out of a heart always full of love to his Master, words helpful and good for the hearers. We gave them the address of a nice Christian woman in Edinburgh, with whom we had often lodged; they took her apartments, and she has always felt as if "two Angels" had visited her. Whilst in Edinburgh, at the request of the late Dr. Thomson, Mr. Wright gave a very acceptable address, at the prayer meeting, in the *large* church in Broughton Street. * * * Where another man might have left impressions, and related incidents in reference to himself, the feeling that *Mr. Wright* left was rather a reflection of his Lord and Master."

A missionary in Spain writes: "It is many years since I stayed at Mr. and Mrs. Wright's, but I well remember

the happy visit. * * * The impression which has remained on my mind all these years is that they were an example of Ephesians 5:22-25, to such a degree as is rarely attained in our day. She was richly adorned with a meek and quiet spirit, and he was full of love; while his joyous spirit made his countenance shine. At first, from natural disposition, I felt somewhat restrained, but such godliness, blended with such simplicity of life and manners, soon made me feel at home. One could not but be conscious that truth and sincerity held their place in that house, hence there was no room for distrust. From that time I felt I could count on Mr. Wright as a friend; and on more than one occasion since then he has given me counsel which has proved to be of great value in the Lord's work in B——."

Another says: "Of all the precious Christian men I have been privileged to meet, there is no one for whom I have had greater respect and esteem than for dear Mr. Wright. He may have had the weaknesses and peculiarities common to men, but I did not see them, and we can never forget the sweetness of the home life that we were permitted to share for a few days in 1888 (Mrs. Wright was then alive), or the night or two (when he was living with his nieces) in 1897. Dear Mr. Wright's gentleness made him so great that he was indeed *"strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."*

To this period belongs a letter from a Christian friend, written in May, 1878:

"You will be glad, with us, to know that the youngest of our sons was received into fellowship last evening at our church meeting. For some time past his heart has been giving evidence of the turn Godwards, and at last he is constrained to offer himself for service to

Him who has bought him with His precious blood. You will be glad with us, and we cannot but turn to you and yours with thanksgiving to Him who has helped you to pray for all the dear children, and we acknowledge, as we do, that we doubt not those great blessings they have received have been 'brought down' mainly through your constant and earnest prayer for them. * * * And now we beg that you will still *continue* to remember them, that having been 'brought in' they may be *kept* by the mighty power of God to the end."

Also the following, from a brother in fellowship:

March, 1888.

"My Dear Brother:—

With many thanks I return you the statement read by you at the church meeting, and am thankful you were helped to draw up so *full and clear an account of the Scriptural principles* that have been acted upon amongst us, from the time when dear Brothers Müller and Craik were led to come and labour as His devoted and faithful servants in Bristol. That the manifest blessing attending their labour and church rule amongst us, and that the same course of action having continued to be adopted amongst us from the beginning of their ministry, and attended with such marked blessing, both in the winning of souls for Christ, as also, in the building up of His saints, clearly manifest His approval hereby. This being so, may the Lord help His people gathered together thus, to continue to take His Holy Word for their guidance, both as to doctrine and practice, so that His *holy name may be glorified amongst us*, through and *for the sake of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ*. Again thanking you for the perusal of your

valuable paper, believe me, in much Christian love to yourself and dear wife," Etc.

The first actual and personal contact, face to face, with Mr. Wright, on the part of the writer of this memoir, was in September, 1888, at the time of my first visit to Bristol.

Two precious letters from his pen are associated with this first interview, and are here embodied as affording further glimpses of his cordiality even to strangers:

Brougham Villa, St. Matthew's Road,
Kingsdown, Bristol,
28th June, 1888.

Dear Dr. Pierson:—

I am so glad that you purpose to visit us. Our private address is as above, and our one spare bedroom will be at your disposal if you can give us the joy of welcoming you from Saturday till Tuesday. It is noticeable that you mention *these* dates, "July 1-3," because *afterwards* a dear sister of mine may be coming from Devonshire to be our guest.

If you *must* defer your visit till later on in the month, kindly give me one or two days' notice of the precise day, and I will arrange for your being hospitably entertained even if our own room should be occupied. I hope if you come now you will manage to stay till, at least, 4 o'clock on Tuesday afternoon, as you will thereby be enabled to see the Orphanage more completely.

May I enquire if you would kindly preach at one of our chapels on Sunday *evening*? It would be a joy to many to hear the truth from your lips. *This day* I have received a letter from Mr. Müller, dated "Auckland, May 19th." He writes: "All my meetings here have been greatly crowded and very much blessed, and I

am begged to stay much longer. We may, therefore, remain two or three weeks longer. We are both well through the Lord's kindness."

If you can come to us on Saturday next, please drop me a line to above address by to-morrow's post.

With much Christian love from my dear wife and myself,

Yours very truly,

JAMES WRIGHT.

2 Gerston Terrace, Paignton, So. Devon,
15th September, 1888.

Dear Dr. Pierson:—

Your kind letter of the 13th reached me this morning *here*, where my wife and I have been staying for three weeks past for a *partial* rest and change.

We return to Bristol, if the Lord permit, next Friday, the 21st, and shall be very glad to promote, as far as we can, your wishes regarding meetings. I can undertake at once to say that we shall be delighted that you should preach at one of our chapels on Sunday *evening*, the 23rd. We have also a prayer meeting on Monday evening, at which there would be an opportunity for you to speak; but for any larger arrangements the notice is I fear, too short. I rejoice to hear of your good time in Scotland, of which I have gathered somewhat from the papers.

Yours affectionately,

JAMES WRIGHT.

P. S.—Mr. Müller is now in Sydney, N. S. W.

Mr. Müller I had met in California ten years before in 1878. This acquaintance led also to correspondence with him and with his son-in-law whom I had not yet seen. When arrangements were made for a brief tour

of various cities in the interest of missions, following the great Missionary Conference in Exeter Hall in June, Bristol, being included, I was thus invited to speak in the Chapels of the Brethren.

Mr. Wright, as his letters show, had purposed to extend to myself and wife the hospitalities of his own home; but some domestic hindrances, such as his wife's health and lack of help, prevented. When on Saturday evening, September 22d, we reached Bristol, we were met by Mr. Wright and found lodgings for our brief stay at the Royal Hotel. By invitation I visited the Orphan Houses on Sunday morning, speaking at No. 5 to about four hundred and fifty girls, from Matthew vii:7, and John i:12, 13. After tea with Mr. and Mrs. Wright I addressed the assembly at Stokes Croft on Luke v:8; and on Monday evening spoke for the first time at Bethesda on "The Problem and Principle of Missions," having that afternoon again taken tea with Mr. and Mrs. Wright, after a visit to Orphan House No. 3. At that tea table also I met for the first time Mr. and Mrs. G. F. Bergin, little knowing then how close was to be the tie with them also.

It was on that Monday afternoon that a curious incident occurred which was always remembered by both Mr. Wright and myself. As we met in his drawing room and clasped hands, *two* five-pound notes lay against each other in those interlocked palms, neither of us having any knowledge of more than *one*. I said, "It has been laid on my heart to ask your acceptance, in the name of the Lord, of a small gift for your personal use." His gracious response was, "And it has been similarly laid upon mine to do the same by you." When the palms were unclasped we discovered that exactly the same

amount each had been led to offer to the other and the two gifts lay thus together within the friendly hands. The curious correspondence amused and touched us both; he insisted on my retaining his gift, and I as strenuously urging his acceptance of mine; so that each had the joy of giving and receiving the same sum and parted, neither of us the poorer! This first meeting at his home struck the keynote of all the intercourse of the seventeen years that followed; nor was this the last time that *exactly the same amounts crossed each other*, each of us being led to minister to the other's possible needs in the same way and form at the same time, though the ocean lay between and the post had to take the place of the palm.

That earliest personal contact with the subject of the memoir also left on the mind of the writer ineffaceable impressions of the man.

Especially did he leave the impression of a quiet *dignity of character*. Like Mr. Müller, he had the bearing of a prince, though there was no sense of distance. He was most approachable, yet he never seemed to lose the sense of the fact that he was "the son of a king," and must maintain his royal standing and be true to his kingly destiny.

Side by side with this dignity was an unaffected *modesty* and *humility*. James Wright never exploited himself. He never sounded a trumpet before him, nor would he suffer another to herald him. He hated flattery. It was both repulsive to himself and dishonouring to his Master. Once, after a conference address, being told that a clergyman present had enjoyed his talk more than any other, his calm and indifferent rejoinder was, "did he?"

Those who knew him felt always a wholesome restraining influence in his presence, instinctively guarding care-

lessness of utterance, especially when a reckless tongue was ready to say what was unkind, ungentle, or uncharitable about another. In his own tongue was "the law of kindness."

Perhaps the next impression left by personal contact was that of absolute *sincerity*. He seemed a truthful and transparent man, perfectly genuine; and, as Tennyson used to say, "a truthful man generally has all virtues." At the bottom of all noble character truth, in the inward parts, must lie as a corner stone, else how can any other part be true? Herbert Spencer's maxim was, that "by no political alchemy can you get golden conduct out of leaden instincts;" but Epictetus had long before anticipated him by uttering the same sentiment in other language, when he said of men about him: "Their principles are golden, but their practices earthen."

Mr. Moody used to delight in that quaint definition of character which he declared was the best he ever heard: "Character is what a man is in the dark." In a sense, character is indefinable, but it can be *felt*. And when its secrets are revealed, how simple they seem.

Archbishop Benson once said his life principles were but few and commonplace:

"Not to call attention to crowded work, petty fatigues or trivial experiences; to heal wounds which, in times past, my cruel and careless hands and works have made; to seek no favour, no compassion; to discover, not ask for tenderness; to feel no uneasiness when my advice or opinion is not asked, or is set aside."

Few and simple indeed, but how grand!

The next impression likely to be made by contact with Mr. Wright would be that of *equanimity*, and this would be through his *face*, which was a sermon in itself, always

radiant with peace and quiet joy. It was sunshine incarnate and his *handshake* helped the impression of his countenance. It did one good, that firm pressure rather than impulsive shake, which conveyed a wealth of love and sympathy.

Thus even a stranger would feel himself in presence of a man of very remarkable *disposition*.

Mr. George Müller, being asked by a brother frankly to state whatever he saw that he most lacked, promptly answered, "Your greatest lack is the *grace of graciousness*."

That was the last thing James Wright lacked. He reminded us of Paler's description of Cornelius Front, tutor in family of Marius the Epicurean:

"The higher claim of his style was rightly understood to be in gravity and self-command."

And again we remember the caution of that other gracious man of God, Dr. J. Hudson Taylor:

"Be careful of your attitude and habitude of mind and heart. Occasional good acts or words signify little. But the half unconscious and semi-involuntary frames are the true index of spiritual growth and constitute the essence of character."

It must not be hastily assumed that such equanimity and graciousness are native traits, or are easily attained. A further knowledge of Mr. Wright would have revealed hidden depths of natural impetuosity and fiery temper. At times, in presence of a great wrong, taught in doctrine or practiced in conduct, his nostrils would expand, his eye flash, and his indignation burst forth in remonstrance and rebuke. One could see the "Boanerges" behind the "John"—the two sides of the character of "James" as of John the Apostle—tender love and stern intolerance,

the one the complement of the other, and both forming a part of his nature.

Dr. Tyndall said of Michael Faraday, that "underneath his sweetness and gentleness was the heart of a volcano; but, through high self-discipline, he had converted the fire into a central glow and motive power of life instead of permitting it to waste itself in unseen passion."

Similarly, it has been written, that "Hans Christian Oersted's anger was a duty which he owed to the broken truth, and when he had spoken as he ought it vanished, leaving his face irradiated with peace and gentleness."

Dr. Gunsaulus is right:

"Temper is the fire of the man, that gives power to all his work for good, or consumes the very machinery of the man himself according as it is, or is not under a divine control."

The Old Testament reveals the strong men to be weak, and the New Testament reveal the weak men to be strong by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Mr. Wright's cordiality was transparent, making others feel somehow richer and better; and as to his *face*, that was habitually illumined with a beaming smile, lighting up the eyes, and spreading a lustre over all the features.

His industry was untiring. With him as with John Wesley, idleness had long taken its final leave. He was busy as long as life lasted, save as health at times called a halt and demanded rest, an enforced leisure. Like Wesley again, he looked on "all the world as his parish," and, "in whatever part of it God put him, felt it alike duty and delight to declare unto all who are willing to hear the glad news of salvation."

Dr. John A. Broadus, a leader in American thought, used to say: "I know no art of social life more needful

to be cultivated in our times and country than the art of skillfully introducing religion into general conversation." But James Wright did not "introduce" it; it permeated his talk as naturally as fragrance a garden. He never said anything that was out of character for a child of God.

To our minds Mr. Wright will always be first and foremost a man of *prayer*. He had found, like Mr. Müller, the inspiration of the promise, "Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it," and that great expectation is the precursor of great blessing and the preparation to receive it.

He felt also that prayer alone could enable us to fulfil the responsibilities involved in knowing God's will. Light is meant to guide life. Hence, as you may have more light, God will hold you responsible.

Some one has quaintly suggested that if many of our prayers find their way to the "Dead Prayer Office" it is no more strange than that so many letters turn up at last in the dead letter office, and it may be for similar reasons. Some letters lack clear address, are misdirected or have no address at all, and correspond to petitions that have no definiteness either in the language or thought of the petitioner. Other letters have no postage stamp affixed, and remind us of prayers that are offered without conforming to the prescribed conditions—they rest on no promise, and are not presented on the authority of the all-prevailing name, and unlike unpaid letters these deficiencies cannot be made up by the recipient at the other end. Still other letters enclose unlawful matter that cannot be transported in the royal mails, and correspond to requests which are prompted by a wrong motive, as when we "ask amiss that we may consume it upon our lusts."

There is a humorous anecdote about a preacher, famous for skill in choosing appropriate texts, who was appointed by that vacillating monarch, James the First of England and Sixth of Scotland, to preach at court; and who vindicated his reputation for timeliness by announcing as his text: "James the First and Sixth:" "*He that wavereth*, is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed."

The "James" of whom we are writing was no vacillating pendulum, swinging to and fro; no wave of the sea, undulating up and down, fluctuating to and fro; he was a steadfast believer, who having "laid hold," "held fast" the beginning of his confidence steadfast unto the end. There was a remarkable uniformity about his whole life; not monotony, but uniformity. His convictions never changed for fifty years, although the last century has been one of such rapidly and radically changing opinions even on religious matters as probably has no parallel in history. His disposition was calm and equable like a placid lake the surface of which is unruffled. His affections, once fixed, knew no vacillation. Like the heavenly Friend who sticketh closer than a Brother, he adhered to the attachments formed in early life. But most of all his will was "fixed"—no capricious winds of feeling or mood affected his lofty and immutable purpose. He had a peculiarly fixed aim and he consistently followed it to the end.

This is an appropriate point from which to survey not only Mr. Wright's conspicuous traits, but the general and well rounded symmetry of his *character* as a whole.

Very often, as in this case, it is the general symmetry itself which makes it difficult to find any conspicuous outstanding peculiarities, as the perfection of a circle or a

sphere consists in the very fact that every part of the circumference is equi-distant from the center, so that there are no prominences. Mr. Wright's character exhibited this spherical roundness and beauty, a general proportion in which special virtues lose their distinctness. Dr. Gunsaulus has likened this sort of manhood to the military square, in which, approaching from any quarter, you meet a line of infantry facing you, a solid body of soldiery, facing four ways at once. We are commanded to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and soul and mind and strength. This makes of the man a moral square, with conviction, affection, conscience and will, all combining in obedience.

But, if no one trait was conspicuous in Mr. Wright, his general conformity to the divine pattern *was* conspicuous. No one ever had to stop to consider whether, to live with him would be a trial or a privilege: it was always obvious that he not only preached Christ but *lived* Christ, like William Arnot, of whom they were wont to say, that though his speaking was good and his writing better, his life was best of all. And when we remember that he left behind him no literary remains, as Socrates said, he would "rather write on the hearts of living men than on the skins of dead sheep."

All Mr. Wright's labour was pervaded by prayer. Dr. Herron, of Pittsburgh, used to say that "working without believing is Atheism; believing without working, presumption; both together primitive piety." If so then he whose memoir this is was a primitive Christian, for his was a work of faith, and his was a faith that works. Like McCheyne, he made it his aim and prayer to have no plans for himself, well assured that another had His plans for him, and that the place where his Lord saw fit

to place him must be the best for him. The distinction between what is sacred and what is secular, based on the conception of a line of cleavage running through life, was to him false and misleading, for everything is to be done unto the Lord and for his glory, and everything so done is sacred.

It was a tonic and a stimulant to doubting souls and timid believers to breathe, even for a little, the atmosphere of his quiet, assured faith. There are those who not only have doubts but infect others with them. Goethe, himself a skeptic, cried, "give us your convictions. As for doubts, we have enough of our own." If Mr. Wright had any misgivings, he never revealed them. There was an air of sublime assurance in his teaching, as though he knew the certainty of those things in which he had been instructed and believed the truth to be established by many infallible proofs.

This is an age of doubt, and even the pulpit and theological chair have caught the infection and are spreading it. Yet here was a believer, a man of unusual intelligence, who stood firm as a rock amid the waves of conflicting opinion. With all his intellectual acumen, he had the spirit of a little child. To him, as Robert Hall used to say, "a religion without its mysteries would be a temple without its God." He expected to find in the Word of God things too high for him. But he had unshaken confidence, not only in the perfect accuracy of direct Scripture statements, but also, as Edwards puts it, "of the *impression* made by its indirect statements or by its phrases." Some would fling out one after another of the vital truths and facts of our holy faith, to appease the clamour of rationalistic critics as the Russian traveler flung his children, one by one, to the pack of hungry

wolves to save his own life. But James Wright surrendered nothing. He had learned the truth of Canon Fausset's wise saying, that "when the Christian religion is studied, simply as a science, nothing is more abstruse; when, as a revelation of duty and practice, nothing is easier."

There is a touching story of an interview between a man of subtle logic and a simple peasant, whom he asked for some "internal evidence which proved the Bible true." No terms of controversial sophistry had ever reached his ear, and he simply laid his hand upon his heart, and only answered, "HERE!" The Bible was its own evidence, and especially when it was truly applied to the wants and woes of men, and found to fit so divinely to all the secret windings of the human heart. Mr. Wright said, earnestly, "To hear Robt. C. Chapman, of Barnstaple, read a Psalm was as good as a sermon. I believe the true explanation is to be found in his unusual grasp of the deeper meanings of Holy Scripture, and in his intense reverence and love for the God-breathed words." The remark was a revelation, both of his own opinions and habits.

The central informing principle of James Wright's whole being, that which gave such symmetry and sphericity to his character, was, however, nothing less than a deep, intense, personal *love for the Lord Jesus Christ*. This explains and interprets all the rest. It explained his beautiful, exemplary consistency, for it naturally begat conformity to his Master's image. It explained his unworldliness; for he insensibly rose into a loftier atmosphere as he studiously gazed on His face and contemplated His beauty. Alexander Maclaren exclaims:

"Why should we live half-way up the hill and swathed in mists, when we ought to have an unclouded sky, and

a visible sun over our heads, if we would only climb higher and walk in the light of His face?"

It explained his joy. Who can be unhappy who has found satisfaction in the Lord Jesus? Samuel Rutherford bore witness that even His yoke is easy and His burden is light:

"The cross of Christ is the sweetest burden that ever I bore; it is such a burden, as wings are to a bird, or as sails to a ship, to carry me forward to my desired haven."

Hence Hudson Taylor, who in many respects always reminded us of James Wright, urged young believers to study the habit of delight in God. This is a most valuable law of life. It gets out of our way all unrepented sin, all hindrances to fellowship and communion. "The Joy of the Lord is our strength."

Mr. Wright's deep devotion to the person of the Redeemer explains his self-sacrifice for others. He learned it at Calvary's Cross. Froude, looking at the matter as a historian and essayist, declared that "Sacrifice is the first element of religion, and resolves itself into the 'Love of God.' Let the thought of self intrude—let the painter but pause to consider how much reward his work will bring him and the cunning will forsake his hand and the power of genius will be gone."

No believer can be brought very near to the pierced hand without, like Catharine of Siena, feeling a sort of pang, in sympathy "as though a nail had pierced his own palm." Elizabeth Fry's heart was so touched at the age of seventeen, by this vital sympathy that she "never awaked from sleep henceforth, in sickness or health, without her first waking thought being, 'how best might I serve the Lord.'" And when Captain Hedley Vicars first stopped to think what that text means: "The blood

of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin," he meditated in tearful silence for a moment, and then said, "If that be so, then henceforth I will live as a blood-washed man!"

We are recounting and recording the story of a "blood-washed man," who felt that the vermilion rod had touched, marked and separated him (Levit. xxvii:32). He had the spirit of the ambassador who must be one with the Crucified whom he represents, and learn, as Mr. Jowett so tersely phrases it, that "when we cease to bleed we cease to bless."

One more attraction that all who knew him found in James Wright was the beautiful combination of innocent humour and seriousness. It has been said that "much may be known of character by what excites laughter;" and that,

"If the sense of the ridiculous is one side of an impressive nature, it is very well; but if it be all there is in a man he would better have been an ape and stood at the head of his profession at once."

Nothing needs regulation more than the sense of the ludicrous; yet nothing when it is properly restrained, imparts more sunshine to life. With Mr. Wright the humorous element was keen and conspicuous, but it never transgressed the limits of decorum. He enjoyed innocent fun as a child does a romp, and his enjoyment was as pure.

But the deep undertone of his being was serious and sober. He bore the marks of one who knew desperate inner conflict. Paxton Hood says that "all virtue is developed in conflict, in fighting. In every character it may be said, where there is no difficulty there is no virtue." And Carlyle, in his "Cromwell," says:

"Temptations in the wilderness, choices of Hercules, and the like, in succinct or loose form, are appointed for every man who will assert a soul in himself and be a man."

We are too apt carelessly to infer that serenity of temper and a controlled tongue are easy of attainment to some who seem habitually amiable and prudent; but we know not at what cost of conflict such triumphs have been bought. Faith is trained in the darkness; love gets strength in trial, and hope needs the storm to test it as an anchor. Our temptations and tribulations are angels in dark disguise. But when these angel visits are past, *patience* abides if their errand is not in vain. He whose eye is fixed on the Master will, like Him, be a victor. Bossuet represents the crucified One as saying:

"I have overcome the world. By the lowliness of my birth, by the obscurity of my life, by the cruelty and ignominy of my death, I have triumphed over all that men admire, esteem or fear. This is the sign by which you shall know me."

CHAPTER FIFTH.

TOWARD THE EVENING TIME.

One of the life lessons early learned and continually practiced by Mr. Wright was that of simple child-like *faith in God*.

We are taught by our Lord to put first things first: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." When the primary things are put in the primary place, the secondary are *added*—supplied in addition by the great Giver, without being sought at all. But, when the secondary are thrust into the place of the primary, we forfeit the primary altogether and have no promise of success even in seeking the secondary. These eternal principles of God's administration should be the first principles of every believer's life.

To James Wright they were fundamental. To be like his Master and help others to be like Him—which is the practical force of our Lord's precept—was his constant aim, and he expected that whatever else is essential to the carrying out of that primal purpose the Lord would unfailingly supply. As the French proverb runs: "*Ou Dieu guidera, Dieu gardera*"—"where the Lord guides, the Lord provides." Without the support of this promise and his own unwavering confidence in it and in Him who had given it, James Wright never could have carried on the vast work of his latter days; nor could he, without it, have borne patiently the burdens of sorrow and bereavement which he accepted as from the same benignant

hand. Patience to him was a form of service. Bearing was as important as doing, and both pertained to a servant of God as a part of his obedience and self-surrender. He himself said more than once, "I want only the Will of God. I *dare* not choose for myself. I would not if I could. I could not if I would."

We now approach the last memorable fifteen years, which form the closing period—the evening time of this human life—though at evening time it was still *light*.

The year 1890 was a marked one: it bore the marks of the cross. On the very first day of that year, his "darling Lydia" manifested symptoms of illness, and, in ten days, for a second time the light of his home went out in darkness.

If the memory of his nieces is accurate, she had on that day been visiting some of the poor of the flock; and, the weather being severe, took cold, or it may be added to a cold already taken; so that pneumonia rapidly developed and defied medical treatment. During this time of sore trial, the utterances that fell from his lips in the hearing of others were the same expressions of complacency in his Father's will. Two days before his dear Lydia departed, when sitting down at a meal, he is remembered to have said in his "grace before meat": "We thank Thee, Lord, for help up to the present. Let us not bring to-morrow's cares into to-day.' 'Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.' 'Cover us with Thy feathers, and under Thy wings may we trust.'" And, in the evening of the same day, he remarked to one of his nieces, who was his helper in nursing Mrs. Wright, "What a thing it is to trust in God! And I have been thinking what a fool I should be if I disputed with Him, when I remember that He is '*the only Wise God!*' This has not been

unforeseen by Him: He has planned it all; and whatever the issue, it will only tend to the same end, and run in the same lines—the wisdom of ‘the only Wise God.’ ”

In a somewhat similar strain he dictated to be sent to a relative the following message:

“Tell dear ———, with my love, that God keeps me resting in His revealed name ‘the Only Wise God,’ ‘Our Father.’ I can’t dispute the wisdom of ‘the Only Wise God.’ I can’t doubt the love of my ‘Father’ in heaven. I do not FEEL that this dispensation is either wise or good, but I KNOW that it is both, because I BELIEVE *God’s word.*”

On the tenth of January Mrs. Wright passed away, and a few days later was laid to rest in Arno’s Vale Cemetery. The funeral service, conducted by her cousin, Mr. Henry Groves, was held in Bethesda, which was filled, a crowd also being gathered outside the building. At the close of the service, Mr. Wright rose, and, laying his hand on the coffin, addressed the Orphans present, referring to the great loss he had sustained, but saying he would willingly go through it all again, “If only it might be the means of leading one of them to the Saviour.” He then briefly prayed for Mr. Müller who was at that time absent in India.

He was marvellously sustained of God, though he looked very ill, for he had been passing through his Gethsemane of sorrow, and at the cemetery it seemed as if he could not tear himself away from the place of burial, gazing long and fixedly into the open grave. The following beautiful lines were written by a friend on this day in January:

“He giveth His beloved sleep” (Ps. cxxvii:2).

“And Aaron held his peace” (Lev. x:3).

“So have we seen at break of day,
The tender star light die away,
Paling before the sun’s bright ray;
Yet shall we say it ceased to shine
Though hidden from thy eyes and mine?

So have we known some woodland bird
Upbear its song, all undeterred,
Till not a note below was heard;
Though higher, higher, it has soared,
Its cup of praise is still outpoured.

When the great Master’s touch is laid
Upon the keys His fingers made,
Deem not the music then is stayed;
Nay, the full chord is struck at last,—
Tuning and tension all are past.

What though for *us* the strains may cease?
In heaven the harmonies increase,
And, Aaron-like, we hold our peace,
Lord in Thy perfect will we rest,
Content to yield to Thee our best.

L. A. B.”

The writer of this memoir saw Mr. Wright not long after his dear “Lydia’s” death, and he shewed me a precious verse, found after “Lydia’s” death in her little orphan house bag. It came to him as a special messenger of God. He told me, with brimming eyes, that he could not be disconsolate with such a testimony to her intense satisfaction in God. With his own hand, at my request, he copied this verse on a leaf of my blank book:

*"I have seen the face of Jesus,
Tell me not of aught beside;
I have heard the Voice of Jesus
All my soul is satisfied."*

*Found, copied on a slip of paper,
in Lydia Wright's Orphan Home bag,
a few days after her departure
to be with Christ. 1890.
James Wright.*

The number of the letters of condolence received was so great that he was unable personally to reply to each, and so expressed his thanks in a printed letter, of which the following is a copy:

"Dear ———:

Accept my warmest thanks for all the love and sympathy you have shown toward me and mine during the last week, or for letters or messages of loving sympathy received since the departure of my precious wife on the tenth instant. Gladly would I write with my own hand to each of the dear friends whom the Lord has made my helper in these hours of inexpressible sorrow—but their number makes this impossible, and I therefore ask that this circular may be kindly accepted instead.

Great as has been, and is, my tribulation, my peace, through Christ, (I say it to the praise of His faithfulness) has been and is greater.

Yours affectionately and gratefully,

JAMES WRIGHT.

St. Matthew's Road, January 13th, 1890."

Though quietly resting in the will of God, Mr. Wright felt that he had sustained a personal loss that was alike, from a human point of view, incalculable and irreparable.

What the departure of his wife meant to her husband no words can tell. She had been as near as may be a perfect *wife*. But more than this, she was in every respect a true helper. She was a wise counsellor; on her judgment he had been wont implicitly to rely. Yet he did not lose his sweet serenity. Though to his own dying day the shadow of this bereavement was always across his path; though he continued so to feel her absence from his side that he appeared to dwell a good deal on the past and *in* the past, and always seemed depressed as the anniversary of those ten days recurred, he was never gloomy, nor unable to enjoy life and help others' joy.

Mrs. Wright was beloved far beyond her home and immediate circle. She was a friend to many and of many. Unselfish and faithful, she won both love and trust from many who implicitly confided in her, assured that whatever they committed to her 'ear-gate' in confidence would never find exit through the unguarded portals of the lips.

After his second great bereavement, Mr. Wright asked his only remaining sister, Rachel, who for some time had been living with the Withy family on Charlotte Street, to keep house for him, in his loneliness, which she undertook. At the end of a few months, finding the long walks to and from Bethesda Chapel on the Lord's Days too exhausting for her, she asked his nieces, the Misses Withy, to receive her back into their home, and to take Mr. Wright also for three months, until he could decide what disposition to make of the house where he had been living. At the close of those few months,

by a cordial mutual agreement, that residence on Charlotte Street became his permanent abode, and it need scarce be added that his dear nieces considered his presence there a continual flood of sunshine. His wants were few and simple; his cheerfulness constant and contagious; his affectionate and gentle temper made companionship delightful; and his keen sense of humour made even vexatious annoyances wear a ludicrous aspect. He was in a word a source of perpetual delight to all around him, and became more endeared to them and inseparable from their domestic life.

Thus began those fourteen radiant and tranquil years, during which to those orphan nieces he was as a second father and they to him as dear daughters, or, as he used to call them, his "quarternion."

During his life at Charlotte Street his habits were regular the year round. He was wont, at six o'clock in the morning to rise, and after a season of private devotional reading, often take a short walk before the eight o'clock breakfast. Coming back from his walk bright as a singing bird, family prayers followed, with reading of scripture and often brief comments; and on Sundays the singing of a hymn. By half after nine, he was on his way to Ashley Down, accompanied by Miss Anna M. Withy, twice a week for the first few years, but, after Mrs. Müller's death in 1898, daily. Miss Withy had already for some years been Mrs. Wright's helper at No. 3. Mr. Wright generally was at home by 5.30 or 6 P. M. to tea, and, unless at some week-night service, spent most of the evening in the quiet of his own chamber, conducting prayers after supper at 9 o'clock, and often asking for a hymn before retiring.

This daily programme, made necessary by the burdens



NO. 13 CHARLOTTE STREET, BRISTOL, WHERE MR. WRIGHT RESIDED FOR THE LAST FOURTEEN YEARS. THE ROOM WITH THREE WINDOWS ABOVE THE ENTRANCE WAS HIS APARTMENT.

of daily duty, cut him off from much social intercourse, even with near relatives. Now and then, when he could spare time for an evening's companionship, he would ask his niece for some piano music of which he was fond and in which his taste was classical. Though not, technically, a musician, he found much refreshment in this indulgence of musical tastes; and in sacred song he had no little knowledge though self-acquired, and had himself a good voice and native talent, and for years acted as precentor at Bethesda.

Sometimes, when reaching home in the later evening, and finding the beloved ones there playing with friends at innocent games, he would join them with zest, entering heartily into their fun and making the joy of all the greater.

To this period of life belongs his visit to Italy, which was in 1890, in the summer following his wife's death.

His beloved friend, Colonel Molesworth, had proposed that he should accompany him on such a visit, with a two-fold object: combining a thorough change of scene with an inspection of the schools supported by the funds of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution—attending also the Annual Agape at Spinetta. This journey proved a very helpful and happy time on the part of both. Mr. Wright was keenly interested in all he saw, and wrote home delightfully descriptive letters. Among the places of interest visited were the site of the Battle of Marengo, where they saw the Tower from which Napoleon directed the fight, and the ditch which was filled with the dead, over which he drove his guns. Another day they visited the marble quarries at Carrara. Little time, however, was spent in mere sight-seeing.

They examined the children in the schools and held

meetings for the believers in various places, speaking by interpretation. In one of these addresses an illustration was used by Mr. Wright which may be mentioned here. Speaking of the Arm of God as underneath us to bear our burdens, he placed a piece of paper on his hand, remarking that the paper had no sustaining power; but the same bit of paper, placed on the palm of his right hand, could bear as much as *his arm* could bear; "so we, as helpless in ourselves as a bit of paper, can with the Arm of Jehovah underneath," bear as much as that Arm can bear. The little Diary, kept on this Tour, records that at Torre Pellici, where the meetings were held in a tent, a goodly number of the villagers came in the morning near enough to *hear* all that was said, though, to keep square with the Priests, they would not actually come under the canvas; but, in the evening, their desire to hear so far overcame their fear and scruples, that many *did* venture inside the enclosure, and the numbers attending were larger than had ever been known before.

On that occasion he preached the Gospel from the incident of the Good Samaritan, and Colonel Molesworth spoke of Christ as the Revealer of the Father. But the greater number of the meetings were mainly for the edification of believers. At Castmo, Colonel Molesworth was taken for a *Cardinal*, due to the fact that he wore a puggaree bordered with three red stripes, while Mr. Wright, as his companion, was supposed to be a *Bishop*, because no Cardinal could be attended by any one of less dignity than a Bishop! When the tour came to an end, and they were about to leave, the Italian Brethren gathered for prayer, thanking the Lord for their visit and commending them to His care for the journey—they also prayed; and when parting at the station, pointed each

other to texts in their respective Bibles as farewell words. This reminds us of that most interesting incident in modern missions, where a persecuted people fleeing for their lives, landed among a strange tribe, and found themselves among fellow Christians with whom they had, however, no means of communication except by means of the Word of God. Each tribe had a Bible in its own vernacular, and so it occurred to them all that they could hold converse through this sacred medium. The Christian refugees accordingly pointed to texts in their own Bibles, and their strange hosts would by chapter and verse trace the message in their Bible translation and in the same way respond.

Mr. Wright was wont to preach at one of the chapels on Sunday evenings, and was always a familiar figure at the Monday evening prayer meetings at Bethesda; as on Thursdays, at Stokes Croft, where he also usually spoke, until the increasing work at the orphan houses compelled him to relinquish the latter meeting.

His teaching talent was so appreciated that invitations poured in upon him for addresses at conferences and other meetings. He complied as far as he could; but demands on time and strength gradually left him less at liberty to go to any meetings at a distance. Once he attended the Believers' meetings in Glasgow and in Dublin, being absent a few days at a time; also the Leominster conference, annual meetings at Stroud, Ross, Clevedon, etc., which took less time, and some of which he attended to the end of life, finding in them a refreshing break in the monotony of a busy career.

Very little of his deeper inner life was ever disclosed. These secret chambers few, if any, invaded. But occasional words from his lips, when speaking in public,

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seemed echoes of inward battle. He evidently had his great conflicts with the Adversary. Once in course of a sermon, he referred to his earlier spiritual experiences, and "dark thoughts," and how, when telling some of these to a fellow disciple, his answer was, "My dear fellow, the Devil is impudent enough for anything!"

They show little knowledge of the human heart who think that any holy life is a victory easily won. Paxton Hood thinks man is the battle ground of right and wrong—subject to two demons—that of sensuality and sense on one hand, and intellectuality and spirit on the other; and that of the former Milton's Comus is the delineation and impersonation—the arch-reveller and tempter to whom everything exists only for the indulgence of lust; and that of the latter, Satan, is the representative, who oftener approaches us from the higher intellectual plane, dealing in lies and wiles, as when he would make us think of sins as infirmities and so lightly estimate them; or think of infirmities as sins and so plunge us into despair.

Mr. Wright, as we have already said, bore marks of conflict, but he bore also unmistakable signs of victory; they were the marks of the Lord Jesus, which are never marks of defeat.

We embody here a few sentences and paragraphs from his public addresses, which, though fragments, may serve to reveal somewhat of this inner life of both trial and triumph. His conversations in private and his discourses in public often disclosed rich veins of both spiritual knowledge and experience.

FRAGMENTS.

April 28th, 1901.

"Deep waters flow silently—babbling waters, by that

very fact, proclaim their shallowness. * * * The harp of the believer is a harp of solemn sound, but its tone is very rich (Ps. cviii:1).

March 25th, 1900.

"We fear sometimes to enter into a cloud, but once in it then let us be assured that He who spread it over us is with us in it.

"In Luke x:17, 20 and 21. 'There are three stages of joy spoken of:

"1st. *Joy in service.* 'The seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Thy name.'

"2nd. *Joy in Relationship to the Father.* 'Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.'

"3rd. *Joy in the Father's Will.* 'In that hour *Jesus rejoiced* in spirit, and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in Thy sight.' Submission to the Father's will is the highest joy of all."

One little sentence that he was very fond of giving utterance to, when he saw any one trying to bear to-morrow's burden before it came was, "Never cross a bridge till you come to it."

After an attack of influenza in November, 1901, having received a letter of sympathy from a friend, he replied as follows: "Thanks for your loving sympathy and words of truth and hope, which endorse and confirm the secret teachings of the Holy Spirit during the last sixteen days of unwonted *quietness*. 'It is good for *me* that

I have been afflicted,' and I trust the Lord will, in His own way, cause the blessing to *spread*, for is not this His object? seeing that 'none of us liveth unto himself.' This day is the thirtieth anniversary of my marriage union with my precious Lydia. Verily, 'the *Lord gave*'—and no less true to *faith* is the fact that 'the *Lord hath taken away*.' She is *with* Him; and He is with me; so we are not sundered; and how blessedly near the Hope of 'our gathering *together* unto Him!' "

It was while laid aside with the same attack of influenza that he dictated the following notes to his nieces on Sunday morning, November 3rd:

"I. Luke viii, verses 43-48.

Boldness of Faith.

"The woman *ventured* in faith. The ground of her venture being the apprehension of the *omnipotency* and *infinite grace* of the God-man, Christ Jesus. This delighted and obtained the commendation of the Lord (v. 48).

"II. Luke viii, verses 41, 42, 49-56.

Tenacity of Faith.

"The ruler's faith *clung* to Christ, in spite of delays in obtaining the blessing. The ground of this tenacity was a measure of apprehension of the *unchangeableness* and *faithfulness* of Christ."

"God is not a man that he should lie" (Num. xxiii:19).

"Christ encouraged this tenacity by His words in v. 50. 'Fear not, *believe* only and she *shall* be healed.'

"N. B.—Though the Lord admires and applauds the *greatness* of the Centurion's faith (ch. vii:9) and the *boldness* of the woman's venturous faith, He does not undervalue a tenacious faith, like Jairus's.

"The Centurion's faith reached to the point that there

was no need of Christ's *presence* to effect a cure, His *Word* was enough, and this delighted Christ. On the other hand, Jairus began with beseeching Him that He would come into his house. The Lord did not chide him for exercising a lesser faith than the Centurion's, but at once went towards this house, and, though hindered by the interposition of the woman with the issue of blood, continued, after that cure was effected, to comply with Jairus's request that He would come into his house; and, further, when the discouraging message came to Jairus, that it was no use for the Lord to continue His progress, as the child was dead, Christ interposed with His word in season, encouraging him still to cling, and continued His progress till He had *reached the house* and *there*, at length, rewarded the ruler's tenacious faith.

"N. B.—If the measure of faith granted us is not the highest possible of attainment, yet let us seek to exercise a tenacious faith, that clings to the "God who cannot lie," and has combined oath and covenant in order to prevent our faith from relaxing its hold."

Of the vastness and variety of the matters coming before him as Director of the work at the Orphan Houses, few are aware; but, beside this, he was constantly sought as counsellor in church affairs, and in private perplexities, and to all he gave heed so far as able; often, when wearied with a long day of work, he was summoned from his "chamber of peace" to give spiritual help or advice. Ever ready to rejoice with them that rejoiced and weep with those that wept, he had

"A heart at leisure from itself,
To soothe and sympathize."

He never hurried an interview unduly, but gave ample time patiently to consider any matter, for the time giving

himself wholly to it, doing nothing by halves. Whatever was worth doing at all was worth doing well.

One evening a niece remarked what a strange day she had passed, only "interruptions," unable to get through anything she wanted done, and his quiet rejoinder was, "the major part of my days are of that type." "But I think you bear it better than your niece," was the involuntary reply. But even interruptions did not "interrupt" him. He took them all as of the Lord, and even when busily writing, if there was talk going on about him, it was not uncommon for him, instead of betraying annoyance, to look up smilingly and take interest in what occupied others.

No portrait of Mr. Wright could approximate completeness which does not include the specific feature of his *church* life.

From his conversion the assembly of fellow disciples was with him a favourite place of resort and of profit. He never forgot that *numbers* do not constitute a Christian assembly nor measure its power. He believed in the promised Presence which is assured to "two or three"—the smallest possible number that can meet in the all-prevailing Name; and he recognized the obvious fact that too often numbers accompany weakness and degeneracy. Principal Forsyth says, "the church has always been greatest as a minority, so long as it was a right minority. The Lord's chief work has been with a remnant. The church is in the greatest danger when it is popular." Nor did Mr. Wright forget that poverty and obscurity are no hindrances to piety, and that God still chooses the poor and base and despised of this world rich in faith and good works. "Be sure," said Wesley, "to make ample accommodation for the poor. They are God's

building materials in the erection of His church. The rich make good scaffolding, but bad material."

He emphasized holiness as the one grand feature of a true disciple or an apostolic assembly. The church is a Temple for the Spirit, and the Spirit of God is a *Holy* Spirit. "If," says Canon Fausset, "the spirit that is in us can be at ease under sin it comes not from the Holy Spirit of God, for the gentle 'dove' trembles even at the sight of a hawk's feather." Hence Mr. Wright, with all his gentleness, insisted on *discipline*. He had behind his amiable exterior, the courageous, intrepid heart of a reformer, like John Knox, on whose chamber in Edinburgh still appears that noble motto: "I am in that place where I am demanded of my conscience to speak the truth; and, therefore, the truth I speak, impugn it who list."

All love that is God-like has a side of holy wrath. It is like a magnetic needle that repels, at one pole, by the same law whereby it attracts at another. And some who knew James Wright only as a lamb, were surprised to find how much of the lion was in him when truth was assailed or duty in peril. Seneca's Pilot was represented as calmly saying to Neptune in the wild storm that threatened to engulf him,

"You may sink me or save me,
But I'll hold my rudder true!"

This man of God was calm amid every storm, holding his rudder true; and if conflict was necessary in defence of the right, either in doctrine or practice, he accepted the conflict; nay, in a sense he courted it, in the same way that old Ebenezer Erskine did when he called God to witness that he had "done his best to bring on a definite issue between Christ and the adversaries of the truth." When Abraham Lincoln, that foremost of American

heroes, was reproached with defeat, he answered "Defeat? If it were not one but a hundred, I should still pursue the same unchanging course." There was a mild-mannered, suave man that was always modestly prominent at Bethesda, who could hold his ground with intrepid conscientiousness, even though he was reduced to a minority of one: and no one can tell, till the last day, how much a congregation of believers owes to one such man who recognizes no peace that is not first pure.

"Men may misjudge thy aim,
Think they have cause for blame,
Say thou art wrong;
Hold on thy quiet way;
Christ is the judge—not they;
Fear not! Be strong!"

Mr. Wright *believed the gospel* and therefore *spoke*. As a preacher and teacher, he overflowed with the riches of grace. The substance of the gospel message was that Christ "came to seek and to save that which is lost;" and that, when on the cross, He said, "It is finished," He told the truth, and did not leave anything else to be done by the sinner but to trust in His finished work of atonement. He felt that theme of Redeeming Love to be sufficient for a life time—"one string," though some may call it, but a string on which all the melodies of saving grace can be played, as Paganini wrought such wonders on the single string of his violin. For a minister of Christ to think that, to confine himself to the "unsearchable riches of Christ" would be a narrow limitation, would be like a little mouse wondering whether Joseph's Egyptian granaries would be big enough to feed him, or a minnow wondering whether in the fathomless ocean he would find room to swim.

But, when once the great Essentials of Christianity were secure, Mr. Wright could cordially, with Augustine, concede liberty in non-essentials, and in all things charity. In fact, a narrow exclusiveness was to him repulsive; may we not add, impossible? Grimm says of Michel Angelo and Raphael, that, while circumstances tended to make them rivals and enemies, both of them rose so high above the common level, that they were necessary to each other. And this beloved disciple himself rose so high above the average plane of Christian life that he could not but feel himself, like a mountain that finds companionship in its high soaring only in companion peaks of the range, united to other believers whose grand aspiration lifted them into comparative solitariness. To see the grace of God in another man was enough to prompt him to offer the hand of fellowship (Gal. ii:9).

He also was a soul-seeker and a soul-winner. Had his secret heart been unlocked it would have been found to contain a sincere *passion* for man's salvation. He was fond of repeating J. Hudson Taylor's acute remark, that, though not a few are jealous of being in the "Apostolic succession," he would "rather be in the succession of the Samaritan woman, who, while the apostles went to buy food and brought no enquiring souls, forgot her waterpot in her zeal for others' salvation."

Such a man could but be an influential factor in church life, and this modest disciple who never obtruded himself, was felt to be a prominent, if not the dominant, personality in Bethesda. But as President Eliot, of Harvard, has reminded us, we must not confound and confuse *influence* with *authority*. While rulers or magistrates may wield authority they may or may not wield that higher sceptre of influence; while many exercise far-

reaching and resistless influence who never sit on human thrones or in parliamentary bodies. Their heroic spirit, unshakable purpose, undeviating devotion to duty, Christ-like gentleness and conspicuous unselfishness make them masters of men. Their kingdom, like their Master's, comes without observation, but sways human hearts.

The writing of the annual report occupied many weeks and often months. Commencing early in the year he worked at it at such times as he could snatch from other occupations, daily, frequently of late years having to remain at home for an hour or two in the mornings to get quiet for it, the constant interruptions, at Ashley Down, preventing his giving any continuous attention to it there. He always sought to place the whole manuscript in the hands of the printers before his summer holiday—generally in July—so as to have only the proof sheets to correct while absent.

Shortly before his holiday, the Orphans' Annual Outing always took place on Pur Down, a mile or so beyond Ashley Down, and he spent the latter half of the day with them, adding to their pleasure by sending up four or five different coloured fire balloons, and watching with keen interest their athletic sports in the evening. On one occasion when he had gone to the seaside, before this annual outing, he sent the Orphans a telegram of congratulation.

To this annual holiday—taken *en famille*—he always looked forward with great pleasure, though even then he *never* found entire rest; the major part of each morning being taken up with correspondence. He enjoyed especially his early morning swim before breakfast, which seemed to brace him. Trips in steamers he also enjoyed, preferring them to small boats unless the weather was calm.

In places where his holiday was spent, he was wont to preach on Sunday evenings, and at times give a week-night address. Though not a "great preacher," he was a most spiritual and scriptural teacher, his style expository and practical, and he had an eloquence of his own, the outflow and overflow of a full heart, in a stream of rapt utterance which found ready response in his hearers. It was far beyond mere rhetoric, the eloquence which Theremin says is "a virtue."

In speaking, his manner was usually animated. Beginning quietly, and at times almost labouredly, as one who lays down his ground work and maps out discourse; as he developed his theme, his heart glowed, his face beamed, his action became more lively, and his whole being seemed to be thrilled with his thought. At times, under the burning intensity of his convictions, he drove the truth home as a blacksmith welds and moulds the hot iron on his anvil. There was excitement, but it was under control and for a purpose.

Once, some months before his death, he had an experience, unpleasant and embarrassing, while preaching at Stokes Croft, as also once before at Bethesda, when after a happy introduction, he lost his train of thought, and all seemed a blank. Without painful effort to continue his discourse, he quietly informed the congregation of the fact, and said: "It has pleased the Lord to break the continuity of my thought; this being the case we would best bring the service to a close. You see, dear friends, how dependent we are upon God. I had thought out the points of my subject, as I felt, according to His mind; and, as you see He has chosen for the time to allow my memory to fail." He then simply closed with prayer. On returning home, he seemed to feel a burden upon him,

but the next Sunday frankly told his audience that it was the best thing that could have happened to him. No like mental lapse ever followed.

In 1895, Rachel, his only remaining sister, having quite unexpectedly passed away, the night after Christmas, and after attending service that day at Bethesda, he was left sole survivor of his family. At her grave he witnessed to her help in his early Christian life; and henceforth his nieces, being his only near relatives, the ties between him and them grew both more strong and tender.

Thus the life of our beloved brother was not without its discipline. Like the Captain of our salvation, those who follow Him are made perfect through suffering. He had been called to many bereavements. Twice he had laid in the sepulchre the form of a cherished wife; and he had parted with father and mother, brother and sisters, and many precious friends. But as the beloved Charles A. Fox used to say, beautifully:

“Chased silver is chastened silver: silver so fretted with careful instruments that it is made to represent every kind of flower or fruit, and thus to become of ten-fold its original value.”

This comfort he had, that his beloved had died “in the Lord,” and such death is the gateway of a truer life, “Mors Janua Vitae.” Over the gravestone of a poor saint was written: “I have sinned and repented. I have loved and trusted. I rest. I shall rise and live.” And the Quaker poet Whittier wrote:

“Death will find us, soon or later,
On the deck or in the cot;
And we cannot meet him better
Than in working out our lot.”

CHAPTER SIXTH.

THE NIGHT COMETH.

We are coming now toward the hour of sunset, and it is refreshing to see this man of God patiently treading the heavenly way, his path growing brighter and brighter as the night comes on.

During one winter a severe fall on an icy road, as he returned home, dislocated the right shoulder. Being alone, after walking a short way he hailed a cab and drove to the Infirmary, but as the House surgeon was not in, not wishing it set by a less experienced hand, he went home, where his haggard look and loosely dangling arm awakened no little alarm. But the bone being soon set in place, and he being comfortably abed, he was at once his own bright self, and through the two or three weeks of enforced stay at home continued ever cheerful and radiant. While thus laid aside he was amused and touched by the gift from the little son of a friend, of a small toy owl, which ever after looked down on him from the top of the bookcase in his room.

He was, however, very seldom laid aside, having such uniform health as to be disposed to make light of any ailment. When obliged to keep his bed, he was an invalid whom it was a privilege to nurse; always brimful of child-like fun, his sense of humour—at all times keen—sometimes so exciting his risible faculties that he did not easily regain complete composure. He was no fretful patient, and kept those who waited on him constantly in a merry mood.

This aspect of Mr. Wright's character would not be observed by those who did not come into close touch with him, but to such it was a revelation of his intense and many-sided *humanity*. Like Terence of old, he could have said, "I am a man, and nothing peculiar to man is foreign to me."

His humanity again was seen in the childlike pleasure with which he received and enjoyed the tender attentions of those he loved—not that he cared for the intrinsic value of a gift, but for the love and thoughtfulness it exhibited. For instance, it is delightfully remembered how on birthdays or holidays, like Christmas, he beamed with satisfaction at the little "surprises" that awaited him on his breakfast plate when he came down to his morning meal. Only on two occasions was it otherwise; once, when, on the first birthday anniversary after his dear Lydia's death, the gifts that he found only brought a flood of tears, and he said he "wished the day had been forgotten!" And again, after Mr. Müller's death. The fountains of mirth and of tears lie so close, side by side!

Another touching proof of his tender sensibility was seen when, returning from the orphan houses one wintry afternoon, he found he had left in the tram car a cape which he was wont to wear in very cold weather. The discovery of his loss greatly distressed him. When, in the evening, his niece, who having inquired at the office and found the lost cape, returned with it, his joy and the warm embrace he gave her were sufficiently explained by the fact that the tenderest associations made that cape precious. It had been given to him by his dear departed "Lydia."

Three years after his sister Rachel died he was again

called to bear what to human view was a crushing blow. Yet in this, as in every other crisis, he found Divine grace all sufficient and he not only accepted, but rejoiced in, the will of God. We refer to Mr. Müller's departure.

For some time past he had felt his father-in-law's health to be precarious, his heart being weak, and if on rising in the morning he heard any vehicle rapidly approaching, involuntarily looked out lest it might be some messenger from Ashley Down with sad tidings.

When, therefore, on the morning of March 10, 1898, a cab did come with a teacher from No. 3, announcing that the patriarch of Bristol had been found lying on the floor of his bed chamber, and that life seemed extinct, he was scarcely taken by surprise. On arriving at the Orphan House, he at once made his way to that room, made now doubly sacred by the presence of Death. There standing mute by the prostrate form on the floor, he uttered a few words of prayer, then stooping to kiss the cold forehead, he again prayed, and quietly left the room, placidly remarking as he met one of the helpers in the corridor, "he is at rest."

Subsequently he expressed satisfaction at finding all the workers at their wonted place and the work going on as usual; though sorrow and agitation had left their imprint on all faces, there was no confusion, noise or panic. For himself, the days that followed were, of course, doubly busy, he and his niece rarely reaching Charlotte Street before nine or nine-thirty o'clock. Yet though pressed he was not oppressed. Beneath were the Everlasting Arms. The eternal God was his refuge, of whom he could ever say, amid the changes and chances of this mortal life, "*Thou Remainest.*"

The funeral, on Monday, January 14th, more resembled

a national mourning than a local burial, rather like a tribute to some public hero than to a private citizen, the streets along the miles of the procession's route being thronged. Mr. Wright's usual calmness was not broken. Both in the Orphan House before starting and afterward at the service in Bethesda he spoke; but he, like all the rest, was greatly impressed by the popular tribute to Mr. Müller. The funeral scene was a commentary on those words: "Them that honour me I will honour" (1 Samuel ii:30).

Mr. Wright showed himself God's chosen successor in the work, evidently like-minded with the departed director. The Report for the year, prepared by him, sounded as the significant *keynote* for the future, the same old keynote of the past, carrying on the melody and harmony, without change, into the new measures. It is the same oratorio, without alteration of theme, time, or even key: the leading performer is indeed no more, but another hand takes up his instrument, and, trembling with emotion, continues the unfinished strain, so that there is no interruption.

The heavy burden of work now rested on James Wright alone, and he felt the need of a helper, and his need was soon and blessedly supplied.

For many years prayer had been offered for a successor in the Directorship, in the event of either himself or Mr. Müller, or both being taken; but no name had up to this date been mentioned between them, and Mr. Wright afterward said that, "had God shown him no one as His choice, he would just have gone on, doing his work alone, till he dropped." But three weeks after he was thus left alone, he felt strongly led to ask his well-known and much loved brother and friend, Mr. G. F.

Bergin, to join him as associate Director. It was a joy to him, and a confirmation of his conviction that God's hand was leading, when on proposing this sacred partnership to Mr. Bergin he found that he was *at that very time* secretly offering himself to the Lord for that service. Neither of them knew what was passing in the mind of the other. Yet while Mr. Wright was determining to ask for such help, Mr. Bergin was solemnly giving himself to God for the work and only waiting for God to manifest His own will in the matter. Thus both naturally accepted the coincidence as God's seal upon the compact and covenant of mutual association.

Thus again the Lord interposed to meet a great need, and within a month—April 25th—Mr. Wright welcomed a valued, trusted and efficient co-worker, in whose care he could safely leave the whole work when withdrawing for needed rest, or as it proved, seven years later, when removed by death.

Teignmouth was his chosen place of vacation, that memorable year, partly because it had been the scene of Mr. Müller's early labours, and had been visited by Mr. Wright and his first wife in company with him and his family in later years, when the Orphan work had been established. Thus the place was one of hallowed memories, as well as accessible from Bristol, within reach should any crisis arise at Ashley Down; and the quiet of this resort was restful after the unavoidable interruptions of his work at the Orphan Houses. Here, both this year and the year following, when again he found there a resting place, he preached on Sundays and gave addresses on week nights, drawing large audiences of appreciative hearers, from various denominations, as also at more private Bible readings at the houses of friends.

A little incident, during one of these sojourns at Teignmouth, shows the impression Mr. Wright's sunlit face made even on strangers. Some friends, with his nieces, whom they had invited to join them, were picnicking on the moors and about to boil the kettle for tea when a keeper appeared and objected; but when Mr. Wright assured him they were all "honest folk" and would carefully see the embers of the fire safely quenched, he politely touched his cap, saying, "Well, sir, *you have a very nice face*"—and withdrew, leaving the picnic party to proceed with their preparations.

The death of Miss Rachel Wright in 1895, having left a spare room at No. 13 Charlotte Street, the Misses Withy gladly joined their uncle in the offers of hospitality to missionaries and other servants of God, from time to time, some of whom were well known and loved, but others strangers to them all; but to one and all alike he extended his hearty welcome and great was their joy at meeting him. Not only servants of Christ labouring in the British Isles, but labourers from Spain and Italy, Norway and Germany, various parts of America, Asia and Africa found a cordial greeting from this united family circle.

The summer rest of 1900 was spent at Weymouth, Colonel Molesworth and his wife putting at the disposal of Mr. Wright and nieces their home, and the year after, they found recreation amid the bold and rugged coast scenery of Newquay in Cornwall, the latter journey being undertaken partly with a view to visiting a relative living at Liskeard, who had not been seen for many years. It was a mutual joy, enhanced by the presence of another member of the same family unexpectedly staying at the house, and by a division of the party all were able to pass

a night or two together. It proved to be the last such meeting, one of the members dying the next year, and the other soon after Mr. Wright's decease.

In the autumn of this year, 1891, influenza again laid Mr. Wright low, and after this illness, he never regained his former robustness, his heart being weakened. Hitherto he habitually made light of his ailments, never seeming to relish being much looked after or "fussed over;" but henceforth it was somewhat otherwise. When well enough, he with two nieces who had been ill with the same disease, made a brief stay at Weston Super-Mare, which proved helpful. The next spring, at the kind invitation of Colonel and Mrs. Molesworth, he again rested, in their home, from the severe pressure of work at Christmas and New Year time—an invitation renewed the year after when these friends were glad to find him stronger. But, though regaining strength in a measure, the pressure of daily work constrained him to decline invitations to conferences, etc., held at a distance; and he gracefully yielded to the importunity of those he loved in sparing himself when possible, and resting more at times, even breakfasting in bed after nights of partial sleeplessness and brain weariness. From the annual Clifton Conference he was rarely absent, and his addresses were much prized.

Again some letters and literary fragments may be preserved as giving a few hints of his inner life and reflections of his true self.

The first is a letter, written Dec. 15, 1903, to friends who had been bereaved; and who, like many others, paralyzed by grief, found it difficult to see the meaning of the Lord's dealings;

"My Beloved Friends :

Miss ——'s kind letter (for which please thank her) has told us of the great sorrow that has befallen you. May the "Father of Mercies, and the God of all Comfort; who comforteth us in *all* our tribulation" comfort *you now*. In such mysterious providences as this, our poor hearts are often tempted to try and solve the "hard questions" that unbelief, aided by Satan, will suggest. I pray that the Holy Spirit may enable you to imitate the Queen of Sheba, who came to *Solomon* with her "questions" and "*communed* with him of all that was in her heart," and "*Solomon* told her *all* her questions" (that is answered them). "*There was not anything hid from the King*" (1 Kings x:1 to 3). Now a *greater* than *Solomon* is with us. Will he do less for us? O beloved friends, "Be not hasty to go out of (*this King's*) sight * * * for *He* doeth whatsoever pleaseth Him * * * and who may say unto Him, 'What doest thou?' " (Eccles. viii:3, 4). The "only wise God" has done this, and He well *knows* that the faith and patience which *He* will endow you with, will bear the strain of this which is, perhaps, the *severest* you have yet known, but He is faithful, and "will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able" (1 Cor. x:13). Do not, I beseech you, suffer your life to be chained to the *one dark link* in the chain of His purpose, but let your eyes look *right on* to the *End*. This is the one word that I feel free to send as a message. Seek to keep your eye on the *end of the Lord* in this severe discipline. "Ye have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy" (Jas. v:11). "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know *hereafter*" (John xiii:7). "Now no chastening *for the present* seemeth to be joyous but *grievous*; nevertheless *afterward* it yieldeth the peaceable fruit

of righteousness to them which are exercised thereby" (Heb. xii:11). "Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the End of the Lord—that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy."

"These and other like utterances of the Spirit counsel us to watch against allowing our eyes to *fasten* upon the *present dark* link in the chain of God's perfect way," and to *look on to the end* of the golden chain which is in the hand of Him that sitteth on the Throne! My beloved father-in-law used to delight in that sentence, "I had fainted unless I had *believed to see* the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living" (Ps. xxvii:13). May Paul's experience (2 Cor. xii:9) find its repetition in your own happy experience.

I will not write more. These few words will suffice to show that we are thinking of you very often, and endeavouring to continue in prayer for you, and endeavouring, also, to *please* our Father by hoping in His mercy (Ps. cxlvii:11). The four nieces unite with me in tender sympathy and love."

Having received an invitation to spend a little time with friends at Weymouth, in the early spring of 1904, feeling that his state of health at that time did not *necessitate* a change, and hesitating to lay any extra burden on his dear fellow-labourer, Mr. Bergin, he wrote his friends at Weymouth to that effect. Just after posting his letter, he received one from them saying that illness in their home would prevent the carrying out of the purpose to have him there at that time, to which he sent the following reply:

12 January, 1904.

"Half an hour *after* I had posted my letter of this date to you, I got yours.

I deeply sympathize with dear Mrs. ——— and yourself in this sore affliction that has been permitted, and rejoice and praise God with you for His sustaining and recovering mercy.

I am sure it will be a satisfaction to your loving hearts to learn, as you will have done from my earlier letter, that my state of health renders an immediate change or rest unnecessary. After passing through such an ordeal the loved sufferer must need a prolonged season of *quiet*, and I must beg that you will allow me to *contribute* to this by deferring my visit indefinitely. We will wait 'the fullness of time.'"

"Thou which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth. Thou shalt increase my greatness and comfort me on every side" (Ps. lxxi:20, 21).

We add also a few *fragments* of thought that belong to this period of his life:

July 31, 1904.

"Faith is the arm outstretched with open hand to *receive the gift*." These words were spoken "with a beaming face" in the course of a sermon on Isa. liii:1.

Speaking one time of the Lord's tender care over us in counting the very hairs of our head, he added, "How much more the *cares* they cover!"

A friend writes the following: "Calling on your revered Uncle about mid September, 1904, for prayer, and speaking of the difficulty of knowing how to prevail in prayer, dear Mr. Wright gave a look of sympathy I

cannot forget, saying, 'Dear Sister, the narrow way does not get easier as we go on.' On replying, 'Do you, dear Mr. Wright, find it so?' with deep feeling he replied, '*Indeed I do.* The adversary sets all his forces in array against us to hinder in drawing near.' "

This hint of Mr. Wright's experience of conflict 'in the heavenlies,' reminds us of the fact, that it is in that very Epistle to the Ephesians, where we are lifted to the highest level of privilege, that we also find the most emphatic warning against the wiles of the Devil, and the exhortation to put on the panoply of God, in order to withstand him.

And now the actual sunset hour drew near.

It is beautifully and significantly recorded of our Lord, that "His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father:" what a divinely worded expression of that which should be the true conception of the nature of every believer's death.

It is no chance event, but the hour, wisely and lovingly determined in the Father's wisdom and grace, in whose eyes the death of His saints is precious. Nor is it a descent into the grave but an ascent into the Father's presence, an "*exodus*" from this world as both our Lord himself and his disciple after him termed it, (Luke ix:31, 2 Pet. i:15—Greek) and an *entrance* into Paradise, which is far more than the land of corn and wine into which the pilgrims from Egypt were ultimately led. And so, with some appreciation of the fact that, in a special sense, our Lord Jesus Christ hath "abolished Death and brought Life and Immortality to light" we approach what the poet calls "The closing scene."

It is a great source of satisfaction and thanksgiving that, up to within a few weeks of his "*exodus*," Mr.

Wright had full possession of his faculties, both intellectual and physical. Even those who saw him nearest at hand observed but trifling signs of even bodily infirmity. Albeit he was past seventy-eight, he seemed good for another ten years of work, especially as his life was so exceptionally placid, free from the worry that wears far more than any work.

When, in April, 1904, the Torrey-Alexander Mission was held in Bristol, though he was already so busily occupied, he entered warmly into the work, attending meetings as he was able, and encouraging attendance on the part of the orphans, who were twice present at children's meetings and some of whom received much blessing.

It was on May 9th of that year that Mr. Wright, on his way to Ashley Down, met what might have been a fatal accident. Having started that morning later than usual—being engaged with the annual Report—he neglected to ring the bell soon enough for the tram-car to be brought to a stop when he was waiting to alight; and as he desired to get quickly to his work, not realizing how fast the car was still moving, he swung off, as he had often done before, but in this case was thrown violently forward, falling on his face and getting a sharp cut across his nose. He was helped to a chemist's shop, and was sent to a neighbouring doctor's office; but failing to find him, went on at once to the Orphanage, where his own doctor promptly attended to his wound. With his uniform self-forgetfulness and consideration for others, he sought to inform and yet not alarm his nieces, and anticipating that some one might come from the tramway office to their residence, to make inquiries, he telephoned to them, apprising them of his fall and as-

sureing them that he was not seriously hurt. He returned home early and for a few days had to keep quiet. He appeared to recover rapidly, yet it is not unlikely that the shock of this accident left some lasting injury which hastened his departure.

The last three summer vacations had been spent at Teignmouth, but that of 1904 had been specially happy, marred only by his sudden recall to Bristol, before his time was up, on account of Mr. Bergin's illness. After his withdrawal, the hours hung heavily with his nieces, who felt desolate in his absence. Little did they dream that the Lord was gently preparing them for another sudden call, which should forever remove him from their earthly home and leave a permanent blank.

After the reunion at No. 13 of the little home circle a few months passed in the ordinary manner, without marked incident. Then, early in November, sickness invaded the home, one of the beloved nieces suffering from blood-poisoning and for some time in danger of losing a finger; and for weeks before Mr. Wright himself fell ill, a trained nurse had been sharing the family life. During all this time his paternal sympathies were drawn out to the sufferer, little thinking that, while she whose life was threatened would be spared, she would see him who seemed well brought low with a fatal malady.

On Sunday, New Year's Day, 1905, Mr. Wright was in his usual place at Bethesda, and gave a valuable address on "The new things" spoken of in the letter to the Galatians—the new cry, 'Abba Father;' the new walk, 'in the Spirit;' because of the new Leader, 'led of the Spirit,' the same Leader Jesus followed; the new Hope, 'of the Righteousness by faith;' the new Fruit, 'of

the Spirit'”—a subject touched on again by him in his last sermon at Stokes Croft, the same evening.

It was on this same first day of the year that he felt the first symptoms of the coming malady, though with his habitual reserve he forbore to mention it. The next day, being one of hard work at Ashley Down, he was unable to get to the prayer meeting at Bethesda before 8 o'clock, and so quietly took a seat near the outside door, a listener only. After the meeting, as he lingered, he sought to comfort a bereaved sister by reminding her that it was “not a *sin* to *feel* the stroke—otherwise the sinless One could not be ‘*touched*’ with the feeling of our infirmities.’” He was ever on the alert to impart blessing to others, especially the sorrowing and suffering.

Those who were privileged to dine with Mr. Wright that Monday at the Orphan House remember well the bright face and cheerful greeting with which as he entered the dining room he said to his fellow workers, with such emphasis, “A *happy* New Year to you all”—to most of those present his last words, and singularly memorable as his farewell message.

The next morning he was unable to rise owing to his suffering from what he thought to be a “boil,” this being to those in the home the first hint of any ailment. Though it was not a new thing for him to breakfast in bed after a restless night, there was something different in his manner now, a sort of abstraction, quite observable at the time, and which as he grew worse was looked back to as a premonition of what was coming.

It had been arranged that on Tuesday, January 3rd, he should give the address at the united Prayer Meeting convened by the Evangelical Alliance for the first week of the new year; but he had to advise the chairman of his

inability to be present, and a telegram in reply announced that the time left open for his address would be given to prayer; and it was interesting to see how he rejoiced that his compulsory absence would only leave more time for what was really the main purpose of the meeting—prayer. This was the first service to the Lord's people that he was thus compelled to relinquish.

The first three days of that week he managed to sit up an hour or two to get through the great mass of correspondence, but it was with pain and difficulty. On Thursday morning Mr. Bergin saw him for a little and persuaded him to allow others to relieve him the next day of all letters, but before half *that* day's letters received his attention, it was plain that he was unequal to his task, and he yielded to the entreaty of the niece that these letters might also be left for Mr. Bergin to attend to. For three days more he continued to sign a few personal letters, and with his own hand wrote on January 4th to a donor, a sister who was in much perplexity at the time, as follows, though scarcely able to sit up for pain:

"With many and grateful thanks, dear Mrs ———. I rejoice that you can speak of improved health. May the Lord graciously confirm this. I am thankful to say that the influenza in the Orphan Houses has quite disappeared.

"Through waves, through clouds and storms

He gently clears our way.'

"He led them on safely, so that they feared not.'"

Nothing whatever indicated that he was laid aside. This was one of the last messages, if not the very last message, ever written with his own hand.

It was about this time that, speaking of the work on

Ashley Down, he said to one of his nieces, "I have no anxiety about the work." On Friday, January 6th, he said to Mr. Bergin, with a heavenly smile, "My doctor has christened my ailment with a new name—a carbuncle." It was either on that same day, or the following one, that he said to him also, "The Lord is dealing well with me. I would not alter what He has ordered."

The following lines were often quoted by him in preaching (the authorship we do not know) and we insert them in this memoir:

"Upon a life I did not live,
Upon a death I did not die,
Another's life, another's death,
I stake my whole eternity!"

He had engaged to preach at Stokes Croft on Sunday the 8th inst., and, when Mr. Bergin kindly offered to take his place, he said, "Oh, thank you, I am so glad." That day and the following Sunday were the last for which public engagements had been made by him, as he had been hoping and preparing to accept a loving invitation to spend a fortnight at Weymouth with Colonel and Mrs. Molesworth from the 18th of January to February 3rd, prox. This invitation had been given in view of the extra strain of the work on Ashley Down at Christmas and the New Year which it was feared would probably tell on him, and that a little rest and change just then would be desirable and helpful. Mr. Wright was looking forward with much anticipation to this visit, and particularly enquired of the doctor how soon he thought it would be possible for him to go. The physician replied, "not before March," and so his dear friends at Weymouth very kindly said they would keep the invitation open until then. How little he or they thought at that time, that,

long ere March opened he would be at rest forever in a celestial clime!

Toward the close of life, Mr. Wright had a special fondness for the hymn, "Take time to be holy," and often chose it when the family were engaged in sacred song. Was it not a revelation of his own life habits?

"It was said of the father of Dr. H. H. Jessup, that, as in his later years, his earthly tabernacle became weaker and the 'outward man' slowly perished, it only seemed to set free the beautiful spirit within and bring into more clearness and obviousness the glory of his 'inward man,' and that it was 'like disintegrated quartz, falling away from the gold.'

So it was with him who is the subject of this memoir. The "lamp" of his real inward life shone the more brightly as the "pitcher" was beginning to be broken.

He did not, however, seem to realize the very serious nature of his malady, although, once or twice, he used expressions which made others wonder whether indeed the thought had not occurred to his mind that this might be his "home call." For some days hopes alternated with fears as to his recovery, while it was plain that he was gradually losing strength, until it became necessary that the surgical nurse already in the house attending to his niece should also care for him; and on Friday, the 13th, increasing weakness made a second nurse needful, for night duty. Throughout the four weeks of his illness, the beloved invalid was attended by the Christian physician, the "Luke" of the Orphan Houses, to whom he was greatly attached and by whose visits he was always cheered. One evening when his coming was unexpected, he looked up with his smiling eye, and very cordially said, "I am always glad to see you, doctor." The care

and skill shown by this "beloved physician" were a source of great comfort to all who waited upon the sufferer, as was also the unremitting faithfulness of the trained nurses.

The writer of these pages ventures to insert here the last letter dictated to himself, as among the last messages of his dying days. It will be seen that though written by another hand it was signed by his own:
Dictated.

"13 Charlotte St.,
"Bristol,
"January 10th, 1905.

"Beloved Brother:—

"In acknowledging the receipt of your welcome letter of the 17th ult. I am beholden to the hand of my dear niece as amanuensis, having been, since last Tuesday, compelled to keep my bed through a largish carbuncle, which, like a volcanic region, with two or three craters, is pouring forth what I hope it will be to the benefit of the whole system to be rid of. It is situated at the extremity of the spine, so that I am unable to sit, or lie on my back. I am thus furnishing another illustration of the truth to which you allude in your letter, that we know not what a day may bring forth. I am very thankful that this did not come on until I had got through the bulk of extra correspondence, which Christmas and New Year always bring. First let me thank you warmly for the advance copy of 'Making a Sermon,' which I duly received and have already become deeply interested in. I trust it may be greatly used to encourage the practice of expository preaching. I am greatly interested in hearing of your gifts of copies of the memoir to the officers of the Salvation Army and missionaries in India and Egypt.

God's hand has been very marked all through in regard to the chapel in memory of your beloved daughter.

I have received, within the last few days, a parcel containing 41 copies of your recently published volume, 'The Supernatural.' Unless my memory is at fault you have not advised as to these, so I shall be glad of a line indicating your wish as to their disposal.

I am glad to learn that your early return to Britain is definitely fixed, and shall pray that you and the companions of your voyage may be under the sheltering wing of our loving Father. Hoping soon to see you face to face, I am,

"Yours lovingly,

"JAMES WRIGHT.

"P. S.—An earnest Welsh servant of Christ (David Jones) and another Christian friend came, by appointment, yesterday evening to our prayer meeting at Bethesda, to tell us a little of what they have been eye-witnesses of in South Wales. From what I learn the power of the Spirit of God is undoubtedly very manifest there at this present time. Should we not expect such manifestations in response to the cry which is ascending from many hearts? 'It is time for *Thee*, Lord, to work, for they have made void *Thy* law.'"

In the early days of this last illness, though his suffering was very acute, not a murmur escaped his lips. He was constantly thinking, feeding upon the Word of God, and it was beautiful to witness the perfect calm and peace of his spirit. His conversation then and to the end was in heaven, though he scarcely seemed aware how soon earthly scenes were forever to fade from view.

His marked veneration for Holy Scripture, if possible, grew as he neared the gates of the unseen. Almost his

last talk with one of his nieces, his voice even then low and feeble from exhausting weakness, was on the inseparable link between the *written* Word and the *living* Word; and he significantly said, "as we treat the one, we treat the other."

At another time, when part of the Hundred and Nineteenth Psalm was being read to him, he said in connection with verse 161,

"My heart standeth in awe of Thy Word,"
"it is that very Word, of which we stand in *awe* that becomes our food."

About January 13th or 14th, for a short time, a little cloud seemed to float over his spirit, so that he said to Mr. Bergin that his joy was not what he would have it; but this slight obscuration was soon gone; and on the 15th, when a niece who had been absent for an hour or two, in the afternoon, expressed regret at having been so long away, he answered brightly: "Oh, I am not unhappy. God has brought me into a sweet resting place and He is talking to me." And from that time on not a shadow rested for a moment upon his peaceful spirit, even as from a passing cloud.

On *Saturday*, January 14th, a second doctor had been called in for consultation. The disease was making rapid progress, and so was the prostrating weakness. Towards evening feverish symptoms often appeared, making the night restless and half sleepless. Yet on the Tuesday following he still testified:

"The lines have fallen unto me in pleasant places;
Yea, I have a goodly heritage."

"If I could have my choice I would not dare choose other than the Lord has appointed for me." * * * "I do not care to talk much; many words are not needed; but

it is my joy to testify." * * * "I have left myself entirely in His hands, and I have been walking with Him in this illness. I know He is doing the very best for me." He had tested and proved the lines:

"He knows, He loves, He cares,
Nothing this truth can dim.
He gives the very best to those
Who leave the choice to Him."

On *Wednesday*, 18th, when one of his nieces was sitting in his room, he said, "His name shall be called *Wonderful*, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father." Then, after a few seconds, "Of the increase of His Government there shall be no end." After another pause, "The zeal of the Lord of Hosts shall perform this." Then he said, "Everything in the world will have to arrange itself in accordance with this." After about an hour, he whispered softly and slowly, "*The stillness of His presence.*" "With twain they covered their faces, with twain they covered their feet."

On *Thursday*, 19th, referring to his illness, he said, it had been a sweet rest. He could not explain it to any one. Then he said, "Dear Mr. Craik used to quote, in his strong Scotch accent, 'The heart knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger INTERMEDDLETH NOT *with its joy.*'" The same evening he suddenly and unexpectedly uttered the words, "And there was a *great calm.*" Another day he said, "I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." Then, "If I had known all this"—meaning his illness on that Monday, referring to the last day he was able to go out—but "It is the Lord's ordering."

Saturday evening, January 21st, he said, "And when He had taken the book the four and twenty elders fell

down before the Lamb." The niece who was with him said, "That was worship, and that is what *you* are doing." He said, "Yes." Then he said, "John wept much because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon." * * * "Weep not, behold the *Lion of the Tribe of Judah*, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book and to loose the seven seals thereof." When *He* took the book there was peace. He is the source of peace both in heaven and on earth. Satan's aim is to blind men's eyes to this. Oh! wonder of wonders! that *our* eyes should have been opened to see it." One of those beside him said, "It is all of grace," and he answered, "Grace and glory." "Behold I *make* all things new, not I *will* make." His niece said to him, "Jesus walks *upon* the waters, and I suppose so far as our faith lays hold on Him we, too, walk *upon* the waters?" He answered, "Yes, He does not let me even sink ANKLE deep. Later in the evening, being told of the special prayer meetings, being held in the Orphan Houses that evening for him, he was much touched on hearing this, and said, "Who am I, Lord? But Thou art very great."

On Sunday, January 22nd, a physician, who had come down from London to see another patient, was brought in to see him. This doctor gave *some hope* that he might recover, though he said it was a very grave case. That same evening when one of us was feeding him with his supper, he burst out with the ejaculatory prayer, "O, Lord, bless all this kind attention."

On Monday, 23rd, he dictated to one of his nieces, as best he was able, a message to those who would be assembled at the prayer meeting at Bethesda, a meeting he had regularly attended for over fifty years. It is here given verbatim, as follows:

"As it would be impossible for me to acknowledge individually the tenth part of the loving words, prayers and acts of which I have been the recipient, I desire to take this opportunity of expressing my heart's thanks in this public way. At the same time the Lord has ministered to my soul, and now when I find it difficult to exercise continuous thought, such indescribable joy in the three aspects of our adorable Saviour's work in appearing at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, thus triumphantly meeting every personal need of my conscience as a guilty sinner; then His present appearing before the face of our God for us, thus bringing Heaven's peace into the soul in regard to all present things, cares and needs, and then the certainty of His appearing 'the second time without sin unto Salvation'—the Living Person—God's Christ, is enough. Would the dear brethren read the three passages in Hebrews ix to which I have referred, and receive them as a loving message from myself."

That evening, by the doctor's orders the beloved suffering one was moved and laid upon a water bed, for greater ease. He appreciated every attention, however slight, that was paid to him, to promote his comfort.

On Tuesday, 24th, he said, "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not accept (i. e., receive joyfully) the evil?"

On Wednesday, 25th, one of his nieces repeated to him the verse, "The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him; and the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between His shoulders." He simply raised his hand and said, "Yes."

Friday morning, 27th, when told of a loving note from one in fellowship at Bethesda, telling of the many earnest prayers being offered on his behalf at Martock, Westport

and Lerington, he said, with a smile, as if speaking to the Lord, "Who am I, Lord? A sinner saved by grace. Christ has not forsaken His Church. There's a good deal of Christ yet to be found in His people."

That morning he was very low and weak and failed much towards evening. His nieces almost thought he was going home that day, but his sweet presence was spared to them nearly two days more. On the morning of this day he spoke to Mr. Bergin, whom he was able to see for a few minutes, of God's grace to them in the conduct of the work on Ashley Down, and added how deeply they were debtors to Him for that grace.

On Saturday, 28th, there was another consultation of doctors, and on one of his nieces asking the doctor, who came in consultation, what his opinion of the beloved Uncle was, the reply was, "I'm afraid his work is done." This opinion did not take them by surprise, for they had themselves but faint hopes of his recovery from quite the early part of his illness, though friends had tried to buoy them up, and seemed sometimes to think that they were looking at the dark side. But He who knew what He was about to do had been gradually preparing their hearts for this final issue for some four years. As the months went by they who were most with him, could not help noticing that his strength was not what it had been, up to 1901, though to outsiders he might have appeared as well and strong as ever. Though he was always so bright, the hearts that clung to him so fondly and the eyes that watched him so tenderly, could not fail to feel and see that the "earthly house of this tabernacle" was being gradually "dissolved," that he might be "clothed upon with his house which is from Heaven."

In the morning of Saturday he replied clearly to some

questions which Mr. Bergin was obliged to ask him about the work on Ashley Down, but, after that, he seemed unequal to any conversation, as the brain was getting a little confused from the nature of his malady.

The lively interest he took in current events, however, was manifest, even on this day, the last before he passed away. It had ever been his wont to keep himself in close touch with passing events, both at home and abroad; and, on this morning, he desired a daily paper to be got, that he might know how things were progressing between Russia and Japan, saying, he was "so out of touch with it lately." One of his nieces read him the leader, but whether he was able to follow it all they did not know.

In the afternoon a band came and played at the top of the street. The nurse who was with him inquired if it disturbed him, when he replied, "Oh, no, I enjoy it!"

At 11:45 P. M. he had an attack of heart failure, and for a few moments could hardly get his breath. As it was thought that his hour had now come, three of his nieces were immediately called, but by the time they reached the room the acute attack had passed off. Both nurses, however, spent the night in his room. He was wandering most of the night; sometimes his utterances were quite incoherent, but once the nurse heard him praying about the work and about himself, and saying he was not afraid. In the morning about 6 or 6:30 the nieces whom he called his "quaternion" went to see him, and he knew them, kissed them, and said, "Thank you!" and then lay quiet again.

Early in the morning, he asked the nurse to read him Ps. xxiii and also a favourite hymn of his, the first verse of which runs thus:

"Abba, Father, Lord we call Thee,

(Hallowed name!) from day to day;
'Tis Thy children's right to own Thee—
None but children 'Abba' say.
This high blessing we inherit,
Thy free gift through Jesus' blood;
God the Spirit, with our spirit,
Witnesseth we're sons of God."

After breakfast, when two of the nieces were with him, he said, "This is Sunday." Then a little later, "Isn't this the meeting house?" One of them answered, "This is our home, and the Lord meets with us here." He answered, "That is what I mean." Later in the morning the words were quoted to him, "Fear thou not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine." He repeated the words, "I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine." His beloved ones could do little else but watch him all that morning. His speech was becoming so incoherent that it was with difficulty sometimes that they could discover what he wanted to say.

Mr. Bergin saw him for a few minutes at 10 A. M., when, in reply to his question as to what kind of a night he had had, the loved one replied, "Well, I thought I had a good night, but they tell me I had a bad one." At 12:30 Miss Adele Bergin called and saw him for a few moments. He knew her, and said, "What do you think of me?" She answered, "You are wonderful as ever."

Between 1 and 1:30, the early afternoon of January 20th, his breathing became short and laboured. All the inmates of the house gathered in his room, and for more than two hours watched beside him. He seemed to have short intervals of unconsciousness, for, when the doctor came, about 3 P. M., he took no notice. Towards the close his breathing became quiet.

Once he looked enquiringly at the niece who was standing by the bedside, holding his hand, as if he would ask whether they were all there; and, when Mr. Bergin came in just after 3 o'clock, he knew him, and greeted him with a lovely smile. When Mr. Bergin said to him, "Nearing Home, beloved brother," he assented by a grip of the hand. Then he looked round as if he wanted to wish all goodbye, and they took their farewell of him then, but he was unable to respond. Shortly before 4 o'clock a deadly pallor overspread his face, his eyes opened, and he gazed up fixedly for a few moments, then they closed again, and he gently passed away to be

"FOREVER WITH THE LORD."

Were we called to choose a scriptural epitaph, we would select two scriptural passages, as an accurate expression of his character and life.

Luke ii:25:

"The same man was just and devout,
Waiting for the consolation of Israel;
And the Holy Ghost was upon him."

And Job xxix:11-16:

"When the ear heard me, then it blessed me;
And when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me:
Because I delivered the poor that cried;
And the fatherless and poor that had none to help him.
The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon
me,
And I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.
I WAS A FATHER TO THE POOR."

CHAPTER SEVENTH.

THE DAY'S AFTERGLOW.

Two choice texts of Scripture recur to the mind in connection with such an event as James Wright's departure for the world unseen and eternal:

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints;" Psalm cxvi:15.

"The memory of the just is blessed;" Proverbs x:7.

The former suggests the glory of the sunset hour, as one dear to the Lord, and therefore radiant with His presence; the latter, the afterglow of the lingering twilight which forbids the night of oblivion to advance.

If the last words of departing saints could be gathered in one volume what illumination they would cast upon the experiences of the dying hour!

"The Celestial City," said Payson, "is full in my view," thus expressing his faith in the interconscious moment. "Welcome joy," said Eliot, the pioneer apostle to the Indians, showing his confidence at the instant of departure. Said Frances E. Willard, "How beautiful it is to be with God!" Said D. L. Moody, "Earth is receding, heaven is advancing—God is calling me." Said Major D. W. Whittle, "I am dying in the dawn of the morning."

The late Bishop of Durham had many days of quiet illness. Friends thought him cogitating a scholar's problems. "No," said he, "I take three or four great truths, first truths, and think upon them always."

"Can you not think of a promise that will help me?"

said the dying Bengel. "The blood of Jesus Christ His son cleanseth us from all sin." "That is enough! Just what I needed."

Bishop Butler—the Melchizedek of the Anglican church—without predecessor or successor—had some dark hours on his deathbed, and asked his chaplain, "What shall I lay hold of?" "*He bare our sins,*" was the answer. "But was it for me?" "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." "Oh, this is comfortable," were his last words.

John Wesley, in the weakness of his last days, had a season of obscurity, when a darkness almost supernatural, for a time, enveloped him. But the glory of the cross burst upon him at last, and he began to sing:

"I, the chief of sinners am;
But Jesus died for me."

Perhaps the experience of darkness is not uncommon, even to saints, when the life currents are fast ebbing. So close is the bond between body and spirit, that it is not strange if the physical weakness and morbid conditions affect the mind at times. Even the most conspicuous saints have been known to be oppressed with doubt and even despair; but at the last the sun emerges from the clouds and lights up with glory the sunset hour.

Hence our Puritan fathers treasured up the sayings of the dying among their Bible records. These "last words" became a part of their folklore. They were repeated from behind the pulpit hour glass, under the sounding board. They took the view of the old English poet Waller:

Stronger by weakness, wiser men become
As they draw nearer to their heavenly home;
Leaving the world, both worlds at once they view,
Who stand upon the threshold of the new.

Longfellow's poem, *Resignation*, was the voice of this experience. The poet's belief in the destiny of the soul came to be:

There is no death! what seems so is transition;
This life of mortal breath
Is but the suburb of the life elysian
Whose portal we call death.

One of the most venerable and devout of American preachers, toward the close of life, gave a public testimony to the preciousness of the death of saints in the eyes of the Lord. He said that in a pastorate of sixty years, he had never seen one of God's saints *die* in agony; that in many cases, there were peculiar visions of heaven or of truth and grace; that there had been repeated cases of the granting of some special desire or prayer, long withheld; and that the aggregate of dying testimonies was marvellous as a witness to God's faithfulness.

No doubt, in many instances, as in that of Whitefield, the dying hour is not one of testimony, because the whole life, as he said, had borne sufficient witness. But, in others, Satan seems to be permitted to have his last conflict with the believer, if only to make the victory of faith and the fidelity of the promise the more conspicuous.

But even when the shadows are permitted to gather and clouds cover the light, how beautifully it breaks at last!

Part of the joy of the saints' death must lie in the *review* of the Lord's dealings with His servants: and may not no small part of it be connected with the remembrance of a life of service and suffering for his sake? If as Dr. Johnson said of the luxurious provisions for self indulgence in David Garrick's sumptuous villa at Hampton, "these are what make a death bed terrible," must not a

foretaste of reward and recompense be found in the humble retrospect of what has been voluntarily foregone and renounced for Christ? It was said of Cecil Rhodes, that he allowed himself to possess but few pictures, not because he lacked power to enjoy them, but because he looked upon them as luxuries. "I could for the money that would cost build so many miles of railway!" This was from the worldling's point of view. Is not the disciple permitted to look back and see how for the Lord's sake what was gain to him he counted loss and refuse that he might know Christ, the power of His Resurrection and the fellowship of His Sufferings, being made conformable unto his death?

"The death bed's a detector of the heart;" yes, is it not also a revealer of the life? Does it not cast back a powerful searchlight over the whole history of the dying man, and expose what is wrong, or reveal what is consistent and Godlike. If God says to the sinner "Remember!" does He not also open before His faithful servant the vista of past years and permit him to sing,

"I have fought a good fight,
I have finished my course,
I have kept the Faith!"

Is it not worth while, in every crisis of life, when new decisions are to be made, and we are at the turning of the way, the cross roads of duty and inclination, to ask how they will look from the dying hour!

Benjamin Jowett, L. L. D., master of Baliol College, was once asked by a lady who wished to draw out some smart reply, "What do you think of God?" "It matters little: the all important question is What does He think of me."

The time will come, and it often comes in this life, and especially as we confront the august exchange of words, when we cannot but ask each for himself, "What does God think of me!" "How does the life I have led look in His eyes!" It is not that *salvation* hangs on any merit of our own; but there is such a thing as being ourselves saved while our work is burned and we suffer loss. There is also "an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom" (compare 1 Corinth. iii:15 and 2 Peter i:11). In those quiet hours, when dear James Wright said "God is talking to me, and I have been walking with Him in this illness," may we not believe that, because perhaps of his very humility, the Lord refreshed him with the memory of the life service he had been enabled to render to Him? Surely to have done something for the Lord, and to have done it well; to have borne some burdens in His name and filled up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in our flesh for His Body's sake which is the church, must bring to the dying saint a foretaste of the heavenly reward!

Heaven is not only a *place* but also a *state*, and a true affinity with God is both the preparation for its joys and the inward certification of its citizenship. In proportion therefore as the Divine likeness is more and more evident the bliss of heaven is more and more enjoyed in foretaste so that the "days of heaven" are known upon earth. This is the inspiring thought that finds its expression in that beautiful "Hymn of the Ages," where the "angel of the golden gate" says to an intercessor,

"Who knows to bless with prayer like thine in Hell can never be;

God's Angel could not if he would bar up this door from thee."

But, whatever be the experiences of the "closing scene," there is an after glow, a long lingering glory of the departing day. Some one has beautifully said, "Recollection is the one Paradise from which we cannot be shut out or turned out."

"The memory of the Just is Blessed."

May we not say even more that the career of the good man is never ended? "He being dead yet speaketh."

It has been suggested that we may make an abridged history of the two worlds, by drawing a line, with an interrogation point below and an exclamation point above:

There is between the two worlds only the thinnest possible partition: and while below lies the realm of doubt and questioning, above is the realm of answers and certainties. So the two lives, here and there, constitute a divine unit, and service is continuous. Dr. Holland wrote:

"I count this thing to be grandly true,
That a noble deed is a step toward God,
Lifting the soul from the common clod
To a purer air and a broader view."

Charles Kingsley has echoed a similar sentiment:

"Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever:

*Do noble deeds, not dream them all day long;
And so make Life, Death and the vast Forever,
One grand sweet song."*

We like to think of a holy life as an unquenchable flame.

Psalm xxi:4: "He asked life of Thee, and Thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever."

Presently we shall give some evidences of the wide influence exerted by Mr. Wright's saintly life.

We are first concerned, however, with the radiant re-

flections from the very sunset itself, while as yet the sun of his mortal life had scarcely passed below the horizon.

The one feeling of all survivors was that the life of a disciple rarely reaches such a stage of completeness. There seemed nothing left unfinished. It is said of Peter the Great that he died, dictating his will. "I leave all to" ——— and the blank was never filled.

Roebing, the bridge builder, brought as an invalid, in a canal barge to be present at the opening of his great Brooklyn Bridge, looked up at the structure and down at the drawings and said: "*It's like the plan.*"

Surely here was a human life that filled out the divine purpose with remarkable entirety; and what could death be to such a man but a more complete realization of his one life aim—absorption in the Will of God! Tennyson must have caught a glimpse of such a life and its perfect bliss beyond, when he wrote:

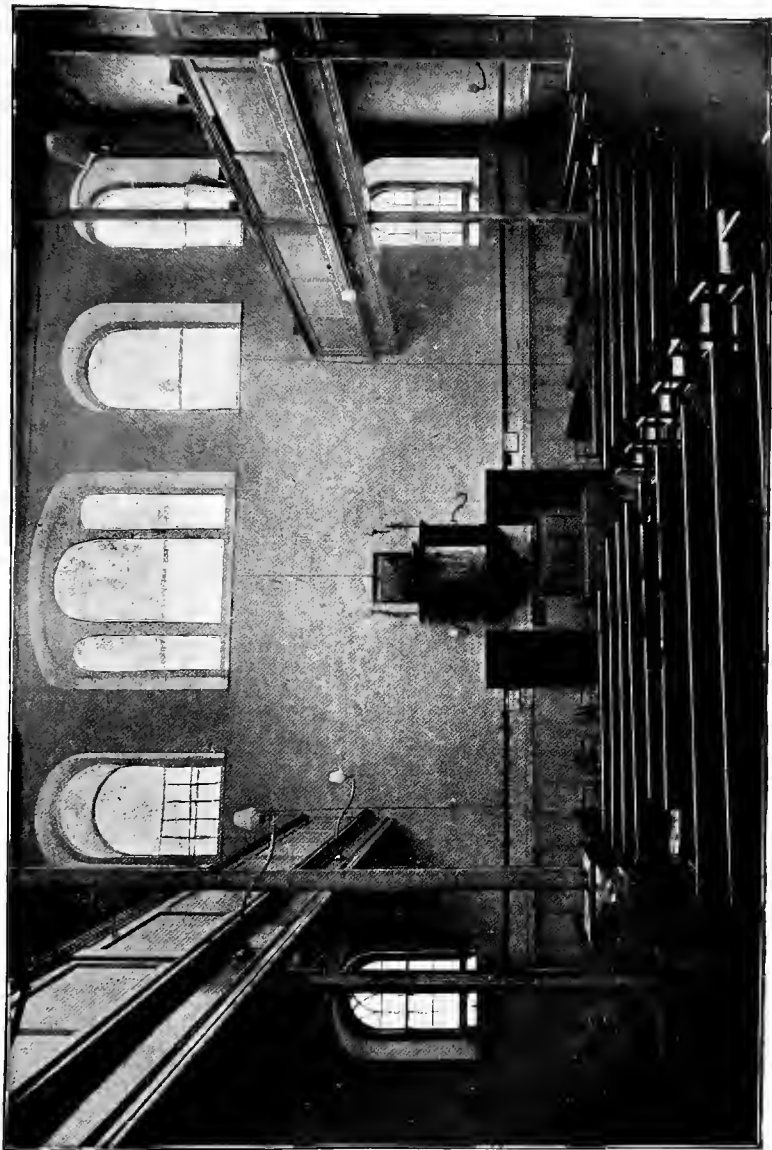
"Man's free will is but a bird in a cage; he can stop at the lower perch or mount to a higher. Then that which he is and knows will enlarge his cage, give him a higher and higher perch, at last break off the top of his cage, and let him out, to be one with the Free Will of the universe."

The funeral services form a part of this biography, for they throw side lights upon the remarkable character we are seeking faithfully to portray. Devout men carried this holy servant of God to his burial and made great lamentation over him, not because his life was cut prematurely short, but because of the desolation left behind.

"Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth!

The faithful fail from among the children of men."

The funeral services, held at Bethesda, February 2nd, will be memorable to all who were present, while recollection survives.



INTERIOR OF BETHESDA CHAPEL.

Mr. Davies gave out the hymn, "O God, our help in ages past," etc.

Mr. Stanley then announced that the services at all four the affiliated Chapels, on the following Sunday evening, would be of a memorial character; and read a letter from Pastor Frank White, of the Talbot Road Tabernacle, London:

"I take my pen immediately on receipt of your kind card, but how to tell my grief for the tidings therein contained I know not. Truly I am a chief mourner with you and Mr. Bergin, and all in fellowship at Bethesda, and those precious orphans for whom my heart weeps, besides those of his nearer kindred. Blessed man he was in his life, blessed, too, in death, for does it not mean 'Forever with the Lord—His Lord and ours. Many years ago, while staying a few days in Bristol, he honoured me with a brief call. The memory of those few golden moments has lingered with me ever since—I felt when he had left the room, that a man of God had been with me. I recollect nothing he said, but I felt and still feel what he himself was. And so another of the King's own has passed over—a 'Mr. Valiant-for-the-Truth' and 'Mr. Standfast' in one. He too has gone in to see that Head which was crowned with thorns, and that Face which was spit upon, and to be with Him in whose company he so delighted when here. Surely the thought of what he has gone to, and what awaits us on the other side, should and does lie as a glowing coal at one's heart.

"'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.'

"With fervent love to you all,

"Yours very faithfully in Christ,

"FRANK H. WHITE."

After prayer by Mr. J. L. Stanley, Mr. G. Fred. Bergin spoke:

"Beloved friends, you may be better able to imagine my feelings than I can describe them, and I would bespeak the earnest, silent breathings of God's children that He may help me in the few words I desire to speak now.

"Let me read Psalm xxiii. I have been led to choose this scripture on which to dwell for a moment or two, by the deeply interesting fact that it was the last scripture that the beloved departed one had read to him. On the last night of his earthly pilgrimage a little before three in the morning he asked his nurse to read him Psalm xxiii, and as I meditated upon this, and thought of what I had known personally, and intimately, during—not what the beloved writer of that letter says—'A few golden moments,' but during thirty-two years of unbroken, increasing friendship, with never a breath between us, but the friendship growing and increasing, and still more close during the past seven years—and let me pause to say I esteem it as one of God's choicest gifts to me to have had that friendship. Bear with a personal word—a week before his death he grasped my hand and kissed it, saying, 'O my brother, how I love you.'

From my knowledge of him during that long period of our friendship, I cannot think of a more fitting scripture to meditate upon—for what was this Psalm but the bleating of the sheep in the ear of the Shepherd, and what is it but the outpouring of the heart of one who has learned what the Shepherd is, delighting in the Shepherd, and confiding in the Shepherd? That was the attitude of our beloved brother during all the years that

I have known him. I have been with him in many difficulties and sorrows. I was with him in his life's sorrow fifteen years ago, when his beloved wife was taken. I was with him an hour after, and wept with him, but never for a moment did he lose his confidence in that Shepherd. I went from him to the prayer meeting, and told friends there, that I found him a broken-hearted *worshipper*; sorrow had not hindered his worship, but increased it. During the month he was lying ill, there was so little consciousness that he was going home, that there was no farewell for me, no counsels as to carrying on the work—no good-bye to his nieces whom he loved. * * *

There seemed quite a calm satisfaction with God. During the first week he said to me, after he became aware of the serious nature of his malady, and with increasing suffering—"God doeth well, I would not alter one thing he has done." Now all this, beloved friends, betokens his deep, full confidence in the Lord. And that marked his character throughout, and that largely helped to sustain him in the great and arduous work to which the Lord had called him. In times of difficulty and trial, his confidence seemed to grow. And his last utterances were: "Jehovah is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures"—mark the contrast—while lying suffering, "green pastures." Beloved, this first verse seems but an echo of the language of his heart from beginning to end. And they are the result of our blessed Lord's words in John x:27. "My sheep hear my voice—I know them, and they follow me."

When a boy of fourteen he first heard the Shepherd's voice. Is my voice reaching any ear to-day, which has never heard that Shepherd's voice? It may be some are

here who have had transactions with him, and have admired the character of James Wright—beloved friends, let me tell you, it was the grace of God made him what he was. Oh, if there is one here to-day who has never loved the Shepherd's voice, let my beseeching of you by this lovely life just closed, woo and win you, to listen to that voice, and know the joy he knew. As a lad of fourteen, he heard that voice, and like the Apostle Paul, his was one steady, growing, onward course, his path was verily "The path of the just shining more and more unto the perfect day."

Like the sun in mid-day splendour, never did it shine out more fully than on this sick bed, in absolute submission of heart to that blessed Lord. Those who knew him well, knew how he delighted to put his Lord in the first place, and how he loved to take the back place. How little he not only not cared for, but I might say, disliked mere popularity—mere public notice, and it was with great difficulty we could persuade him to have bills printed when he was going to preach. And yet those who were privileged to listen to his words, will perhaps never forget what an expositor of Holy Scripture he was, how the doctrines of God's grace, meeting man's ruin, filled his mind. This came out in the little message he sent to the church, which his niece wrote at his dictation. He first returned thanks for all the sympathy and prayer on his behalf, and then turned to Hebrews ix showing how the three appearances of Christ, mentioned towards the close of that chapter, were then staying his heart. The first appearing, to put away sin—meeting his guilty conscience—the second, "Now in the presence of God," to sustain him in the present, and the final appearing when He comes again, which was the hope

of his heart. These doctrines were filling his heart and mind. The Holy Scriptures were to him, the Word of the Living God; the "Higher Criticism," which is doing such havoc among many, did not for one moment touch his confidence in the plenary inspiration of the Word of God, which he received, not as the word of man, but as it is, in truth, the Word of God. In the latter part of this Psalm, there was a beautiful similarity to his circumstances, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death." It was within twelve hours of his death that he asked for that portion to be read to him. "I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me, Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me." Ah, yes, there was no discomfort spiritually through that illness—much suffering and inconvenience—much weakness, but ever joy in the Lord.

One day one of his nieces remarked to me, when they were alternating between hope and fear—that they feared he was going, his converse was so heavenly. Satan was not allowed to harass him, he knew the Lord was with him.

And then he had the hope of being "In the house of the Lord forever." And akin to this faith in Christ was his confidence in God and his Father, and this Psalm he found specially suitable for the circumstances in which he was then.

Dear friends, is it not blessed to find at the close of such a life that his confidence was expressed by asking for that Psalm. And after it had been read to him, he asked the nurse to read the hymn, "Abba, Father, Lord, we call Thee," which we shall presently sing.

A brief word as to his career. He came from London in 1859, by the request of Mr. Müller to help him in his work, and became co-director privately in 1870, which

was made known in 1873. From 1875 onward, he had, one might say, the sole directorship, while Mr. Müller traveled to the ends of the earth; and, from the death of Mr. Müller, he was actually and literally sole director. He called on me, before the month after Mr. Müller's death had expired, to ask me to join him. God had prepared my heart, and when he opened his heart to me, and I told him the exercises of my heart, our hearts were made more than ever one together; and on April 25th I was up at his side.

Dear friends, when I pass that empty room, now—bear with me—my heart is very full!

The desolation felt at Charlotte Street, nothing can describe—he was a father to those nieces with whom he went to live—and the desolation at Ashley Down,—we can't trust ourselves to speak one to the other about him,—please remember us in prayer.

The question has been asked me more than once in the last three days, "Will the work go on?" I can't do better than answer in the very words which our beloved departed brother uttered seven years ago in exactly similar circumstances. "The work *is* going on, we have received orphans since he went, and sent out two apprentices, and we are carrying on every branch of the work." The Lord knows as to the future what He will do; and I gladly echo this, *we* know not, but He knows, and as long as He shall help us, and see fit to provide, we will joyfully put our shoulder to the burden and go on, and if it be *His* will to shut it up, who are we?

One interesting fact perhaps may not come out elsewhere, that, during the time of Mr. Wright's long association with that work from 1859 till his death, there were received into the Orphan Houses, ten thousand

seven hundred and forty-one orphans, a service full of honour.

It was his joy in 1901, at the beginning of the new century to widen the area of the work, by admitting orphans, bereft of one parent only, and this has swelled the numbers, so that now there are more orphans in the houses than have been there for twenty years.

The last time our beloved brother ministered in our midst was at Stokes Croft on January 1st, and some who heard him told me how powerfully he ministered. His last bit of pastoral work was on the last Monday evening he was out,—he was standing near the door there, talking to a sorrowing widow, just bereft, and whose husband had been closely associated with him in school work. That widow has written to me just a line or two with regard to that last interview. "I recall with deep gratification the brief interview I had with our beloved departed one after the prayer meeting only a month ago, when he told me how helpful it was in like affliction to remember that it is not *sin* to feel the stroke, for if it were sin to *feel* the stroke, the Sinless One would not be touched with the feelings that we were the subjects of. His words coming from such honoured lips, have again and again comforted me in my deep sorrow."

Thus has closed a life full of the savour of Christ. We don't magnify *him* but the grace of God in him. We glory in the grace that made him so fair and lovely, and we should seek to imitate his faith, and follow his steps."

Dr. Maclean, of Bath, then gave out the hymn to which Mr. Bergin had referred, "Abba, Father, Lord we call Thee," referring to that as the title put into our lips by the Lord, made sure by the blood of the cross, and repeated by our Lord in resurrection, in His message to

His disciples, on the first morning after the resurrection.

Mr. Bennet, of Yeovil, then said, "Before engaging in prayer I should like to read one of the Lord's abiding messages to us, 'Fear not; I am the first and the last; I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive forever more, Amen: and have the keys of Hades and of death.'" He then prayed and was followed by Dr. George F. Bergin, who also pronounced the benediction.

To these records of the funeral services, we add a few of the brief tributes and testimonies to Mr. Wright's character and worth which were received after his death, and which represent what the writers would have said, had they participated in those exercises. They are like the little touches of the artist that give to the portrait completeness of outline, tone and colour. Wherever the extracts are from personal and private letters, the names of the writers are omitted.

"What struck one so much was his unwavering faith in and loyalty to God and His Word; and his bright, genial graciousness in conversation—so free from all asceticism;—delighting in the beauties of nature around;—his keen sense of humour, his kind sympathetic way, and withal his deep reverence. * * * I have looked on him as a beautiful model of what a Christian should be."

"One always felt that, no matter what kind of trial one was passing through, in dear Mr. Wright one could always find a deep sympathiser; and his very soul seemed to accompany his hearty handshake and genial smile."

"I think every one feels a sense of *loss*, and we shall always miss the sight of his sweet face as he passed the windows going to and fro. I feel glad that I heard him

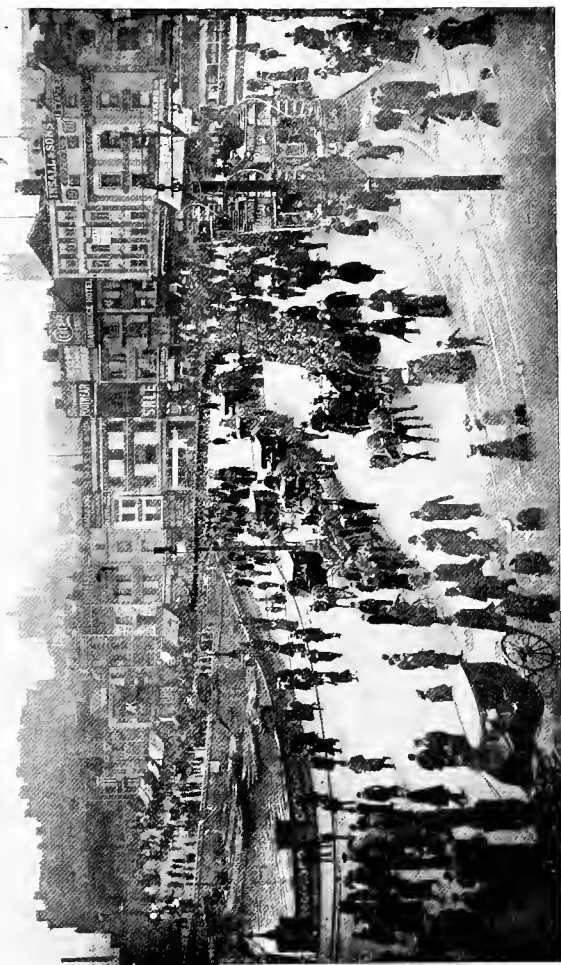


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MR. WRIGHT'S FUNERAL PROCESSION, THE ORPHANS FOLLOWING THE HEARSE.

preach on Christmas night. How little we thought then that it would be the last time."

"The pillar and light of your home is gone! *Such* a pillar, and *such* a light! He was a rare man! Simple yet deep—solemn, yet abounding in joy and overflowing gladness of heart. Since this experience of exuberant joy in God was common to him while on earth, we cannot imagine what it is to him now! Now, in the actual presence of Him in whom he so absolutely believed."

"He had long lived the life of heaven here below, so that, when he entered into the immediate presence of his Lord, he was at home in that presence. It was no new fellowship that he entered upon, but that which he had enjoyed long here on earth. His path was that of the just 'which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.' "

"He was *great* with the greatness which God gives to a few childlike souls. Personally, I regarded him as one of our greatest living preachers (*none* greater in my opinion!) and as one of the most Christlike of saints. I felt it a privilege to know him ever so little, and I greatly prize the kind words he wrote me when our dear ones passed away."

"Oh, how I loved him, admired him, respected him! He was a noble man, a very great man from the moral and spiritual point of view."

"We did so love and reverence your dear Uncle, and feel that we have lost a father."

"Dear Mr. Wright's words have, I know, had their influence upon me throughout my life; and I can never be thankful enough that in my younger days I so often had the opportunity of listening both to him and dear Mr. Müller."

"At present we can none of us realize the truth of what we *must believe*, and it comes constantly as a *fresh stab* that our beloved Mr. Wright is with the Lord he adored, and that we shall no longer have his help. May the fact stir us up to seek to walk in his footsteps, and follow him, as he followed Christ. Oh, what his joy is now—we often saw the foretaste of it shine out in his lovely face, and now he has the fulness."

"I had not seen him much, but to see him was to love him. His beautiful smile was a benediction."

"May he who has removed your noble Uncle to higher and holier service, and the enviable joy of the unveiled beholding, Himself clothe and strengthen those who remain to carry on the blessed work inaugurated by dear Mr. Müller until He come."

"I have lost a friend indeed—one so gracious, so faithful. I can recall some of his expositions of Scripture that always help me and then how kind he was to me whenever I saw him at your house. I can remember the last time I saw him one evening, and he was so cordial and sweet. Dear ones! *God remains*. He will be more to you now than ever."

"My visits to your home, when it was my high privi-

lege to have closer intercourse with him, will ever be recalled with unfeigned pleasure; but the best is before, and soon the grief of parting thus temporarily, will be changed for ineffable joy, when, once more united, we shall be together, and that 'forever with the Lord.'"

"He was a lovely man, and I know how he must be missed by you. I feel like one bereaved myself. * * * During the many years the S. K. I. supported the schools in ———, I had the joy of receiving letters from him constantly, and so learned what a true friend he was and how wise in his counsel. His words and ways I think will never fade from my memory. I was glad that I had an opportunity of seeing him at the Orphan Houses just before we left England."

A friend writes: "I shall often think of dear Mr. Wright's face. It often preached to me without any words, reminding me of Moses who 'wist not that the skin of his face shone.'"

A Swedish friend in New Britain, who had only seen him once or twice for a few hours, writes:

"He was good and shall always live in my memory, and I pray that his life-work may, through God's grace, be an inspiration to me. For the happy privilege I had last summer (1904) to meet him for the first and the last time in this world I have reason to thank God again and again. In him I found the fruit of the Spirit. His meekness made him strong. He was a man (if I understood him right) who could throw himself down in the dust before Jehovah and pray and receive answers, but, at the same time, he could be firm like a rock when he felt it

was the will of God that he should withstand the powers of darkness. There are few men in the world, if any, who can, at the same time, have great strength and deep humiliation combined in their characters; but Mr. Wright, that dear man of God, could. He was a real Great-Heart. I loved him, and I could not help it."

The following is a copy of a post-card written to Mr. Bergin by a beloved brother after Mr. Wright fell asleep. ("Written in great prostration" he afterward remarked):

"I would like to tell you, my beloved brother, how I have been shocked this evening by hearing suddenly (first intimation of even danger) that our beloved and honoured Mr. Wright has finished his course, and that devout men have carried him to his burial. I shall never see that beautiful face, until it is more beautiful than ever, when the dead in Christ God brings with Him. Oh, how our brother seems brought *near* me now that all is past—*until that day!* I hear a most sweet voice, melody itself, unfolding inimitably a Psalm or a chapter in John! What a loss for me! But for you who knew him so well and were so intimately linked with him, what a stroke! And the dear sisters who were privileged to care for him! I am tired and cannot write more. Will you accept my deep, loving *sympathy*, and give it also to those most sorely bereaved, and to any at his dear Bethesda (2 Tim. iv:7, 8; John xvii:24).

"Mine to be forever with Him

His that I am there."

In sore and fellow grief,

T. NEATBY.

As we read such testimonies as these we are reminded

of Whitefield's prayer: "I PRAYED God this day to make me an extraordinary Christian." So reads an entry in the diary of that great and good man, and his life was the evidence that the prayer was heard and answered. In spirit, in prayerfulness, in ceaseless labor, in love to Christ, and in earnest and tireless efforts to win men from their sins to Him, he was, as he prayed to be, "*an extraordinary Christian.*" As we read the prayer we cannot but approve and admire its spirit. But can we and do we adopt it as *our own*? Is it our daily, earnest, heartfelt prayer, "O Lord, make *me* an extraordinary Christian?"

To the writer of this memoir James Wright was an extraordinary Christian, and a few lines are subjoined which may briefly express what seemed to him to be the habitual attitude of this beloved and departed saint:

At Thy dear feet, once pierced for me,
With cruel nails, upon the tree,
I lay my life, for use by Thee,
Henceforth to know no anxious care,
With cheerful heart my loads to bear,
My sole resort—believing prayer!

No worry, lest my work be stayed,
No hurry lest I be delayed,
By haste, to prayerlessness betrayed.
Not careful to be praised of man,
But only to be taught Thy plan,
What Thou *wilt* have me do, I *can*.

No greed of gain, since Thou hast said,
That if the beasts and birds are fed,

Thy children shall not lack for bread,
How sweet to live alone in Thee,
In danger to Thy wings to flee;
The name of Jesus, all my plea.

Before Thee, let Thy servant stand,
To watch Thine eye, Thy beckoning hand,
And promptly move at Thy command.
So shall my life be one sweet day,
Lit up by Heaven's cloudless ray,
A walk with God—a radiant way.

INSCRIPTION ON STONE.

IN

AFFECTIONATE MEMORY OF

BELOVED

JAMES WRIGHT,

SON-IN-LAW OF THE LATE GEORGE MÜLLER,
AND HIS SUCCESSOR IN THE DIRECTORATE OF
THE ASHLEY DOWN ORPHANAGE,
WHO FELL ASLEEP IN JESUS JANUARY 29TH, 1905,
IN HIS 79TH YEAR.

IN HIS YOUTH HE TRUSTED IN OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST
FOR SALVATION.

SINCE 1859 HE LABOURED FOR GOD IN THE CARE OF ORPHANS,
AND DURING THAT TIME OF SERVICE
10,741 ORPHANS WERE RECEIVED AND SHELTERED,
AND VERY MANY WERE LED TO CHRIST.

AN ARDENT LOVER AND ABLE EXPOUNDER OF THE WORD OF GOD,
HIS MINISTRY WAS WIDELY BLESSED.

MEEK AND LOWLY LIKE HIS MASTER THE LORD JESUS CHRIST,
HE GAVE TO HIM ALL THE PRAISE

FOR WHAT HE WAS, AND WHAT HE ACCOMPLISHED.
LIKE ENOUGH,

" HE WALKED WITH GOD." GEN. V. 24.

" HE PLEASED GOD." HEB. XI. 5.

" HE WAS NOT, FOR GOD TOOK HIM." GEN. V. 24.

THIS MEMORIAL WAS ERECTED

BY THE LOVING AND SPONTANEOUS GIFTS

OF NOT A FEW OF THE ORPHANS,

WHO WERE FORMERLY CARED FOR AT ASHLEY DOWN.

CHAPTER EIGHTH.

TRIBUTES OF FRIENDS.

To these brief memoirs, we add several more extensive tributes to the subject of these pages, and some reports of Mr. Wright's addresses, etc., by way of completing, as far as possible, the pen portrait of this beloved brother. It seemed better to give these papers a separate place of their own than to attempt to weave them into the narrative, as in most cases they cover the whole period of the life, and belong therefore to no single portion of it. These papers are from certain friends who knew Mr. Wright especially well, and who have been asked to supply from their own recollection and personal knowledge, partial portraits of his many sided character.

I.

Recollections by Mr. J. Storrs Fry of Mr. Wright's early life, and his testimony to him, as a brother:

The late Mr. James Wright was a member of one of the most valued families in the Society of Friends in Bristol. His father, Mr. James Ireland Wright, was, as I have always understood, a man of earnest Christian character, and I remember him as an occasional preacher in the meetings for worship of the Society, although I do not think that he was ever a recognised (or "recorded") minister of that body.

He was engaged, at the time to which I am referring, in the wholesale tea trade in conjunction with Mr. Henry Hunt, in which business his son was also employed in his earlier years. I believe that he suffered some heavy

pecuniary loss, but I have no reason to believe that he failed honourably to discharge all his liabilities. It is probably to this circumstance that allusion was made by his son referring to a loss of income for which he could "bless God." My knowledge, however, of these matters is only an early and not very distinct memory.

When Mr. James Wright was still very young his father became dissociated from the Society of Friends. At that time there was a movement, within the Society, some of its members seeking for more definite evangelical teaching than they thought they could find within its borders. For a time they maintained a separate existence as a small body, chiefly in Manchester, but eventually most of those who were thus separated, connected themselves with the "Brethren," and many others of them and their families ultimately joined the Church of England.

In looking back, after the lapse of many years, one feels that mistakes may have been made on both sides; and there was much to regret, on the part of the Society of Friends, at the loss of some of its valuable members.

It was, I believe, owing to these causes and the presence of the late Mr. George Müller in Bristol, that Mr. James Wright was led, under Mr. Müller's teaching and influence, to take up the position with the body of Christians in Bristol, amongst whom he filled so important a place during the rest of his life.

When he left the Society of Friends my opportunities of personal intercourse with him were not so frequent as might otherwise have been the case, but everything which I can remember about him is in harmony with the devoted Christian life which he has led, and so long as he attended the services of the Society of Friends I retain

the picture of a most devout, though then, youthful worshipper.

I may add to these few reminiscences of my late dear friend that our mutual regard was undiminished by the fact that we were connected with different portions of the Church of Christ, and whenever we were brought into contact, I always received from him the greatest kindness and consideration.

I watched his work at the Orphan Houses with deep interest, and could not fail to recognise the wisdom and grace which were bestowed upon him in the discharge of his heavy responsibilities.

II.

COLONEL MOLESWORTH'S TRIBUTE.

If comparison is lawful then John Bunyan's description of Mr. Valiant-for-Truth applies fully to the beloved subject of this memoir, James Wright.

Gentle yet firm, gracious to a degree, yet uncompromising where he believed the truth of God was impugned.

Forgiving and never resenting, his grace overcame even those who strongly differed from him. Of genial temperament he could heartily enter into all the loving human interests of life, yet his countenance was "as the north wind" if any unkind or unlovely expressions were used of any. No mean or narrow views did he take of any, nor do I remember after many years of intimate intercourse to have heard him express a single depreciatory word of any one.

His ministry of the Word of God was of masterly character. His teaching thorough and convincing; his grasp of the subject in question was such that you rarely felt he had omitted any material point. His choice and

use of words was unique, and such was his spiritual insight you felt he was truly a teacher sent of God.

Yet despite his master-gifts he was too faithful to be popular or run after. The searching character of his teaching (and he lived up to his words) proved more than the many were able to follow. At a conference I remember he greatly offended one present by sternly denouncing certain teaching as tending to subvert the faith of some. The one offended sought an explanation, as having felt personally aggrieved, being well known as the leading promulgator of these views. He quietly answered, "Permit me before entering on any discussion to say I did not know you were present. I did not know you held these views. I had not even heard your name." What more could be said?

Of his own estimate of himself, I well remember when seeing together an applicant for church fellowship, who was mourning over his own failure and sinfulness, yet humbly repentant, the sudden reply was, "I yield to none as to the blackness of my heart."

It was said he had a strong will and was unyielding. Yes, he had a strong will to do the will of God, and so *convinced* others of the rectitude of his judgments, but he was ever ready to yield, personally, where no principle was involved.

In 1890, the summer after his beloved wife was called away, he paid a special visit to the schools and churches in North Italy, entering with refreshing joy into the various phases of the work there and preaching (by interpretation) with much acceptance and with blessing following. His visit there is still remembered and but recently there came word of the happy departure in the faith of one who had been converted through an address he gave in North Piedmont.

On the way there I remember he entered into conversation with an elderly clergyman and his wife in the train. When leaving the clergyman asked me quietly who he was, for he had been specially struck with his beaming countenance and conversation. I told him he was co-director with Mr. Müller of the Bristol Orphan Houses. This greatly interested him.

It was his strong personality which spoke so loudly. Reticent, though ever genial, few could have known the latent strength and wisdom underlying his calm exterior. Often chary of speech, he was the best of listeners and pondered well all he heard, though rarely expressing a judgment save when necessary.

At the frequent Bible meetings held, *his* mind was the object desired, but such was his humility he preferred others to speak—only quietly affirming, or expanding, or suggesting an alternative, which generally proved the essence of the passage.

Bringing him one day a correspondence to read in which serious question had arisen as to the holy character of the person of the Son of God, he expressed full approval of the way it had been dealt with and closed by saying, "We are true Kohathites," alluding to their reverently carrying the Ark of God.

As another has said when asked to write his biography, "Dear brother, it has been written and it will be published *in the morning*." So he would have said. Truly it is written in the Book of the Chronicles of the King and has His imprimatur.

Beloved in his every phase of life, his memory will ever be fragrant and "He shall be yet spoken of" when to-day's world heroes are forgotten.

A. O. M.

III.

MR. WRIGHT'S CHURCH LIFE.

BY MR. J. L. STANLEY.

While the work of the great institution on Ashley Down claimed the lion share of Mr. Wright's time and attention, yet his church life and relationship constituted a very distinct and interesting phase of his career. He was first of all

A Church Member.

He was more than that, but he *was* that, and he never forgot it. Some men allow the official position to obliterate the fact and consciousness of membership; Mr. Wright never did. Though he became distinguished from all, yet he always regarded himself as one among many. The patronising phrase "the people," had no place in his vocabulary. With the utmost sincerity he ranked himself as a fellow member with the humblest member of the body of Christ.

He was a *faithful* and *exemplary* member in many ways.

1. In the *regularity of his attendance.*

There are four meeting places associated with the church, and Mr. Wright was often urged to visit each in turn on the Sunday mornings, so that each place might have the benefit of his ministry. Yet he could never be persuaded to do this, partly on account of his native humility, and partly because of his attachment to the meetings at Bethesda, the mother church, as it is sometimes called. It was a rare occurrence for his seat to be vacant on Sunday morning, and this was not because of any official position or because of any ministerial appointment,

but because of his loyalty to Christ and his love for the fellowship of saints.

The Monday prayer meeting almost invariably found him in his place, and never were any engagements allowed to interfere with his presence on those occasions.

The same may be said of the monthly church meetings in which he always took a lively interest, and until later years when failing strength demanded longer rest, it was an exceptional thing for him to be absent. The same may be said of other meetings, though these are the principal ones. The church was dear to him, and he rejoiced to do what he could by his presence, his prayers, or his words of encouragement to strengthen and sustain its life.

2. *In his Liberality.* He made a conscience of carrying out the Scripture injunction to liberality, and though he was one of those who did not let the left hand know what the right hand did, it *was* known that his generosity did much to aid the church funds. His giving was systematic and proportionate; since his departure evidence has come to light that *that* proportion was exceptionally large.

3. *In his interest in the members and the general work of the church.* Mr. Wright never claimed to be a pastor; his work at Ashley Down made that impossible, but he felt a warm interest in the members of the church and made acquaintance with them as far as he was able. There was not a department of church work that he was ignorant of, while his prayers and his inquiries showed how alive he was to all that affected the welfare of the flock. It is, however, chiefly as

Preacher and Teacher

that Mr. Wright is remembered in his church life. His

character and gifts gradually made a place for him in the front rank, and won for him the confidence and love of all who knew him.

His preaching was pre-eminently *expository*. He loved the Scriptures, studied them continually and then, in his ministry, endeavoured to communicate to others what the Holy Spirit had communicated to him. He was logical and methodical, but remarkably free from all mere artificialities. He did not commit the mistake of many of forcing his subject into a straight-jacket kind of division; he discovered and exhibited the division or arrangement which lay concealed. If any hearers came looking for "an intellectual treat," for dramatic effect, flights of oratory, and the like, they would be disappointed. But if they came looking for spiritual instruction and help they could scarcely fail to be gratified and strengthened.

It was mainly as a teacher that Mr. Wright excelled. He *could*, and often did, deal with doctrine in the abstract, and in definition and argument lucidly set forth the contents of any portion of Scripture. But it was more common for him to blend the purely doctrinal with the practical and experimental; coming close to the every-day life and need of his hearers and making them feel that the Bible was indeed "a lamp to the feet and a light to the path." He spoke out of the fulness of his own knowledge and experience, and was, in the truest sense, eloquent.

At the same time he was evangelistic. Here, again, he had no narrow idea of evangelism, as something belonging to a professional class, or a "special mission." No evangelist could put more clearly or scripturally the truths of the Gospel than did Mr. Wright, as it was rarely that he preached without doing so.

It goes without saying that he was intensely loyal to the Bible. To him, it did not simply "*contain*," it is the Word of God.

He certainly did not crave or aim at popularity, though in the esteem of his fellow Christians he filled a large space, but, as Miss Waring puts it, "He was content to fill a little space." A *small* congregation was never a trouble to him, and he never measured the amount of pains and effort by the size of a congregation. He was too good a man, and too great a preacher to preach a poor sermon to a small company. A service among a handful of people would be treated as conscientiously as one among a big crowd.

In a *good* sense, Mr. Wright, in church life, was

A Disciplinarian.

He jealously guarded the church against everything that would mar the purity of its doctrine. Happily, the church life at Bethesda has seldom been disturbed by heretical attacks, but a notable controversy arose in 1872 in connection with the subject of the non-eternity of punishment.

On that occasion, speaking at one of four memorable meetings, Mr. Wright said in his closing sentences: "The membership of this church is about nine hundred. If that number were to be reduced to nine on account of this question, I would rejoice to be one of the nine."

In cases of moral delinquency Mr. Wright was often stern and severe. Particularly was this the case when instances arose of dishonourable bankruptcy. Those who tried to gloss over shady commercial practices by any false standards of business morality, very soon found their refuges of lies swept away. Yet he knew how to observe the scripture injunction "of some have compas-

sion, making a difference;" or that other gracious direction, "considering thyself lest thou also be tempted."

Mr. Wright was ever regarded by his brethren and the church generally as a valued

Counsellor.

For very many years, until the pressure of institutional work and the advance of age prevented him, he was constantly present at the weekly meeting of elders. His calm, patient and dispassionate mind enabled him to take a clear view of any matter that came up for consideration, and his judgment was seldom, if ever, at fault.

In this feature of his character Mr. Wright was of conspicuous value to the church. We venture to think there are not many to be found who could equal him. He had a very fine and dignified presence which harmonized well with his judicial mind. He was a true Christian gentleman and always treated with respect and consideration the judgment of the humblest of his brethren. He was a capable ruler, and because he was so, never attempted any show of authority. In unimportant and secondary matters he knew how to yield when he was in a minority, but in primary matters, where principle was at stake, none could be more firm. He was naturally very conservative and looked with suspicion on any new departure in methods of Christian work. At the same time he was possessed of a large and true charity which enabled him to rejoice in the success of those whose methods he might not have been able to adopt or approve.

In connection with Mr. Wright's church life we must give a prominent place to his

Prayerfulness

This, of course, was a chief characteristic of his *whole* life, and therefore conspicuous in the church.

Long and affectionately will he be remembered as a man of prayer. His disappearance from the Monday night prayer meeting leaves a serious gap. How carefully and systematically he used to read the requests for prayer which had been sent in, and with what fervency would he present many of these before the Throne of Grace. The requests were sometimes numerous, and he was always watchful that none should be overlooked.

And then, there were the *private* assemblies for prayer. How much he did to foster and sustain this habit. When some pressing trouble came upon an individual or family in the church; when some sore sickness rested upon a member of the body, and a call was made upon several friends to gather for special prayer, Mr. Wright would never fail to respond to such a request. His teaching and example have been powerful educators in this respect.

One more form of service deserves notice ere we close this chapter—

The Service of Song.

Mr. Wright was fond of psalmody, though he was strongly opposed to instrumental music in the service of the church. He was himself a good singer, and well acquainted with music. For many years he led the singing at Bethesda, and only gave it up when physical strength was unequal to the demand. In earlier years he devoted himself considerably to the improvement of the singing in the services of the church, for a long period—from about 1860 to 1870 he used to conduct a singing class at old Salem Chapel on Monday nights after the prayer meeting. He gathered around him a

band of young Christians whom he trained in this way, and who became a modest sort of choir (without the name), under his leadership.

One relic of these times is affectionately preserved in the family of the writer who, together with his wife, were members of the little favoured band. That relic consists of an antique wooden pitch pipe, which seemed indispensable to Mr. Wright for giving the key note.

The instrument itself is, when closed, seventeen inches in length. Most leaders would employ a neat little tuning fork, or one of the more modern chromatic instruments, but Mr. Wright kept to the old pipe. The members of the class once presented him with a pair of chromatic tuning forks, but the old pipe was never superseded. The little incident was characteristic of the man, and is among the treasured recollections which were full of quiet benedictions.

There are those still living among the members of the church, though they are now very few, who cherish the memory of the beloved and learned Henry Craik. There are more who remember his great coadjutor, George Müller. And in the history of the church the name of James Wright is worthy to be ranked with theirs for saintliness and service.

JAMES L. STANLEY.

IV.

JAMES WRIGHT AS DIRECTOR OF THE SCRIPTURAL KNOWLEDGE INSTITUTION.

H. WELCHMAN.

"Of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things, to whom be glory forever, Amen" (Rom. xi:36).

If there were ever a servant of God who believed,

and, at all times, remembered the truth of these sublime words, it was James Wright. He believed it, not only as true in a general way, but as true of himself in particular. I do not remember hearing him preach on the text, but in all his preaching and living, he exemplified and enforced its truth and power. Often have I heard him quote the words of our Lord Jesus; "A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven" (John iii:27). From the year 1859, when Mr. Wright became an assistant in the work, till 1870 Mr. Müller had abundant opportunity of watching the conduct, and of discerning the evident ability increasingly manifested in him, and he was not wrong in his judgment that God had raised him up and fitted him to be a special help in the work and to be his successor. I have read that when Mr. Müller revealed his mind on this subject in 1870, Mr. Wright, in his humility, shrank from the proposal, not, I am sure, because of the labour involved, but from a lowly but mistaken view of his ability for such a responsible position. When, however, he saw it to be God's will, and his question: "Who is sufficient for these things?" was met by—"Our sufficiency is of God," he was satisfied to go forward, and in 1872 he became co-director with Mr. Müller. When, on the tenth of March, 1898, it pleased God to take Mr. Müller suddenly to himself, the Institution was passing through deep waters—one of those times of pecuniary need, which the Lord has occasionally permitted for the trial of faith and the greater glory of His name, but Mr. Wright did not hesitate for one moment, but calmly and courageously took up at once all the responsibilities and duties of his new position as honorary director and treasurer of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution for Home and Abroad.

He went on taking in more orphans, and gloried in the fact that the gigantic work, like the earth, hangeth on nothing visible; nothing but God. Having set his hand to the plough, he never looked back. His labours were incessant from morning till night—enough I have often thought for any two men. His trials and sorrows were at times exceedingly heavy, but he went steadily and steadfastly forward. He realized that the call, to occupy the position, was "*of God*;" he devoted himself to fulfill all its duties "*through God*," and his one object was that everything should be done "*to God*"—to His honour and glory.

Mr. Wright was not a director in name only, but in reality. It is true he had some efficient helpers; especially in his associate director, Mr. G. F. Bergin, and his beloved niece, Miss A. M. Withy; it is true that he fully appreciated their loyalty and help, but notwithstanding this, he made himself acquainted with every part of the work, and maintained practical control over it all. This involved a large amount of time and thought, yet he never appeared weary or ruffled. Often, when I have watched a stream of other helpers going to his room for direction on various subjects, and have at last gained admission, I have said; "We give you no rest," he would reply, with his own sweet smile, and in a merry tone of voice, "I am appointed thereunto."

It is not easy, perhaps not possible, to give to one not connected with the work, any adequate idea of the amount of labour; the burden of responsibility, and the demand for wisdom and grace, for patience and yet firmness, in a director of such a large institution. There is not only a vast number of letters every day to be read and answered; but there are five large houses to be kept

in repair ; nearly 2,000 children to be fed and clothed and educated ; physically, mentally, and morally. There is the labour and responsibility of investigating the many applications for the admission of orphans, and the care of selecting suitable masters for the apprentices and homes for the girls, trained for domestic service. It may be said that he had efficient helpers to attend to the details of the work, and this is true ; the work could not possibly be carried on without them, but sometimes it is difficult to obtain suitable helpers, and when obtained there is a sense in which it may be truly said, they become an additional care. Parents who have half a dozen children, with servants to help, find it no easy task to care for them in sickness and health, and much more when the family is three hundred times as large. No more need be said on this subject, for all people who read the Annual Reports, and have any idea of the magnitude and variety of the work carried on : not only for the orphans, but also for the School, Bible, Missionary and Tract work, will know that the supervision and direction of it all must require unusual ability, and, however great the ability, must demand much time and application of heart and mind.

One secret of Mr. Wright's success in the conduct of the work and of the perpetual calm and brightness of his spirit was the wonderful method he adopted for doing things, and the care bestowed on every detail, so that very little time was lost in discovering and rectifying mistakes. Another secret was the beautiful order in which he kept the vast number of books and papers, etc., so that very little time was lost in hunting for any particular letter, or key, or anything under his care. It may be that his early training in the Society of Friends, al-

though he left the Society in early life, had a lasting effect for good. He never appeared to be in a hurry. He knew what was in man, and was not greatly moved by the discovery of imperfection and failure in one or another. He was very careful to obey the injunction, "speak evil of no man," but on the contrary he was quick to observe, and ever ready to speak kindly of the gifts and graces of others. He was generally cheerful. He could enjoy a hearty laugh at any ludicrous incident, or humorous saying, but his cheerfulness never degenerated into levity, and he would not allow, but sternly reprove any appearance of jesting on the Word of God, or the character of good men.

Any one who had the privilege of conversing with him on difficult matters of business, as well as on spiritual subjects, would be struck with the rapidity and exactness of his apprehension, the clearness of his judgment, and the firmness of his decision. He was a born leader of men. He ruled the institution, not as an autocrat, whose will is law and must be obeyed, but more as a father, whose wisdom might safely be trusted, and whose loving interest could not be questioned. He had a large body of helpers, living and working together in the five houses; in different positions; of different ages, temperaments, tastes, habits, denominations of religion, and views on various subjects, yet, under his wise rule all lived and worked together, year after year, in happy unity and love. One great secret of this triumph was that he never allowed any tattling or talebearing. If any difficulty arose and one complained of being unfairly treated by another, he would be directed to Matthew xviii:15, and if the teaching of our Lord and Master had not been obeyed, the complainant would be advised, after prayer, to seek

an early opportunity of doing it. Very often, a little explanation on both sides would set matters right. If, however, the difficulty continued, the parties would be seen together; the whole case would be gone into patiently and judiciously, and this resulted not only in both parties being satisfied and reconciled, but in a determination being formed in both minds never, if possible, to go through such an ordeal again. Mr. Wright had a strong sense of justice. He held the scales with a steady hand. There was no favoritism, no partiality. With the Word of God before him as his guide; with God ever beside him as his strength, and with the judgment seat ever before him as the time of his reward, the one question to his mind was, "Is it right?" When that question was answered, it mattered not who was pleased or displeased; whether it was gain to him or loss; the right must be done. It must be done kindly, but it must be done.

To sum up this sketch of Mr. Wright as Director, I want to repeat that he was essentially a man of God—a man of faith, a man of prayer, and a man of consecrated life. As a man of faith he received everything out of the hand of God; his own position was given him *of God*; every provision of a suited helper was *of God*, every legacy and donation, great or small, was *of God*, and every trial was *of God*. As a man of prayer, he recognized that the work was carried on not through his wisdom, or power, or diligence, but *through* God, and as a man of consecrated life, he laboured to the very best of his ability, not to obtain honour, or wealth, or pleasure to himself, but to give pleasure and to bring honour and glory *to God*. "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen."

V. THE LATE MR. JAMES WRIGHT.*

A TRIBUTE FROM REV. JAMES ORMISTON, RECTOR OF ST.
MARY-LE-PORT, BRISTOL.

"The memory of the just is blessed," and it is the revealed will of the Lord that "the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance." A sad pleasure, therefore, is ours in memorialising the fruitful and faithful life and labours of the beloved servant of Christ whose name appears above. The gracious fragrance of that name, associated by us, as it ever will be, with an exceptionally powerful testimony of God's precious truth—alike by lip and walk—we fain would worthily transfer to these memorial pages, but that service of love is largely beyond our powers. We must therefore be satisfied to simply put on record a few traits of a spiritually lovely character, produced by the rich grace of God, and set before us as an instructive example to be thankfully admired and humbly followed in these days of religious defection and widespread unbelief.

Our happy personal acquaintance with the late Mr. James Wright, successor to the universally known Mr. George Müller as Honorary Director and Treasurer of the New Orphanage Houses (for 2,050 children) on Ashley Down, Bristol, and of the other objects of the "Scriptural Knowledge Institution for Home and Abroad," extended over a quarter of a century, and its hallowed associations will be cordially treasured by us so long as the Lord spares us below. From the earliest occasions of converse we enjoyed with him—mainly

*From "The Gospel Magazine." Much that is here found is anticipated in the foregoing pages; but it seems best to present this tribute entire.—A. T. P.

in connection with the happy Conferences of God's people held annually at Clifton—we were forcibly attracted by his heavenly-mindedness, closeness of walk with the Lord, remarkable knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, steadfastness of faith in God, singular power and directness in prayer, and his remarkable gifts as a Bible expositor and teacher. These sacred influences grew and deepened as multiplied years of fellowship in the Master's service brought us more closely together. His address at the Clifton Conference in October last on "The Divine Promises in the New Testament" left on those who were present a singularly refreshing and edifying impression—the closing aspiration of his never-to-be forgotten utterance being, "May we be enabled to take heed in our hearts to these exceeding great and precious promises, until the day dawn, and the Day Star arise. Amen!" That "Amen" of the beloved man of God we affectionately and fervently reiterate. His was ever a waiting attitude. He truly loved his Lord's appearing, and no subject upon which he spoke seemed to move him more deeply than the personal, visible, glorious return of his adored Lord and Master. To him Jesus was a very real Personality. He intimately knew Him as his ever accessible Counsellor, his all prevailing Advocate with the Father, and as the faithful performer of the Yea and Amen promises.

Of Mr. Wright's call by grace little is known, but it is generally understood to have taken place early—probably when he was about fourteen years of age. He was a native of Bristol, and came of a family identified with the Society of Friends. For several years he resided in London, where he was engaged in commercial pursuits, but returned to his native city in 1859, and

became associated with Mr. George Müller in the great work on behalf of orphan boys and girls which that eminent servant of Christ had been led to originate in 1835. At the date of his entering the Lord's work at the Ashley Down Orphanage, only two of the five extensive houses had been built, so that during the nearly forty-six years of his connection with the beneficent undertaking he had the satisfaction of seeing it grow exceedingly. During the term of his service with Mr. Müller, and subsequently, there were received into the Orphan Houses no fewer than 10,741 children. At the date of his death, on Lord's-day, January 29th, 1905, there were more children in the institution than there had been for twenty years. For some considerable time prior to the death of Mr. Müller, on March 10th, 1898, Mr. Wright—his son-in-law—had practically the sole charge of the "Scriptural Knowledge Institution" in its various departments, including the superintendence of the orphan establishment; assisting financially and otherwise Day and Lord's-day Schools conducted on Scriptural principles at home and abroad; the circulating of the Holy Scriptures in a great variety of languages; the aiding of Missionary work in China, India, Persia, Spain, Italy, Germany, France, Africa, the West Indies, Canada, the United States, Ireland, Scotland, and—at home—many places in England; and the diffusing throughout the world of Gospel truth by means of books, tracts, leaflets and other publications. Mr. Müller's preaching tours in India, Australia, on the Continent, and in the United States of America, necessitated long periods of absence from England, but Mr. Wright was divinely enabled to discharge all the heavy responsibilities of a *locum tenens*, the Lord thus preparing his servant to become Mr.

Müller's successor when the latter was taken to his rest seven years ago.

The Holy Spirit endued Mr. Wright with an established faith like that of the honoured founder of the work, while his habit of making every detail the subject of prayer gave continuity to the vast undertaking. The leading characteristic of Mr. Müller's long service and stewardship was that God Himself, and not man, was trusted to supply the needs of the Institution in all its branches. Mr. Wright jealously followed on the same Scriptural lines. With a clear conscience and a grateful heart the dear man of God penned the following testimony *to the praise of his promise-performing Lord* in the very last Annual Report of the proceedings of the Institution issued (for 1903-4): "*Without any one having been personally applied to for anything, £1,142,479 os. 5¼d. has been given for the orphans, as the result of prayer to God, since the commencement of the work, which sum includes the amount received for the Building Fund for the five houses.*" And then he added, to the further glory of Him who "keepeth covenant and mercy" with those that truly trust in His Word: "It may be interesting to the reader to know that the total amount given for the other objects, since the commencement of the work, amounts to £417,613 7s. 5½d.; that that which has come in by the sale of Bibles since the commencement amounts to £24,037 18s. 4½d.; by the sale of tracts and books, £30,026 5s. 3½d.; and by the payment of the children in the Day Schools, from the commencement, £25,036 6s. 1½d. Besides this, a great variety of articles of clothing, furniture, etc., has also been given for the use of the orphans." Surely this simple narrative of facts, recorded by the almost dying

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hand of an honoured witness to the abiding faithfulness of the Living God, is an object-lesson to which heed might be given by too many of those who claim to be engaged in the Lord's work, yet carry it on in accordance with worldly principles, and by appeals to fleshly motives. Never shall we forget a remark made in our hearing by Mr. Wright at a meeting held many years ago in connection with a home-mission enterprise, the substance of which was, "Be always careful in connection with the Lord's work, lest you present to the world the idea that He whom you serve is a *poor* God!" He was referring to the danger of running into debt in the name of the Lord, and then appealing to the world for help; as though God did not take much interest in the cause of His own truth. It was important, he urged, that when funds were not provided, consideration should be given to the question of curtailing expenditure and reducing the number of agents. It was not for the Lord's servants to say, "We *must* have so many agents to keep pace with the demands of the work," and on that presumption go on to involve God's Name in resulting failure. If the work were indeed God's work, and we were really called to be His instruments to further it, then it was ours to follow His dictation, and to leave Him to provide the means to meet its demands. Mr. Wright was a gifted organiser, a wise, firm, but loving director of fellow-labourers subject to him, a man of peculiarly tender sympathies—just the ideal character to fill the relation of a foster-father to the thousands of orphaned little ones providentially entrusted to his care. His chief concern was for the spiritual welfare of the dependent lambs whom Jesus bade him "feed." One of the absorbing aims of his labours among

the orphans, as it ever had been that of Mr. Müller, was "the salvation of the children." This fact, we may observe, he very pointedly sets forth in his last report. He quotes and endorses as his own the following words of Mr. Müller:—

"To make the children see their lost and ruined condition by nature, through instructing them in the Word of God, and to lead them to put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, was my aim; and God has given us the joy of seeing *thousands* of them brought to believe in Him, so that few Institutions, perhaps, have been more abundantly blessed in this respect than the Orphan Houses on Ashley Down have been; yet even this was not the primary object I had in view, when I began to care for poor destitute children, bereaved of both parents by death; but, in carrying on this work, simply through the instrumentality of prayer and faith, without applying to any human being for help, my great desire was, that it might be seen that now in the nineteenth century, *God is still the living God, and that now, as well as thousands of years ago, He listens to the prayers of His children, and helps those who trust in Him.*" Here we have the secret spring of motive which actuated these dear men of God—and, it should be added, of their devoted fellow-labourers also. Upon that holy aim the stamp of their heavenly Father's approval has been signally impressed. The five Orphan Houses at Bristol to-day represent to the Church and to the world the tangible fruit and evidence of what the living God has been pleased to effect in reponse to Scriptural faith and prayer exercised by His servants through a period of seventy years. No one with eyes to see need put the question, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?"

Soon after the death of Mr. Müller, the entire burden of superintending the Institution having now devolved on Mr. Wright, it was laid on his heart to ask the Lord to raise up in some servant of His a brother well qualified to share the onerous Directorate of the Institution. This request was lovingly and remarkably answered. At the very same time that Mr. Wright was waiting on the Lord for a helper, Mr. G. F. Bergin, of Clifton—one whose spiritual character, knowledge, and gifts peculiarly fitted him for such a post—was waiting on God in prayer for direction as to service. The two devoted servants of Christ met, and it was found that the will of God was so plainly indicated in the matter that no room was left to question it. Thus, the Directorate was shared onwards by Mr. Wright, and Mr. Bergin, and only death has divided them in their work of faith and labour of love. Without wavering so much as a hairbreadth, in principle or method, from the original design of the Institution, its administration has been jointly conducted for seven years. And now the surviving steward and servant of the Lord stands alone and single-handed—a touching appeal to believers to plead with Him who is “the Father of the fatherless,” that a true help-mate may be provided for this honoured and willing shepherd of Christ’s lambs. We commend Mr. Bergin to the prayers of the Lord’s people. On his dying bed Mr. Wright appears to have implicitly left the orphanage work in the hands of his heavenly Father, and to have spoken little of its future. About a week before passing away he grasped his fellow-worker by the hand, kissed it, and said, “Oh! my brother, how I love you!”

His illness lasted nearly a month, and was borne with

exemplary patience and acquiescence in the Divine will. Much fervent prayer was offered for him among the people of God in Bristol, of various denominations; for his consistent Christian life, abounding labours, and faithful Gospel testimony made him indeed "a brother beloved" far beyond the limits of his immediate communion. The last Scripture read to him by his own request—just before he passed into the glory of his Lord's presence, was the 23rd Psalm. About three o'clock in the morning he asked his nurse to let him hear that most precious, suggestive, and suitable portion of the Word. Then he wished to hear once more the hymn which he had peculiarly loved—dear Doctor Hawker's grace-exalting lines:—

"Abba, Father! Lord, we call Thee,
Hallowed name! from day to day;
'Tis Thy children's right to know Thee,
None but children Abba say.
This high privilege we inherit,
First Thy gift, and then Christ's blood;
God the Spirit, to our spirit,
Witnesseth we are sons of God.

"Abba's love first gave us being,
When, in Christ, in that vast plan,
Abba chose the church in Jesus,
Long before the world began!
Oh! what love the Father bore us!
Oh! how precious in His sight!
When He gave His church to Jesus,
Jesus! His whole soul's delight!

"Though our nature's fall in Adam
Seemed to shut us out from God;
Thus it was His counsel brought us
Nearer still through Jesu's blood:

By the plan Himself had formed,
Ere like sheep we went astray;
They, said God, shall call me Father,
Nor from me shall turn away.

"And the richest stores of pardon
God sets forth in Christ His Son;
With the Spirit's grace to guide us,
Safe to bring His children home.
Abba, Father! makes all certain,
Both by word, by oath, and blood
Abba saith, 'They are My people,'
And they say, 'The Lord's my God.'

"Hence through all our changing seasons,
Trouble, sorrow, sickness, woe;
Nothing changeth God's affection,
Abba's love will bring us through.
Soon shall all Thy blood-bought children
Round Thy throne their anthems raise;
And in songs of rich salvation
Shout to Abba endless praise."

Many blessed utterances had passed his lips during the closing weeks of his suffering illness, and numerous passages of the Word his soul dearly loved were repeated by him. To the last his mind was kept in perfect peace, for, through grace he knew well Whom he had believed, and was richly persuaded that He was "able to keep *that*" which he had long-gone years before committed unto Him. He had been a devout and diligent student of the Scriptures of eternal truth, his mind was liberally stored with the verities of the blood-sealed Covenant of Grace, and the sweet message of salvation through the atoning blood of the Lamb—which he had delighted to minister to others—was now his sufficient stay and consolation when flesh and blood failed him, and all human succour was in vain. GOD HIMSELF was "the

strength of his heart, and his portion for ever." Thus entered into the rest that remaineth to the people of God one of the most laborious, humble, consistent, able, and courageous Gospel witnesses we ever had the privilege to know, to love, and to revere. His intelligent apprehension of God's revealed truth, his striking aptitude in rightly dividing the Word, his tenacious grasp of the doctrines of grace, his jealousy for the Divine accuracy and verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, and his forcible and edifying methods of exposition, made him "one of a thousand" among the religious teachers of the time in which he lived. His addresses at Clifton Conferences, happily preserved in the published reports, were masterpieces of spiritual instruction and counsel. Fain would we here reproduce many of his choice Conference sayings, but they are reluctantly held over through want of space.

The funeral of our dear departed brother, on Thursday, February 2nd, afforded the citizens of Bristol an opportunity to give expression to the high esteem in which, "for his works' sake" and for his personal worth, they held him. The service, both at "Bethesda" and at the grave-side in Arno's Vale Cemetery, was touchingly impressive. Mr. G. F. Bergin and Mr. J. L. Stanley took leading parts in the simple obsequies; the pulpit address of the former, relating several beautiful incidents arising out of the speaker's intimate association with Mr. Wright in the superintendence of the Orphanage, were listened to with profound attention by the densely crowded audience, among which were a number of the elder orphans. The streets in the neighbourhood of "Bethesda" were lined by fatherless and motherless children, whose faces bore unmistakable signs of the

sorrow that wrung their hearts. Many of them walked behind the hearse into the City, where they fell out, and then returned to their bereaved Orphan Houses on Ashley Down. At the grave-side Mr. J. L. Stanley delivered a short address, of which the following is the substance. He said they laid those beloved remains in the tomb not with spices and odours, as they did of old, but with something far better. They did so amid the affection of hundreds of loving hearts, and with the shout of the song of Christian triumph. They had been reminded that day very fittingly of the gifts and the grace that made their beloved friend what he was. And they were reminded of his rich and noble Christian character. But as they stood there for a few moments they did not think so much of that. It is not because of his lofty Christian character that they committed his remains to the tomb with such confident hope; it was based upon something other than that. He could find two words which expressed it in the message they had just read. One word was "sin," and the other "victory" through the Lord Jesus Christ. All who knew their dear friend knew that he recognised very fully the dark lines in which human depravity was drawn in the Scripture, and he never tried to make that dark shadow any lighter; he accepted to the full the teaching of the Word of God concerning the depravity of the human heart, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." And he was ready to class himself with the vilest sinner on earth. No one could sing with more heartiness or sincerity than he did the well-known words:—

"The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day;
And there have I, though vile as he,
Washed all my sins away."

He recognised most fully his deep sinfulness and his need of the cleansing blood of Jesus, but he also looked into that dark mystery of sin and his own connection with it. On the other hand, he knew what was meant by victory through the Lord Jesus Christ. He rejoiced in the triumph that came through the grace of his Redeemer. Over and over again from his own lips many of them had heard that testimony, how he delighted to speak of the cleansing fountain of the blood of Jesus Christ. So that day they "glorified God in him," and they rejoiced as they stood around the open grave that would hide his remains from them until the resurrection day, that he went down to his resting place cleansed in the blood of Christ, and his spirit had joined the spirits of just men made perfect in grace. Oh, that from the open grave there might come the voice of God to many hearts. Nothing would delight their beloved friend more than to know that round that open grave some had been enabled to accept the Saviour.

Never shall we forget the hallowed moments when the great gathering, in softened but joyous tones, addressed the throne of God in the following sacred song:—

"Death is but sleep in Jesus
To those who live in Him,
Since Jesus at His coming,
Their bodies shall redeem;
One moment and the trumpet
Shall call to life the dead,
From earth's remotest caverns,
From ocean's deepest bed.

"The dead in Jesus, raised,
From Abel to the end,
With all the living changed,
Shall then to heaven ascend.

Oh, what a glorious morning!
 Oh, what a joyful band!
 How great the congregation,
 Round Jesus then shall stand!

"And oh! what burst of praises,
 When Jesus leads the song,
 The Saviour and the saved
 The harmony prolong!
 The theme is God's salvation,
 The joy is full that day,
 The echoes of that morning
 Shall never die away.

What glories and for ever,
 Shall crown the Lamb once slain!
 What trophies for His travail,
 What triumphs He shall gain!
 The joy of all creation,
 His Name shall be adored;
 And ours the joy of dwelling
 'Forever with the Lord!'"

As a last look was taken into the unclosed chamber wherein lay the redeemed body of the Lord's faithful servant, a simple inscription on the breast-plate of the casket met the eye: "JAMES WRIGHT, fell asleep in JESUS, January 29th, 1905, in his 79th year." As we turned away, the consoling thought was given, "Till He come."

"'Lord, if he sleep he shall do well!
 In sleep like this he taketh rest;
 He lieth down corruptible,
 He riseth in Thine image blest.

"For he who sleeps *in Thee* sleeps well,
 All earth shut out, all heaven shut in;
 Though damp the couch and damp the cell,
They dwell in light who sleep within."

Deeply do we condole with the sorrowing relatives of our beloved brother, with Mr. Bergin and all his fellow-labourers, in their deep affliction—with the bereaved congregations among whom Mr. WRIGHT so profitably ministered the word of God's precious truth, and with the twice fatherless little ones on Ashley Down. To these last may the inspired words of the Psalmist become an increasingly experimental reality. "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up" (Ps. xxvii: 10).

A pathetic statement of the last four weeks of God's dear servant on earth has been prepared by his devoted friend and successor, Mr. G. F. Bergin, for which we feel deeply indebted to Mr. Bergin. The record of the last precious sayings of the Lord's faithful witness is very edifying, showing, as it does, the all-sufficiency of Jehovah's grace to enable them that truly trust in Him to "glorify the Lord in the fires." (Isa. xxiv:15.)

CHAPTER NINTH.

EXTRACTS FROM THE SEVEN REPORTS WRITTEN BY

MR. WRIGHT, 1898-1904.

Introduction.—My beloved father-in-law, Mr. George Müller, who was the instrument in the hand of God in founding, and for 64 years carrying on this institution, had, a week or two before his departure to be with Christ, begun to prepare the manuscript for the present report, the fifty-ninth issue since the year 1834. In our first prayer meeting after the decease of the human guide whom all of us loved and revered, no fear as to the future was permitted to distract our hearts. By God's *grace* our minds were kept "*in perfect peace,*" because "*stayed upon*" Him. And thus it has been, without intermission, ever since, until the present hour; the only difference being that the constant proofs of His *presence* with us, and His *power*, love and tender care toward us have confirmed our *faith* in Himself. It is written (Job xxvi:7), "*He hangeth the Earth upon nothing,*" that is on no *visible* support. And so we exult in the fact that "The Scriptural Knowledge Institution for Home and Abroad" hangs, as it has ever hung, since its commencement, now more than 64 years ago, "*upon nothing,*" that is, upon no *VISIBLE* support. It hangs upon no human patron, upon no endowment or funded property, but solely upon the good pleasure of the Blessed God. A very noticeable feature in the history of the Institution during the past twelve months has been the continuance of the trial of our faith and patience in re-

gard to pecuniary supplies. He who is pleased, sometimes, to teach His servants "*how to abound*," sees it *best* for them, at other times "*to be instructed how to suffer need*." For many of the 64 years during which this work has been carried on, the former was our experience; we abounded, and richly abounded. Latterly, and especially during the last two or three years it has been the very reverse. *Pressing need* has been the *rule*; a balance in hand, over and above our need, the rare exception. Yet we have never been forsaken. Our faithful resident helpers, loyal to the great principle of the Institution, dependence upon God alone for everything, have been cheerfully content to *wait*, once and again, for their salaries, rather than encumber the finances of the work; and then, ere long, a most timely deliverance has come, their needs have been met, and our hearts have been filled with praise. We have never been permitted to give way to unbelief; and, in the end, our Heavenly Father has invariably shown us that His only purpose in delaying the answer to prayer was to strengthen our confidence in Himself.

March 14th.—This day Mr. Müller's earthly remains were laid in the grave of his first and second wives, at Arno's Vale Cemetery. A short service, at which many hundreds of the Orphans were present, was held in the House in which the one whom they love to call father had lived amongst them. The principal service was held, afterwards, at Bethesda Chapel, Great George Street, where the deceased had laboured in Word and doctrine for about 66 years. The reading of some portions of those Holy Scriptures which he so revered and loved, one or two prayers and a few brief words of exhortation at the grave-side closed the solemn proceedings. The attendant circumstances, throughout, were very remark-

able and interesting to the Christian mind, chiefly as illustrating God's eternal principle, "*Them that honour Me I will honour.*" The man who in life sought not his own glory, became in death the one to whom all classes delighted to show respect and honour. From the masses of sympathizing spectators that lined the streets, from the tearful eyes and the audible prayerful ejaculations that escaped the lips of bystanders (many of them the poorest of the poor) as the Orphans filed past, following the hearse; from the suspension of all traffic in the principal streets, the tolling of muffled bells, and the half-masted flags, and from the dense crowds in the cemetery that awaited the arrival of the funeral company, it seemed as if the whole city had, spontaneously, resolved to do honour to the man who had not lived for himself, but for the glory of God and the good of his fellows. Such a public manifestation on the day of the burial, coupled with the previous public and private expressions of sympathy, could not but deeply affect my beloved fellow labourers in the Institution and myself, and led me to send the following letter to the local papers, as the only mode in which the expression of our gratitude could reach the vast number of our sympathizing friends:

LETTER FROM MR. JAMES WRIGHT.

"To all fellow believers in Christ, to all ministers of His truth, and to all our friends, of every name and degree, who have at this time of our sore bereavement expressed, privately or publicly, their esteem and affection for the memory of my beloved father-in-law, Mr. George Müller, I, together with all my loved helpers in the Orphan Houses on Ashley Down, and in the other objects of "The Scriptural Knowledge Institution," desire to express our deep gratitude.

It is impossible to address each of our kind friends individually, so we beg them all to graciously accept this mode of conveying our sincere and hearty thanks.

“JAMES WRIGHT,

“(Honorary Director of the Institution.)

“Ashley Down, March 14th, 1898.”

REPORT FOR 1899.

Introduction.—The signal blessing that the God of all grace bestowed on the “Scriptural Knowledge Institution,” during the 64 years that my late beloved father-in-law was permitted to direct its operations, has continued to rest upon it abundantly, through another twelve months. By the grace of God, my dear fellow-labourer, Mr. G. F. Bergin, and our dear helpers in the work and myself have been enabled to trust in Him, and in Him alone; and He, who “*is no respecter of persons,*” has shown himself strong on our behalf. In His unmerited mercy I am permitted the joyful privilege of preparing for publication this Sixtieth Report of the Institution; and of thus bearing testimony to the loving kindness and faithfulness of our God. Between May 26th, 1898, and May 26th, 1899, in answer to believing prayer, without a single application to any human being for pecuniary help, the sum of £29,677 17s. 9½d. was received, of which £23,666 2s. 0½d. was taken for the support of the Orphans, and £6,011 15s. 9d. for the other four Objects of the Institution. The above-named total includes a sum of £2,400, received in November, in one donation, and a legacy of £2,000 received in December. These two sums were the means by which the Lord was pleased to remove the financial *pressure* which we had experienced, almost continuously, for between two and three years.

December 10th, 1898.—Legacy of the late Mrs. H. H., £2,000. Intimation that this legacy had become payable, by the death of the testatrix, reached us about ten months ago. Subsequently we were informed that the will was disputed, and we were invited by some of the beneficiaries under it to join them in active legal proceedings to defend our claims. Observe, this was not one of those cases which often occur, in which, through the ambiguous wording of the will, or some technical defect in the instrument itself, or in the witnessing of the signature, executors run serious personal risk in seeking to carry out the provisions of the will; and, therefore, the *sanction* of the Chancery or other law courts is sought to enable them to act with safety, or the whole responsibility of the administration is devolved upon such court. In such cases what may be termed a “friendly action” may be instituted simply with the view of carrying out the wishes of the testator; and the beneficiaries under the will may be made consenting parties to such proceedings without assuming a *hostile* attitude towards any person whatever. But, as I said before, the course we were invited to enter upon in the present instance was litigation pure and simple, directed *against* the party, who with or without just ground sought to quash the will. In *such* proceedings we preferred to take no part, believing it to be the more excellent, because the more Scriptural way to commit our cause to Him who judgeth righteously. We, therefore, continually waited upon God in private and united prayer, that inasmuch as the deceased lady undoubtedly desired and intended by her will to befriend the *Orphans*, He would, as “the Father of the Fatherless” defend the Orphans of Ashley Down, and not suffer the will to be upset. Our petitions were listened to, and, for the sake of our great Advocate in the Court of Heaven!

were answered to the letter. In the month of August the case came before the judge in London, and occupied several days; and, though we were not represented *there*, the verdict of the court was to the effect that the will was perfectly valid, and that its provisions were all to be carried out. In due time the will was proved; but for three months we had to wait patiently for the money bequeathed to the Institution. For two years and six months the financial *strain* in providing for the Orphans had been permitted to continue. My beloved father-in-law departed to be with Christ, after sharing this trial of faith and patience with his helpers for one year and nine months; and he departed in the buoyant hope, to the last moment, that financially, the Lord would "revive us again." With a face beaming with joyful confidence in the love and power of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, he would turn to us, at our united meetings for prayer, and exclaim: "A little *more* faith, a little *more* prayer, a little *more* patience will bring the blessing!"

Now, see beloved reader (and may God cause the lesson it conveys to sink down into your heart and mine), how God, in whom he trusted, vindicated the confidence of His child and servant. Nine months more had to pass, after beloved George Müller had entered his Lord's presence, before God's time had "fully come," but come it did; and on the 10th December, nine months to a day after his departure, our faithful God turned our prayers once more into praises; and our poverty into comparative abundance! By the £2,400 donation of last month and the £2,000 legacy to-day we are richly supplied, for the present, for all the five branches of the Institution.

March 28th, 1899.—This day I received information

that, by the decease of a gentleman, connected by family ties with a banking establishment in this city, this Institution becomes entitled, under his will, to a legacy of £20,000.

On April 28th, 1899, I received a letter from an entire stranger in which he wrote as follows:

"I am very wishful to know what is the pecuniary position of your Orphanage this year, more especially since the first of January last. I had a somewhat unusual conviction brought home to me about your needing help one night when lying awake in bed. My inquiry is in *strict confidence*. Give me at the same time the name in which a draft should be made out.

Yours faithfully,

_____."

To this letter I replied expressing my full appreciation of the kind interest in the Institution which this writer's letter evinced, but adding that the principle upon which my late father-in-law had, from the first, carried on the work was, never to divulge to any human being its *present* financial position. That only once a year, in the Annual Report, a financial statement was published; but that this always referred to a state of things eight or ten weeks *previous* to the date of publication; and that, as I had received the responsibility of carrying on the work as a *sacred trust*, I could not depart from the principle which had been undeviatingly adhered to up to the present hour. Three days afterward, that is by return of post, I received the following letter enclosing a draft for £1,050:

"Dear Sir:—I am in receipt of your report, and note it is your rule not to give information as to your present needs. I now enclose draft in your favour for £1,050 to

be devoted to the maintenance of the Orphans and your other objects as God may direct you. Please acknowledge receipt to me in enclosed envelope, and please note it is strictly private. *He* gave it to me in a very direct manner with what appeared to me a plain intimation that you required it. No thanks whatever are due to me. Trusting this instance of His wonderful kindness may still further strengthen your faith in Him, whose goodness is so great that words cannot characterise it,

I am, yours truly,

_____."

Now, that the reader of this report may be helped more clearly to see and admire the hand of the Invisible, Living God in this transaction, I here state, simply, our position at the time. The fund for the Orphans (which, since we received the two large donations in November and December, already referred to, had, with the current daily income since, been amply sufficient to meet all our requirements up to the end of April), by the beginning of May had again become nearly exhausted. The quarterly salaries, payable in May, the monthly bills and other current expenses during that month would amount to not less than from £1,500 to £2,000; to meet which we had, on April 30th, only £374 in hand. Moreover, we had been much in prayer, secretly and unitedly, that for the honour of His Name, the Lord might be graciously pleased to close our financial year with a substantial balance on the right side, after paying all expenses up to the 26th of May. Under these circumstances came the letter of inquiry above noted. Now, as beloved Mr. Müller was wont to say in his "Narrative and Reports" there is nothing sinful, in itself, in a child of God asking a *fellow believer* to help him with money for the work of

God. Much less is there any sin in giving information of financial need to one who, as in this instance, particularly inquires in order that he may be guided in his own action; but Mr. Müller began this work with one clearly defined purpose, viz., to illustrate the truth that the Unseen God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, really listens to and answers the believing prayers of His children, now, at the end of the nineteenth century, just as much as He did in the days of the Apostles, or in the days of Daniel, David, Abraham and Enoch. To emphasize this lesson Mr. Müller resolved, from the outset, *never to do* what, otherwise, it would have been perfectly scriptural, and therefore lawful to do, viz., to make his needs known to his fellow Christians. Only in the ear of the Living God would he tell his circumstances. And for 64 years God vindicated His servant and showed His approval of his utter trust in Himself. Beloved Mr. Ber-
gin and I felt that if we departed a hair's breadth from this position in conducting the Scriptural Knowledge Institution, we should be marring its unique testimony, and so we had not a moment's hesitation as to the nature of the reply that *must* be made to this kind friend's inquiry. Now, mark, dear reader, how our faithful God *owned* our reliance on Himself alone. In answer to our secret cries that *He* would influence our unknown friend's heart, we received by return of post one thousand and fifty pounds sterling, of which, as the kind donor left the apportionment entirely to me, I could place £1,000 to the greatly reduced Orphan Fund, and add £50 to the fund for aiding Missionary labourers, the ability to do which had long been much on our hearts in prayer. How true was the "conviction" which our kind helper had brought home to him as he lay awake! We were indeed "needing help."

And though we cannot (in spite of what he wrote in his second letter) fail to feel truly grateful to *him* as the *instrument* whom God used so greatly to help us, and have, therefore, very heartily thanked him, yet we do just as heartily echo his expressed desire that "this instance of the Lord's wonderful kindness may still further strengthen our faith in Him whose goodness is so great that words cannot characterise it," and may this be the blessed result to many who shall read this record.

May 1st, 1899.—Received to-day a letter, in which the writer, for years a donor, expresses her regret that she finds it necessary, on account of special circumstances, to postpone her usual remittance for awhile, possibly for a few months; and, under these circumstances, adds that she and her husband "are thankful that the Orphan Houses have recently *received* so helpful a legacy." The writer refers to the legacy of £20,000 to which I have alluded under March 28th, stating that on that day I received information that the Institution had *become entitled* to such a legacy; and she evidently supposes that the money *had been paid* to us. This, however, was not the case; and, indeed, up to the date on which I am now writing (June 20th) nothing has yet been received on account of this legacy. There is nothing unusual in this. The winding up of large estates often takes three, six, nine months or more. The mistake into which our kind friend fell in assuming that we were already handling this "helpful legacy" is one into which many others have fallen, for I have received many congratulations from those who have assumed the same, some actually speaking of it as a "donation."

The receipt of this letter led me to special and earnest pleading with God; bringing before Him that *He* knew

our real position, viz., that while many were supposing that we were actually in possession of this large legacy, the fact was, that we had not yet received a penny of it. That, instead of, as many supposed, abounding, we were really in such a strait that three or four days would swallow up the balance in hand for the Orphans. That, in His fear, we could not explain to our friends their mistake, or divulge to one of them our real position, as that would be indirectly appealing to them for money. That He knew the heavy expenses of this month. That from £2,000 to £2,500 would be required to meet them, towards which we had little more than £200 in hand. Now, note dear Reader, the result. First, having thus *really* rolled the burden upon God, I was perfectly free from anxiety, and had a night's unbroken sleep; secondly, the first letter that I opened in the morning contained the cheque for One Thousand and Fifty Pounds, of which I was able to take £1,000 for the Orphans!

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REPORT FOR 1900.

Introduction.—Through another twelve months the “Father of the fatherless;” the “Hearer of Prayer,” has condescended, in His dealings with this Institution, to illustrate in remarkable ways these His unchangeable titles. In one respect this display of His revealed character has surpassed that of all the former sixty-six years of its career. I refer to the receipt, on the 24th of March, of a legacy of Eighteen Thousand Pounds (i. e., £20,000, less legacy duty) to the Orphan Fund. This sum exceeded, by about £7,000, the largest amount ever before received in a single payment. It is not, however, the mere largeness of this item that is to be noticed. The *timeliness* of it is especially instructive. When,

some fourteen years ago, the Testator was moved by God to insert this bequest in his Will, what was then hidden from the human ken was "*naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do,*" viz., that the year 1900, *when this bequest would become payable*, would, on account of a most costly war in South Africa, and an unprecedented famine in India, be a year of more than ordinary strain to charitable enterprises dependent, instrumentally, upon free-will offerings. Our Father in Heaven foresaw the need of the hundreds of fatherless and motherless ones who, in the year 1900, would, in dependence solely upon *His* power and mercy, be gathered under the sheltering roofs of the Ashley Down Orphan Houses, or rather under His own sheltering wing, and He took care that even in the time of famine they should be satisfied. Our Heavenly Father really *listened* to the prayer of His poor servants, who have no other plea before Him but the blood and righteousness of His own beloved Son, and the result shows that He determined that it should become patent to the Church and the World of the Nineteenth Century, that, *to-day, none ever really call and wait upon Him in vain*. Besides this £18,000, there was received for the support of the Orphans, during the present financial year, £19,945 os. 10¼d., and, for the School, Bible, Missionary and Tract Fund, £6,040 17s. 2d.; so that, between May 27th, 1899, and May 26th, 1900, inclusive, there was received in answer to believing prayer, without a single application to any human being for pecuniary help, a total sum of £43,985 18s. ¼d.

May 29th, 1899.—Legacy of the late J. S., Esq., £2,700. From "A. Z.," £200. This gift came from an anonymous donor, who, as far as I know, never helped us

before. Her Solicitor wrote a few days ago, asking to whom a donation should be made payable, and on receiving a reply sent us, on behalf of his client, the above-named sum. The Balance in hand for the Orphans on the 26th of this month (the close of our financial year) was £728 1s. 5¼d., not enough to meet the current expenses of 14 days. Now, to-day, on the second day of the new financial year, the Lord has greatly encouraged us by sending us these large sums, which, with other smaller donations that came in, make up a total of £2,924 17s. 7½d., received on this same day.

May 30th.—Legacy of the late Miss F. B., £500. Legacy of the late J. L., Esq., £44 19s. 4d. Our infinitely rich Patron, "The Living God," who knew our need, continues to deal bountifully with us. In the case of this £500, as well as in that of the large legacy which was paid yesterday, we have had answers to a prayer frequently presented, viz., that Executors and Lawyers, having to do with Estates where legacies have been left to us, may be disposed to wind up the accounts and pay the bequests *quickly*. In both these cases, the sums have been paid within a few weeks after the proving of the Wills.

December 6th, 1899. A kind Donor said in his letter: "I hope the present outburst of patriotism is not being made at the expense of your Institution; but, as you look to your Father alone for your support, we may rest assured that, be the demands in other directions what they may, 'He will not leave you nor forsake you.'" To this it is our joy to set our "Amen." The very unusual calls upon the benevolent during the last seven months doubtless diverted from this Institution many donations that otherwise would have come to us. This will be

evident to the reader when I place before him, as I will now do, the state of the funds on the 26th day of seven successive months in our last financial year: On June 26th (exactly one month from the close of the financial year which ended May 26th, 1899, when our balance *in hand* for the Orphans was £728 1s. 5½d.) the balance in hand for the Orphans had risen to £4,990 14s. 9¾d.; on July 26th the balance in hand for the Orphans was £4,620 10s. 0½d.; on August 26th, £3,339 9s. 7¾d.; on Sept. 26th, £2,854 6s. 2d.; on Oct. 26th, £2,785 os. 3½d.; on Nov. 26th (six weeks after the outbreak of the war), £1,602 15s. 1¼d.; Dec. 26th, £1,101 os. 6½d. Thus, the close of 1899 found us with a rapidly diminishing balance and income, but found us also in perfect peace! We were fully persuaded that "*He Himself* knew what *He* would do," and we simply prayed and waited and watched for His working Who "*doeth wonders!*" The income for January was larger than for the previous month, and the balance in hand on the 26th of that month for the Orphans had risen to £1,360 os. 10¾d.; but during February this melted away, and we began March with a practically empty purse. We *began* March, I say, thus, but in the *fourth* week of that month (as, of old, in the *fourth* watch of the night), our promise-keeping Lord came to us; and on the 26th of that month the balance in hand for the Orphans stood at £17,345 4s. 2¼d.! "*Come and hear this, all ye that fear God.*" "*O, magnify the LORD with us, and let us exalt His name together.*" Thus, our deliverance out of one more great strait; and the sustentation of the Orphans' work in a time of diminished income, and rising prices of coal and many other articles of consumption, was accomplished by the Fatherly care of the

blessed God in causing a legacy to be paid at this juncture that was bequeathed some fourteen years ago. I have already, in the beginning of this Report, alluded to this legacy, but do so again, that the reader may admire the loving kindness of the Lord, Who, having in the fourth decade of the present century, led His beloved departed servant, Mr. Müller, to begin this work, has now been pleased in the last year of the century to crown, as it were, the work with this signal mark of His favour by causing the largest sum ever received in one amount to flow into its treasury.

January 3rd, 1900. From Aberdeen, £1 2s. The donor, about a week ago, read in a local paper a statement that a serious fire had occurred at the Ashley Down Orphanage, causing damage to the extent of £5,000, and immediately sent us the above sum as a practical expression of his sympathy with us under the supposed heavy trial. As the statement was wholly erroneous, no fire having occurred, I returned the money, thanking him for his great kindness, but adding that, as the gift had been made under an entire misapprehension, I did not feel happy in retaining it. To-day, however, I received the amount again, the writer rejoicing to learn that we had not suffered as he was led to suppose, but saying that his determination to send this amount for the benefit of the Institution remained unaltered.

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REPORT FOR 1901.

Introduction. The Scriptural Knowledge Institution has now entered upon the Sixty-Eighth year of its existence, and upon the fourth year of its continuance

since its Founder, "*having served his generation by the will of God, fell on sleep,*" resting from his labours on earth. Three years ago the question was anxiously asked by some, "Will the work go on, now that Mr. Müller is dead?" The answer given was, "It is going on; and, in the future, God will do whatsoever He pleases: and what He does will be worthy of Himself." Our experience since, as recorded in the Annual Reports for 1898, 1899 and 1900, has abundantly justified the confidence which was thus reposed in the Living God. And if, to-day, the enquiry should be "How can the survival and continuance of this work be accounted for?" the answer is twofold, viz., the first and fundamental reason is the unchanging character of God. His name endures to all generations; He is infinitely good; He is infinitely great; He does whatsoever He pleases, in heaven and in earth; and it is His good pleasure (as declared in His written Word) to give to "EVERY ONE THAT ASKETH" *whatsoever* he asketh in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and according to the Father's will; and secondly, He has been pleased to give to His poor servants upon whom He has more especially laid the responsibility of carrying on this work (and, more or less, according to the measure of His grace, to all their beloved fellow labourers in this work), *faith* in His infinite goodness, all-mightiness and unchangeableness, and in His unfailing faithfulness in answering prayer, so that in the sorest extremities, financial or otherwise, they have never been permitted to resort to any device of nature, but have endured as seeing Him who is invisible until *He* has made the way of escape. This is not written in self-glorification: the grace referred to was "bestowed" by the God of all grace, and "received"

by us; and, if *received*, there is *no ground* for glorying. It is written simply to fully account for the fact of the continuance of the work, and to encourage fellow workers for God, by emphasising the truth that "They who *wholly* trust *Him*, find *Him wholly* true." It is written also in the deep conviction that we cannot by any native strength maintain ourselves in this state of real dependence upon God for one hour. But that He is "*able to make all grace abound*," and as long as He is pleased to keep us leaning upon Himself we shall never be confounded. My earnest desire also is that the Lord may condescend to use this "Brief Narrative of Facts" to effectually answer the infidel taunt that is, alas! as audible as ever, "*Where is now their God?*" by its affording many infallible proofs that "*Our God is in the Heavens and that He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased.*"

The year ending May 26th, 1901, will, we believe, prove a memorable one in the history of this Orphanage, as having been the period during which we were led (we doubt not in accordance with the will of God) to modify, in one particular, the conditions under which Orphans can be received. Hitherto, for more than 64 years, only children bereaved of *both* parents by death have been eligible for admission; but, from and after the publication of this Report destitute children, born in wedlock, will be eligible for admission if bereaved of *one* parent. I will now state the reasons that have induced us to make this important change.

Since Mr. Müller began the work, and, especially during the last thirty years, the provision for Orphans throughout the country has immensely increased. Orphanages have multiplied, and are now to be found in many parts of England. There can be no doubt that

Mr. Müller's example has had much to do with this great change, and for this we praise God; but one result has been the constant reduction of applications for the admission into the Ashley Down Orphanage of children living at a distance from Bristol. The relatives and friends of such Orphans have now a choice of localities, and naturally prefer sending them to the *nearest* Institution as affording them more frequent opportunities of seeing the children and at less expense. Again, the increased openings for remunerative female labour incline many to undervalue domestic service; and, consequently to view with disfavour Institutions whose object is to train girls for that most useful, and, if rightly viewed, honourable occupation. Further, there can be no doubt that religious bias, and a strong prejudice in favour of certain ecclesiastical forms, disincline many to send children to an Institution where the Holy Scriptures are the sole basis and text-book of the spiritual instruction imparted.

The combined operation of these various causes has resulted in a gradual reduction, year after year, of the number of Orphans under our care, so that, at the time of Mr. Müller's decease, the vacancies in the five Houses amounted to 434—and this number had, during the subsequent three years, so increased that, on the 26th of May, this year, 1901, the vacancies were 615—leaving only 1,435 as the total number of Orphans under our care at the said date. Seeing the steady diminution in the number of children in the Houses, I, last year, inserted in the Report a paragraph drawing special attention to the fact, and inviting the co-operation of Christian friends in helping us to fill up the vacancies by inducing relatives and friends of destitute Orphans to

apply to us for their admission. Some friends kindly responded to this appeal, and some additional applications have resulted, for which we are very grateful; yet the steady increase of the vacancies has not been effectually checked. Simultaneously with this continued reduction in the number of Orphans under our care bereaved of *both* parents, we were constantly receiving applications for the admission of children bereaved of only one parent. Some of these cases were of a peculiarly distressing character. For instance, a father was left, by his wife's death, with eleven more or less helpless children. He was obliged to leave his home the greater part of every day to earn the wages needed to support himself and family, the children having, meanwhile, no one to look after them. In another case, a widow was left with a large number of children, and, not being able to place any of them in Institutions, she was prevented from taking a situation by which she might have managed to support herself and *some* of her large family. Another was a case in which the surviving parent was so addicted to drink that the children were totally uncared for. Now, as long as the rule rigidly prohibiting the admission of such children remains in force, we are prevented from helping such exceedingly needy ones, whereas the relaxing of the rule would enable us to bring joy into these sorrows and go far to fill up the vacancies which occasion us so much concern.

In connection with one of the cases to which I have alluded, I received a letter from a friend of the Institution, who for years has given very practical proof of his deep interest in it, strongly urging that we should take into account the altered circumstances of the country in regard to the provision for Orphans, and open

our doors to those who, though having one surviving parent, might, in reality, be as unprovided for as those who had lost both.

These providential indications made it increasingly clear that our duty, as faithful stewards of public funds, was to do one of two things, viz., either to close one of the Houses (for four would be more than sufficient to accommodate all at present under our care) and thus save the outlay upon a needlessly large staff of helpers, and the up-keep of an establishment which could be dispensed with; or, to so widen the basis of admission of Orphans as to enable us to utilise to the full the accommodation provided in the five Houses for 2,050 children. The one great objection that I felt against the latter alternative was the particular wish expressed by my beloved father-in-law in his last Will, dated March 16th, 1895, that the conditions upon which children should be admitted might continue unaltered. But, after much prayer and consideration I was convinced, first, that had Mr. Müller lived to witness the continual reduction in the number of the inmates, he would, from the eminently practical cast of his mind, have altered his judgment; and, secondly, that the principle which, year after year, he laid stress upon in his Report, in the words "The Orphan Houses on Ashley Down are not *my* Orphan Houses but *God's* Orphan Houses," not only frees his successors to act upon the fresh light, which entirely altered circumstances, and the manifest leading of God, shed upon the situation, but renders it absolutely incumbent upon them to do so.

I am now fully satisfied that, had Mr. Müller lived, he would to-day have been prepared to do this very thing we are about to do, viz., to admit Orphans be-

reaved of only *one* parent; and I am equally satisfied that the principle, which he so repeatedly and emphatically laid down, demands that we should adopt, forthwith, the one measure that is adapted with the blessing of God, to prevent the closing of one of those Houses, which with the land they stand upon, were obtained in answer to the prevailing prayer of patient faith in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

When my own mind became fully at rest upon these important points, I communicated my purpose to my beloved fellow labourer, Mr. Bergin, who thoroughly coincided with me in judgment. We then laid our views before several Christian friends whose judgment we greatly value, and found that, without exception, they were in favour of the proposed change. Lastly, we summoned a general meeting of the Trustees, in whose hands all the land and buildings constituting the property of the Institution are vested, and laid our proposal before them. At this meeting, held on the 14th of March, 1901, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

“The Trustees, meeting together on March 14th, 1901, in consideration of the great increase of vacancies in the Orphan Houses, are of opinion, that, in order to utilise thoroughly the existing accommodation, destitute children bereft of one parent may be received as the Directors shall see fit, provided always that destitute children bereft of both parents shall always have the prior claim.”

As above stated, this resolution was unanimously adopted, and the Trustees present strongly expressed their wish that the Directors will be able to give effect to their recommendation.

The strong desire thus voluntarily expressed by the Trustees, Mr. Bergin and I shall, forthwith, seek to carry out; and, from the 1st of August next, we shall, God permitting, admit Orphans bereaved of one parent only.

July 5th, 1900. From Swansea, £1. The Donor says in his letter: "Knowing there has been such a demand for the War Fund, the Indian famine, the fire in Canada and many exceptional things, fearing that the *home* claims have been seriously forgotten, I feel constrained to send you *another* P. O. for the sum of 20s. for the Orphans." This letter leads me to make some allusion to the undoubted facts that our thoughtful correspondent refers to. The demands upon the sympathies of the benevolent during the past year have indeed been "exceptional," and the result has been that almost all charitable institutions have suffered a serious diminution of their income. The Orphanage on Ashley Down has shared in *this* experience, but a counterfact we are most anxious to emphasize is this, that the diminution of income has *not occasioned us the least financial strain or anxiety*. Our infinitely wise and loving Heavenly Father foresaw and provided for this crisis by moving the heart of a wealthy Testator fifteen years ago to leave the largest legacy which, as yet, has ever been received by us. In last year's Report I announced this legacy, and explained fully its remarkable timeliness; but I refer to this gracious interposition of God again, because it accounts for the fact that, while many valuable charities have been compelled by diminution of ordinary income to *contract* their operations, we have had no such painful experience, and at the present time are actually contemplating an extension of our work by the reception of fatherless or moth-

erless children as well as Orphans bereft of *both* parents. But we desire the reader particularly to observe that, in order to meet the falling off, in other respects, of the receipts for the support of the Orphans we have, without hesitation, drawn upon the *principal* of the large legacy above referred to.

REPORT FOR 1902.

Introduction. It is now my joy, after the altered condition of reception (permitting the reception of children bereft of one parent only) has been in operation for more than ten months, to announce that God has been pleased, most manifestly, to set the seal of His gracious approval upon the new arrangement. This will be apparent to every attentive reader of the following statement:

On May 26th, 1901, the total number of Orphans in all the five Houses was 1,435; the total number in the five Houses on the 26th May, 1902, was 1,659, showing an increase in the number in the Orphan Houses on the latter date of 224. An analysis of the receptions will make clear how far this considerable increase has resulted from waiving the rule which excluded all children who had not lost *both* parents by death.

Of the total number of children received during the year ending 26th May, 1902, there were

Bereaved of <i>both</i> parents.....	98
Bereaved of the father.....	279
Bereaved of the mother.....	92
	— 371
	—
Total received.....	469

Deduct—Dismissals	232	
Deaths	13	
	—	245
Increase, during the year, in the number in the Houses		224

From the above analysis it will at once be seen that, if the 371 children bereaved of only one parent had *not* been received, instead of any increase we should have had a very large decrease in the number of children under our care.

May I be permitted to remind the reader of the fresh illustration which this matter affords of the success which must follow patient continuance in believing prayer. For more than fourteen years the almost unvaried announcement in the Annual Reports was of a *diminishing* number of Orphans in the Houses; and throughout these years the prayer went up secretly and unitedly that the tide might be turned, and our hearts gladdened, and the Father of the fatherless glorified by the refilling of our vacant seats and beds. But year after year passed, and it *seemed* as if our gracious God and Father heard us not! But this was only the *appearance* to the natural eye. The real truth was, that God was only testing faith and patience; and now, by His dealings with us since last August, He shows how truly He was listening all the time, and how speedily He can change the whole aspect of things. If any who read these lines are tempted to think that, in their case, God has "*forgotten to be gracious*," may they be encouraged to *hope* in the Lord and to wait patiently for Him whose *delays* are not refusals, and who always has His "*fullness of the time*" for fulfilling His word of promise.

The state of our finances during the past year furnishes another ground for devout praise and thanksgiving to the Lord. If He has sent us 224 more Orphans to care for, He has, in effect, been saying to us: "I well know that your expenses are all the greater, and, therefore, I will provide accordingly." The balance in hand for the Orphans on the 26th May, 1901, was £8,491 4s. 5¾d.; the expenditures from May 27th, 1901, to May 26th, 1902, was £24,462 17s. 9d., but not only has this large amount been met, but so widely has our faithful God and Father opened His liberal, bountiful hand, that we closed the account on May 26th, 1902, with a balance in hand of £12,424 11s. 2¾d.—that is, with an increase in the funds in hand for the Orphans of £3,933 6s. 9d. How willingly does He "*who spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all,*" give to His children "*freely, with Him, all things.*"

October 7th, 1901. Legacy of the late Mrs. E. D., £6,168 5s. 9d. The Testatrix, in her desire to avoid the payment of legacy duty, abstained from making a proper Will, but dictated her wishes to a friend who took them down in writing. As several Charities were interested in this intended distribution of her property, the case was, by common consent of the beneficiaries, submitted for decision to a Judge in Chancery. His decision, on strictly legal grounds, was that the document was informal, and that the whole of the estate reverted to the Crown. The facts of the case were then brought before the Treasury authorities. The matter was for some months in abeyance. Meanwhile, we gave ourselves to prayer, that the Lord would influence the authorities to decide rather upon principles of equity than upon those of legal technicalities, as we well knew that the testatrix

really desired her estate to be divided according to the written memorandum, though she had erred in attempting to evade the Government Duty. The Lord most graciously answered our petitions, for the Treasury authorities were led to forego the larger portion of their strictly legal rights, and to apportion to each of the Charities, about three-fifths of their respective claims under the informal memorandum. The deceased lady *intended* to benefit this Institution to the extent of £10,000, and, instead of losing the whole, we were awarded a sum of £6,300, which, reduced by the cost of legal enquiry, brought the £6,168 5s. 9d. to our funds. The action of the Government was generous, and we feel deeply grateful to them, but we see *behind them* the hand of our loving God and Father, the Father of the fatherless who *delights* to answer the supplications of His waiting children and servants.

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These gifts, in money and kind, can thus be recorded, their "marked value" estimated and expressed in figures; and this fact by no means lessens their value in the sight of Him who still sitteth "over against the treasury." All these gifts represent "cheerful givers," such as God loveth, for all give without being pressed or appealed to, so that "the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the"—Orphans—"but is abundant by many thanksgivings unto God." But there is another agency in operation for the benefit of this Institution, to which I am led now to refer—viz., the power of *Intercessory Prayer*. This agency is invisible in its working and beyond all human calculation in its results, but we have the divine estimate of its importance in James v:16: "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man *availeth*

much." It is a simple, undeniable fact, that the "Scriptural Knowledge Institution for Home and Abroad" owes its existence and largely its history, instrumentally, to "the effectual fervent prayer of one man," whom God raised up to accomplish it. But *his* faith proved contagious, and the phalanx of *praying* souls that the Holy Spirit has banded together to sustain and forward it by their believing supplication and intercession, have become like David's supporters of old, "a great host like the host of God." But as in that "host" there were some pre-eminently "mighty," so also with the modern parallel, there have been amongst the secret pleaders with our "Father who seeth in secret" the mighty, the mightier and the mightiest. One who, I believe, I may safely class with the last named has just passed away from earth, and it is his decease that leads me to make these remarks. Robert Cleaver Chapman, late of Barnstaple, Devon, was one of George Müller's oldest and most intimate friends. More than once, in critical periods of this work, Mr. Müller sought out and obtained his valuable counsel. This confidence Mr. Chapman responded to by always showing the liveliest interest in the progress of the Institution. Throughout the 68 years of its existence he has been its helper by continuous intercession. It was the knowledge that he was such a mighty spiritual helper that led me, in the spring of 1901, to visit Barnstaple for the express purpose of gaining the expression of his judgment upon our contemplated alteration of the conditions of the admission of Orphans; and I need hardly say that it was no small confirmation that we were really led of God in the matter, to learn, as I did, from his own lips, that he most heartily and unreservedly approved of our modifying the conditions by receiving

Orphans bereft of only one parent. Well beloved, single eyed "Servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ," thou hast "fought *the* good fight, thou hast kept the faith, thou hast finished thy course," may grace be given to us to follow thee as thou didst follow the Lord!

REPORT FOR 1903.

Introduction. On the fifth day of last March the Scriptural Knowledge Institution entered upon the seventieth year of its existence; and, on the tenth day of the same month, completed the fifth year of its *continuance* since the decease of its Founder, the late Mr. George Müller.

A sceptical critic, writing, in the year 1898, in one of the popular magazines, remarked that "the days of *fanatical* giving had *now* passed," and that, therefore, it could not be expected that the extensive work originated by the deceased philanthropist could be, in the future, successfully carried on by the same methods which had hitherto been pursued. Yet, for five years, this work *has* gone on, and *is* going on to-day, *on precisely the same lines* on which it was conducted for the previous sixty-four years. During the last five years the Day Schools in this country and in Italy have been carried on with increasing blessing, and Sunday Schools have been assisted. Every suitable application for free grants of Bibles and Testaments has been responded to, while the sale of the Holy Scriptures at our Depository has continued, and Colporteurs have been supplied with the same at reduced prices. More than eight millions of Tracts and booklets have been distributed gratuitously during these five years; while the sale of these has been constantly going on at our Depository during the same five

years. From 160 to 190 Labourers in the Gospel have each year been aided pecuniarily; and, lastly, from four to five hundred more Orphans have been added to the number under our care. To meet the expenses of the first Four Objects above-mentioned during these five years, the sum of about £27,217 has been received; and, for the Orphan work, in the same five years, about £130,930; and the whole of these sums (totalling about £158,150) has been obtained simply in answer to believing prayer to the Living God in the name of His beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, without any appeal, verbal or printed, to the public, or solicitation for help addressed to one single individual.

July 23rd, 1902. Legacy of the late Mr. M. D., £500. From Edgbaston, £150. From Clifton, £150. For several weeks the income for the support of the Orphans has been much less than the expenditure. Now, in answer to many prayers, the Lord has graciously sent us, *within three days*, more than one thousand pounds for this branch of the work!

July 24th, 1902. Legacy of the late Miss F. P., £250. Still further, after our weeks of comparative straitness, the Lord is to-day pouring bountifully into our treasury. This is according to the manner of our gracious Heavenly Father. First, He *tests* the faith and patience He bestows; secondly, He sustains both the faith and patience that He exercises, and thus strengthens and increases both; thirdly, In grace, He richly *rewards* the trust that has reposed in Himself. For three weeks past I had been away from Bristol for a little rest and change. Mr. Bergin sent me daily reports of the work, so I knew how, day by day, the disparity between income and expenditure increased. Nevertheless, neither Mr. Bergin

nor myself were permitted to suffer any *anxiety*. We “thanked God” that, owing to His previous bounties, we had more than enough to meet this lack, and, for the future “we took courage,” trusting in the Lord Jehovah, Jehovah *Jireh*, that He would in His own time and way, provide; and thus it has again proved.

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REPORT FOR 1904.

Introduction. It is with a deep sense of responsibility, as well as of rare privilege, that I proceed, for the seventh time since the decease of my beloved father-in-law, to record some of the dealings of God with the “Scriptural Knowledge Institution” through another year. In the xivth chapter of the Acts, verses 26 and 27, we have an inspired reference to a twelve months’ work, for which two servants of Christ had been recommended to the grace of God, and which, through that grace, they had fulfilled; and we are significantly told, that after such completion of their work, “*they rehearsed*” (not what *they* had done, but) “*all that God had done with them;*” and, further, “*how He*” (not they) “*had opened the door.*” I pray that, in the like spirit, every line of this report may be written; that

“All boasting be excluded here,
And God alone be great.”

Summing up briefly a few of the more conspicuous favours conferred upon the work during the past year, I would state, first, we have been enabled to receive 308 Orphans into the five Houses, which, added to the 1,850 in the Houses on the 26th May, 1903, gives 2,158 as the total number under our care during the past year. And, deducting from this the dismissals during the year, viz.,

236, we had 1,922 under our care on 26th May, 1904, or 72 more than we had a year ago.

August 5th, 1903. Legacy of J. A. H., Esq., £1,908 1s. Legacy of the late T. W., Esq., £300. *This week's* income for the Orphans exceeds the total income of the previous nine weeks, i. e., the whole period from May 26th to July 29th. The average weekly income for those nine weeks was only about £200 per week, considerably less than one-half of the average weekly expenditure for the said nine weeks. Now, if the Lord had not previously helped us so abundantly that on May 26th there was a balance *in hand* of more than £11,500, we should have been in sore straits. But, during those nine weeks in which the balance was rapidly diminishing, we were kept from *anxiety* because we knew that the work was the Lord's, not ours, and that He could easily and very quickly make up for all deficiencies during one period by opening more widely His loving, liberal, bountiful hand at another period. So we simply continued to ask Him, in the name of His beloved Son, to do so; and now in one short week He has practically done it! Beloved fellow trusters in God, let us learn to trust our Heavenly Father *wholly*; and let us remember that His *delays* are not *refusals*, but opportunities for the *exercise*, and by this for the *growth* of faith.

CHAPTER TENTH.

Reports of Mr. Wright's last sermon and other addresses.

THE JEWS' RELIGION.

THE GRACE OF CHRIST, GAL. I.

In verse 6 we have the expression, "*The grace of Christ,*" and in verses 13 and 14 "*The Jews' religion.*" These two expressions describe a most strongly contrasted condition of things in relation to the Living God. The Apostle explains these contrasted expressions in relation to God, and the Holy Spirit has given in his life an illustration of the *Origin, Course and Outcome* of these two strongly contrasted conditions, a man who was full of "the Jews' religion" and worship of men, who had been brought into "the grace of Christ."

We will speak first of "*The Jews' religion.*" "For ye" have heard of my conversation in time past in "the Jews' religion," my manner of life, course of life. He had been a zealous follower of it, and a most zealous promoter of it. Now as to the origin of it turn to Acts xxii:3, 4, "I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city of Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers." You see that the Jews' religion was educational, and the progress to be made in it was the result of the teaching of Gamaliel. So *that* education was a matter of human institution. How much of the religion of the present day is of that character! People are born in a Christian country, brought up to perform certain re-

ligious ceremonies and observances, many of which are perfectly scriptural, sound and proper in their place, and of great value on a right foundation, but with the great mass it is a matter of *education* and *adhesion*. So we have the persecutor Saul. "An Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee." Phil. iii:5. As a child he was brought up in this seat of religion. And that is the be all and end all of many like him, varying in degree as to power. That was the beginning of the Jews' religion. We do well to remember that the Jews' religion was divinely appointed. The Lord, speaking to the woman of Samaria (John iv:22) said, "Salvation is of the Jews." Paul, speaking by the Holy Ghost, in harmony with this, says of the Jews: "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there in circumcision? Much every way: chiefly because that unto them were committed the Oracles of God." Rom. iii:1, 2. This constituted the high distinction of Israel. No natural greatness but as we read in Deut. iv they had the ear of the Living God always open to them, and they also had the law of God. These two things made them different from their enemies, and constituted their greatness. But while all these things lifted them above all other nations, it was said to them, "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you." "For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision." Rom. ii:24, 25. It was an empty shell, devoid of its kernel.

Now it was into this outward, *external* religion the Apostle entered by birth, ceremonial, and human rite; and it is into a religion of human institution that *we* enter by birth, education, and early training. Oh, the difference between being religious, and *having Christ*, and

being in *Christ*! It is this great difference I want to dwell on, for it is wonderfully illustrated in the experience of this man.

If the beginning of Saul's religion was education and human training, what was the *course* of it? Exceeding zeal for something. "It is good to be zealously affected in a good thing." Gal. iv:18. But what was the cause in which the unexampled zeal of this man showed itself?* "And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers." Gal i:14. What did the Lord Jesus say about these traditions? "Making the Word of God of none effect through your tradition." Mark vii:13. Human pride is ever tempted to make the traditions of men the prominent matter, thus making void the Word of God, emptying it of its significance, and nullifying it as much as by rejecting it. So the course of it was marked by excessive zeal for human additions to the Word of God.

What was the *outcome* of this Jews' religion? It is very significant. "Ye have heard of my conversation in times past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God and wasted it." Gal. i:13. That was the outcome, the business of this most religious man! Wasting the church for which Christ died, injuring the members of His body. "Why persecutest thou *Me*?" Acts ix:4. So intimate is the union between the great mystical body and the Head! He was up in glory, far out of Paul's reach, but He had left members here on earth, and counted what was done to them as done to Himself. Now that was the outcome of the Jews' reli-

*It was in being, as compared with others, "more exceedingly zealous" of the traditions of his fathers.

gion—devastating the fair heritage of God, destroying God's work—what may be called the mere shell of outward religion without Christ.

I want to contrast with that "*the grace of Christ*" of which Paul became a partaker. Verse 12. "For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the *revelation of Jesus Christ*." That is the beginning of the contrasted condition, that is the beginning of Saul, the persecutor becoming partaker of the grace of Christ. How? By *call* and by *revelation*. Beloved friends, have we every one of us been the subject of a divine call and revelation? If not, we are not saved. What is the call? The call is universal and particular. The Gospel is a universal call—the salvation of Christ is presented to all. (Gal. iii:1.) Paul's testimony was: "Before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you." All who preach the Gospel in simplicity preach that Christ took the flesh and blood of the children. (Heb. ii:14, 15.) The sinner must die, or the Substitute, and every one who accepts that Substitute is free. And that is the Gospel, which is preached to every creature under heaven, made known to all, preached to all nations, so that God out of every tribe, people and nation gathers His own. That is the universal call. But now you remember Isaiah says in Chap. liii:1, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" Isaiah was not like Balaam, a man speaking by inspiration, without having a new spirit; no, the holy Isaiah received his commission in the presence of God, he fell on his face, a shamed and self-condemned. "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips." Chap. vi:5. Then flew one of the seraphim with a live coal from off the altar, with

which he touched his lips, and he heard the blessed words: "Lo, this hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." Instantly, in the happy freedom of the delivered soul, he turns and says, "Here am I; send me," and he goes forth in sympathy with his message. Do we not see under these words the concentrated sympathy of His heart with the message he received? when he says "Who hath believed our report?" and "to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" The two things go together. If the soul has not believed the report, there is no revelation; on the other hand, the converse holds good, every guilty sinner who receives that report has a revelation, an effectual call and revelation. When the gracious call in the Gospel is listened to, and responded to, the call is effectual, and in every such case there is an inward revelation of the glory of Christ. Paul did not here refer to the wonderful light that shone upon him on the Damascus road, when he fell to the earth under the power of that light. No, that was the *outward* symbol of an *inward* revelation! Paul had no monopoly in this matter—every saved soul has an inward revelation; every soul that acknowledges the Deity of Christ has this revelation. What made the difference between the world, and those to whom Paul was speaking? In Matt. xvi:16 we read that Peter said: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." What does the Lord say? "Flesh and blood hath not *revealed* it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven!" "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. xii:3), and when he does, the glory of Christ has shone in his soul by inward revelation.

The beginning of the contrasted condition of Saul of Tarsus was when he passed out of the Jews' religion.

And oh! how he abhorred it afterwards—how he speaks of it as dung and dross that he flung from him in disgust! (Phil. iii:8). What a contrast—this human condition, begun by education and human training—and this divine revelation! What a different thing to be educated and trained in Christianity! People are very much offended if you ask them if they are converted. “Am I a heathen?” they say. They are worse than heathen a great deal. Oh, may we cleave to the simple truth of God, to the simple teaching of this Book, as opposed to the false trust of any one who is relying on religious duties for salvation! Is there one such here to-night? What you need is the gospel call responded to with a glad heart; to receive him who came down to earth to lift you up to glory—who went to the cross and bore the penalty you deserved. Receive Him as a personal Saviour. As Isaac looked at the ram, he might have said “*Instead of me,*” so, as you see Him suffering on the Cross, you can say, “*Instead of me.*”

Have you responded to the call, “Come unto Me?” When you hear these words, and let Christ come in, the moment you do that you have a revelation. Every other view of Christ will not save you. You may admire Him as a moral Teacher; that will not save your soul; it was not as an Example that God sent Him into the world; it was “to *save sinners.*” “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” 1 Tim i:15. That is the chief object; it was to *save* He came; to finish the work He had already commenced; not to put sinners into a salvable condition, and leave them to work it out, but to save them out and out, so that they pass from darkness to light, from death to life; there is no middle place; from

a proud enemy and rebel to a child. Who does this? Christ. When as a poor sinner you trust in Christ you have heard the call; listened to the call; and God has revealed Christ in the character in which He sent Him. I never think of coming into God's presence as a holy person, though I have known the Lord Jesus over 60 years; I do not speak of any goodness of my own; my only ground of acceptance is the merit of Christ my Saviour. I know no merit but in Another; not on account of my consistency, or the works done since I was saved. My very best works are stained with sin. If grace has a touch of *work* in it, it is not grace. You can never mix grace and works, whether before or after conversion. I do not forget that there are works of love, but I speak of the ground of acceptance and communion with God, and in that region no works or merits have a place. Paul's salvation was a mercy, not a merit! Look at 1 Tim. i:12-16. Salvation was a mercy. "For this cause I obtained *mercy*, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting." And this ministry was a mercy, not a merit—"I obtained mercy!" Oh the wonderful grace of Christ! That was the *beginning* of it.

What was the *course* of it? We saw the course of the "Jews' religion"—exceeding zeal for human additions to the Word of God. Now what was the course of this new condition into which Paul had come by the grace of Christ? He was as zealous now in preaching the Gospel—he heard the call—received Christ and salvation, and now he "preached the faith which once he destroyed" Gal. i:23. That was the gospel which he never got tired of preaching. So the course of this happy man, after

he had heard the call, is to be an everlasting preacher of the gospel. We are not all called to the same kind of thing as Paul, but there is a sense in which that principle applies—"Necessity is laid upon me, yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel." 1 Cor. ix:16. Not all are called to publicly preach the gospel, but all are called to *live* it—to illustrate it. I have known the case of a soul, that, as the life was watched, and there was seen in a professed believer consistency, patience and cheerfulness in trial and affliction, it was the means instrumentally of bringing that soul to the Lord. A believer who *lives* Christ is better than one who preaches. But the two things go together. It is no good preaching if the life is inconsistent.

What was the *outcome*? You have seen the outcome of the other bitter persecution of the saints of God. What was the outcome of this? It began in the call responded to, a revelation received, and went on to the necessity of preaching the gospel that had brought such blessedness to him. And the end of it is seen in the definition we have in this Epistle of the grace of Christ itself. Verse 4. "Who gave Himself for our sins"—the first aspect meeting our first need—the full, free, everlasting forgiveness of sin. Then in chap. ii:16, we have another aspect of the grace of Christ, justification. "That we might be justified by the faith of Christ—that is, being counted righteous before God, not because of work, but because of the imputation of Another's righteousness to us.

"Upon a life I did not live,
Upon a death I did not die,
Another's life, Another's death
I stake my whole eternity."

And so Paul, quoting from Psalm xxxii, where nothing is said about the imputation of righteousness, but "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord *imputeth not iniquity*," says—"Even as David also described the blessedness of the man unto whom God *imputeth righteousness* without works"—Rom. ⁱⁱiii:6—his inference being that where God did not impute sin, He imputed righteousness. Now in the grace of Christ we stand before God in the righteousness of Another, "Jehovah Tsidkenu, the Lord our Righteousness." Jer. xxiii:6.

But there is another point still in Chap. iii:22. "That the *promise* by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. Now *that* promise is the promise of eternal life. "In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began." Titus i:2. To whom was that promise made? If it was made before the foundation of the world it must have been before there were any human beings created, so it must have been made to the second person in the Trinity. In the eternal counsels of God, we see the Father's promise to the Son, that man should be saved by His atoning death.

And therefore the salvation of every believer was a matter of promise by the Father to the Son before the world began. Now the immense blessedness to our souls is this, that the promise is not in our keeping at all, but God made the promise to His Son as the Head of the Church. And how do we come to share it? As joint heirs with Christ. That is the condition—the promise was made in eternity before the foundation of the world, to the Head, Christ, and when in time we are brought into union with the Son by faith we come into the possession of *all* the promises. And all are surely received, as

the Apostle says—"All things are yours" 1 Cor. iii:21, just equivalent to what was said by the father to the elder son—"Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine" Luke xv:31. Now that is what God says to every saved child, but it must be in the Son. "At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." John xiv:20. What meaning that imports into the words of the Psalmist—"Nevertheless I am continually with Thee." Ps. lxxiii:23. And in Ps. xxiii. "Thou art with me." In Ps. lxxiii, "continually" gives the notion of *union*, because he was united to Christ, and because of that union found himself a partaker of this promise.

But this is not all. In Chap. ix:6, "God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts"—not only *past* grace, but *present*! Just contemplate the immensity of this privilege—to have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us! It is a simple revelation of the Word of God, that into the body of every believer the Holy Ghost comes to be an Indweller—not a mere visitation, as He came on the prophets of old when they prophesied, but "*to abide forever.*" John xiv:16—to come as an abiding guest. That is your portion and mine! And in Chaps. iv and v Paul unfolds to us the many-sided character of this gift. If we have received Him we use a cry we never had in our hearts before we came to Christ, "Abba Father." Again the Apostle tells us that the Spirit energises us for a *new walk*, a walk we never walked before: "Walk in the *Spirit*," v. 16. Then if I follow out the new instinct and walk, I am met again by a Leader. "If ye be *led of the Spirit*," v. 18. I am called to a new walk because I have received a *new Spirit*. And—glorious truth—it is the same Leader that Jesus had—He was "led up of the

Spirit into the wilderness." Matt. iv:1. So you and I have the same Leader as our Master. And then we have a *new hope*. "*We through the Spirit* wait for the hope of righteousness by faith," v. 5. What is the hope of righteousness? *Glory!* That is a hope. We do not wait for redemption in one sense—we do not wait for the Spirit, for the Spirit has come—but we wait for the hope, and that is glory. That is what I look for, and the Spirit who is given me enables me to wait for it. I should long ago have given up waiting, but He enables me to wait. And we, believers, are to be found waiting for Him to the end—we wait till He come. "One day with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, but is long suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." 2 Peter iii:8, 9. Let us set our watches by His chronometer, and we shall not accuse Him of slowness. Scarcely two days have elapsed, according to that reckoning, since the ascension of the Lord Jesus. And then we have a *new "fruit,"* verses 22, 23. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, etc." Now all these things are the result of *one* gift! What a mighty contrast we have seen between "the Jews' religion," and "the grace of Christ." What a contrast there is between any mere shallow religion, a religion of outward ceremonies and observances, and the possession of Christ in the heart! May the latter be the portion of all here!

ADDRESS BY MR. WRIGHT AT ALMA ROAD
CHAPEL, OCT. 9, 1904.

John xx:19-20. "Then came Jesus and stood *in the midst*, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you." * Jesus

“made peace by the blood of His Cross,” and now He comes “preaching peace,” and showing to the assembled disciples His hands and His side, as indicating the ground on which He had authority to speak peace to guilty sinners, and the ground on which guilty sinners believing in Him have the right to rejoice in this peace as one righteously made. He showed them His hands pierced, and His side pierced for their sins. The first step, so to speak, to the believing sinner, is to step into peace on the ground of the atoning work of Jesus Christ in his stead, “Who Himself bare our sins in His own body on the tree,” and when we accept Him as the Surety for our guilty souls, and trust only and entirely in Him, we accept His peace.

Turn now to John xix:18—where we read: “They crucified Him, and two others with Him, on either side one, and *Jesus in the midst*.” In the midst of what? It means between two malefactors, murderers, in the midst of *them*. He “did no sin,” and “in Him was no sin,” yet He was “made a curse.” He was “separate from sinners,” but there He hung between those two. Why was all this? It is certain that He did not die for His own sins, and therefore there is only one possible explanation of His death, and that is given us by the Apostle Peter: “Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust”—the holy righteous One received what they deserved—“to bring *us* to God.” Peter puts himself into that parcel of guilty, condemned sinners—and the moment you do, God will speak from His throne, the living Christ will speak from the throne *His* peace unto your heart.”

Now look at Heb. ii:10, 12, where we get this expression used again—“He that sanctifieth,” that is Christ,

and they who are sanctified," all believers, "are all of one." The Cherubim and the Mercy Seat were all made out of one piece of gold, expressly describing the mysterious but real union, and therefore unity, between Christ and every member of His mystical body. Mark the figures the Holy Spirit employs to give us a glimpse of this truth. "The church which is His body," a most lovely figure. The head is intimately associated with the lowest member of the body, so that a pain in the little toe is instantly felt in the brain. That figure points to unity in the body of Christ, so that the voice of the risen Lord came to Saul, "Why persecutest thou Me?" Then there is the union between the bride and the bridegroom, another figure. Then the most wonderful utterance of them all, "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." Now there is a permanency about this that there is not about all the other figures. There is in them the possibility of separation. The sheep can be separated from the shepherd, I do not say the sheep of Christ can, but in the figure it is possible. It is possible in human beings for the husband and wife to be divorced, though utterly contrary to the mind of God. It is possible for the parent and child to be separated. But who can separate spirit? It is a contradiction of terms.

But again we read: "*In the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee.*" This is the next Scripture. He hung in the midst of malefactors, and was numbered with the transgressors. He came, after the accomplishment of His great work on the Cross, into the midst of His disciples speaking peace. But God had something else for Him, viz., to fill Him with joy, God filled His cup to overflowing, and joy is just the

overflowing of the cup, and joy is expressed by praise, and the Lord comes into the midst of His people to meet their praise. Turn to Ps. xxii, and we shall see the theme of His praise—it is the faithfulness of Jehovah in hearing His prayer and delivering Him from the Cross. How did He deliver Him? He delivered Him from, in the sense of *out of*, death. (Heb. iv:7.) That is the great theme of the song of Christ in resurrection, God's answer to His prayer in resurrection. So first of all He leads us into sympathy with His suffering, and then into sympathy with the joy of deliverance out of death. And, more or less, this should enter into all our songs of praise; if not expressed, it should be understood in order to make our praise Scriptural. We cannot sing if we are not redeemed. There is no song in the Bible (there *is* a reference to musical instruments in connection with Laban, but no mention of singing) till after redemption in Ex. xv. God had used His servant Moses in delivering the people. "Then *sang* Moses." Redemption is the basis, and therefore all true song proceeds from that basis and the proof that redemption is accomplished is that Christ is risen—that is God's seal, God's avouchment, His endorsement of the matter. Therefore suffering is the bass note that underlies all true harmonies. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." His presence there on the throne is the proof that the work is accomplished. And He is there in a body. It is not true that, "His form was dissolved in light and lost in its own radiancy"; He will come in a body and we shall praise Him. And as that must underlie all our praise, what can we do better than study the Scriptures that tell us of His death? Begin where we will, if we yield

ourselves to the leading of the Spirit, we shall go to the Cross, to the sufferings of the One who is the Leader of our praise.

Now quite a different subject. At the right hand of God, He remembers His poor weak children down here and the condition in which they are, and says, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there *am I in the midst of them.*" Matt. xviii:20. They must gather together, they must assemble, they must know what it is to be a family, and then they know family cares—they must watch for one another's souls as those that must give an account. Notice verses 16 and 17—discipline in the church and effectual prayer, both are based on the presence of Jesus in the midst. Now this is often dwelt upon in connection with prayer, but we do not hear so much about it in connection with the act of the church in discipline; yet here, the one as much as the other, is based on the presence of Jesus in the midst. Now I think that in bearing with the infirmities and failures of all, even the holiest of God's saints, the power of the church to exercise discipline may be affected more or less, but certainly in this word the promise of the presence of Christ is found in connection with obedience to Him in this matter. And the real power of it will be in proportion to the degree in which each one gathered to His name recognizes and owns Him in his heart. And because through human infirmity this is imperfect, it would be very wrong to say that the verdict of any church was invalid, because there was not the same recognition of the Lord's presence, or in any of them not an equal recognition of His presence, at all times. Therefore we must keep the balance: we must altogether disown in-

fallibility, for we are fallible and make mistakes when we seek in the fear of the Lord to guide the assembly. On the other hand, we can never read this passage without seeing that the Lord promises to His obedient children wonderful authority. "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven," etc., that is, in connection with the dealing with disorderly persons in the assembly. "There am I in the midst." What is the utmost act of discipline? Putting out of that presence (1 Cor. v:13). That is the central thought, it is taking a person out of the midst where Jesus is. Now while on the one hand this heightens the solemnity of the act done in His fear, it is full of comfort. Is it separation from the Good Shepherd? No, a thousand times, no. Is it separation from the Great High Priest at the right hand of God? No, or restoration would be an utter impossibility. The Lord said to Peter: "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not"—if He had ceased that intercession, Peter's end would have been the same as that of Judas, but the intercession of Jesus saved that one, and he was filled with remorse. Therefore, let us remember—that in separating an erring one from the assembly in the midst of which Jesus is, we are not separating him from the Good Shepherd, or from the Great High Priest; nay, in a sense, we are casting him more on these two offices. It is the office of the Shepherd to go after the sheep, and we commit him more lovingly and tenderly than ever to the Shepherd.

Let us look now at Luke xxii:27. The Lord was just about to go to the lowest point of humiliation, and these poor disciples were striving which should be the greatest, and the Lord says: "*I am among you as He that serveth,*" and just after He took a basin and towel and girded Himself, and washed their feet, "Actions

“speak louder than words,” we say. Was there ever a more speaking action than that lowly service of Jesus in the little flock? That was one of the great concentric circles of His life, and He closes that wonderful act with these words: “I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you—I have done this that ye may do as I have done.” Now in this country and climate feet washing is not necessary, but in the east it is. It just means that we should take a lowly, humble attitude like His own, and what He was willing to do is surely suited to us. The Lord fasten this in our hearts!

Just one more passage, *Rev. ii:1*: “Who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.” The Lord is before the face of the Father for us, but still in spirit is walking in the midst of the churches.

“Lord, in all Thy power and glory,
Still Thy thoughts and eyes are here.
Watching o’er Thy ransomed people,
To Thy gracious heart so dear.”

He is walking in our very midst, the very opposite, the utter contrast to the dead idols that are spoken of at the end of chapter ix in this book—“which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk.” The living Christ is just the opposite; *He* can see, He sees us; *He* can hear, He hears the sigh of the prisoner. And He can walk. Where? In the midst of the churches. We cannot see Him, and that is the reason our hearts so often forget the fact. But we walk by faith and not by sight, and it should be a present fact to our hearts every day—the Lord Jesus walks in our midst, He is at our side, He hears every word we speak. He notices every expression of countenance while we are speaking

to a person, and He listens to what we say about that person to the next person we meet, whether we speak with grace in our hearts, or whether we talk scandal and spread slander. Oh! the practical power this would have on our life if we could just keep before us as a simple fact, that the Lord Jesus is listening to every word we speak. Then He looks on and sees where we go and why we go, and why we refrain from going here or there.

And this brings me to another point. He does not see it with an unaffected heart, He is deeply grieved when He sees any of His children going to any place to which they would be ashamed to be seen going. There is such a thing as a seared conscience, hardness of heart, and it is an awful thing that we can get into that condition, so that it is of much less importance to us, that the Lord sees us, than that a human being should see us. We ought not to *think* anything that we should be ashamed to *do* before our fellow men, and if we do, let us remember this, that to *His* eyes it is just the same as if we *did* it. "He that *hateth* his brother is a murderer." No human judge would be warranted for a moment to look in the face of a fellow man and say, "You are a murderer," for until the deed is committed he cannot know what is passing in any man's heart, but here is One who can. It is the One who is walking in the midst of the churches who knows what I am thinking. He knows the thoughts, the motives of the act, and does not wait till the thought springs up to become flower and fruit, before He puts His finger on it. But what is it then? The fruit of the thought—now that gives us such an idea of sin—sin is desire, and the most perfect definition conceivable is, "The *thought* of foolishness is sin." I

must think a lascivious thought before I do a lascivious deed. Ah! this is a tremendously searching thing: "I walk in the midst of the churches!"

But on the other hand, how delighted the Lord is when He hears one say to another, "Praise the Lord for this," and sees one running from house to house to tell its inmates of some gracious act he has seen in this or that one. As Paul tells the Corinthians of the grace he has seen in the Macedonians, and tells the Macedonians of the grace he has seen in the Corinthians (2 Cor. ix:2). When he is writing to the Corinthians about their sins, he speaks very straightly to them and tells them what is wrong; when he speaks to others about them he tells of the grace seen in them—and that is what we should do. It is a wretched thing to file and deface the sovereigns of Edward VII—it is a worse thing to deface and file God's coin, and when we speak evil of another, it is like filing coins or clipping bank notes.

So it is a solemn thing on the one hand to know that the Lord is walking in the midst of the churches—but anything of the fruit of the Spirit just gives delight to God's heart. This is well expressed in that hymn,

"Our only grief to give Him pain,
Our joy to serve and follow Him."

He notices things that give Him pain, and sees them as He is walking in the midst of the churches. And He sees things that delight His heart, which are the fruits of His own Spirit, and they give Him joy. Now isn't it our business to seek to give our Lord more joy?

EXPOSITION OF PSALM XXIII, BY
MR. WRIGHT, BETHESDA, OCT. 23, 1904.

1. "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want"—a fact stated, and the result of that fact; as the wants of

the sheep arise, the Shepherd prepares for them, and meets them every one, so it is as good as having no wants.

2. "He maketh me to lie down." That is what the enemy of our soul will not allow, his object is to keep his followers in a constant round of dissipation and rush, "Still waters," waters of quietness, a gently flowing rivulet.

3. "He restoreth my soul." The same word as in Ps. xix:7 and lxxx:3. It does not seem from a comparison of passages, that the meaning of this verse is exhausted in the thought of cordial or refreshment, it seems to point to the restoring, the turning back of the sheep that has begun to wander. That is what our gracious Lord does to us, makes us aware that we are getting into danger, and calls us, first by His Word, and if He can accomplish His object by the Holy Ghost bringing the Word to remembrance, good. But if we will not listen, chastisement will be used. We spare Him much painful work if we yield to the first importunity of His love which would recall our souls to Him, when we have in the least degree wandered. How prone the sheep is to wander, we see from Ps. cxix:176. This Book is written by One who knows us altogether, the Holy Ghost, and this is the prayer He puts into the lips of the Psalmist, "Seek Thy servant." The honest soul breathes all through Ps. cxix, the spiritually minded soul, and yet that advanced one in spiritual attainments, who knew no little amount of real fellowship and communion with God, finds out in the bitterness of his soul that he has gone astray. It shows a deeply taught soul, and a quick spiritual per-

ception to detect the tendency of our hearts to get away from the living God.

"For His name's sake." God's wonderful love to us does everything for our highest profit, but He has a higher motive, He is the Shepherd and has the Shepherd's characteristics to maintain, * * * and the honour of His own name is involved in keeping us in the right "way."

4. "Thou art with me." See Ps. lxxiii:23. It is nice to put the two together.

5. Now the metaphor changes entirely, he regards Jehovah as a host. Melchisedec prepared a table for Abraham when he returned from the fight. And our Melchisedec prepares a feast in the midst of our enemies. In other words, there can be heavenly peace in the soul in the midst of the most tremendous tribulation and trial in the world, in the church, and trouble even in the family, yet amidst it all peace, *peace*, if we are close to the Shepherd. "*Thou.*" How beautiful it is to see that the Shepherd does it all!

* * * And another thing, it is all in the present tense, maketh, leadeth, restoreth, *is* with me in the valley of the shadow of death, prepares a table, and fills every cup *now* at the present moment.

Is all that ours? If it is not, why? It ought to be, and it may be if we do not grieve the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is the Dove, gentle, tender and very easily grieved, and He is the Revealer of this Shepherd to our souls.

"Take heed, my soul, and watch and pray,
Lest thou the Spirit grieve."

6. The journey is not over when the table is prepared in the midst of enemies; he has to start again.

But he looks on to the end and says, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life," every step of the way. Two servants following me is one thing, but my running after something is another. He does not say, "I will pursue them," but goodness and mercy will be at hand, not objects of pursuit. I have one object, that is God,—I am not following *good*, but God, and then good will follow me. Salvation is the mercy of all others, and if we have this grace, then glory must follow (Ps. lxxxiv:11). And thus God will be doing good to us every day of our life and then we come to our home. "I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." That must be the culmination of His taking up His dwelling in us.

ADDRESS BY MR. WRIGHT ON "THIS GREAT SIGHT" (EX. III:1-3).

BETHESDA, OCT. 23, 1904.

"This great sight" had two aspects, a human aspect, and a Divine aspect. The bush was a symbol of the nation of Israel, and the fire a symbol of the fire of affliction through which they were passing, and the great, the wonderful sight to Moses was, that the bush should be on fire, and yet not the tenderest twig of it was burnt. And the more the nation was afflicted, the more it multiplied and grew. The fire that did *not* consume, we have here.

Now in order that we may, with the help of the Lord, in meditation on this passage come at some of its teaching better, I want to refer to some other passages which bring before us the different uses which the Holy Spirit makes of *fire* as a symbol.

Will you turn to Lev. xvi:27. The Sin Offering was

consumed by fire outside the camp. Now see what use the Holy Spirit makes of that in Heb. xiii:11-13. Without the camp is the place of distance from God; and everything sinful or connected with sin, His presence cannot endure; so the very bodies of the beasts offered in the typical putting away of sin were burned without the camp. So when the Lord suffered as the Sin Offering on account of His people's sin, He died in the place of distance from God, for three hours of darkness He endured the hiding of the Father's face. Who could conceive what that meant to His holy soul, but He endured it for you and for me!

In Lev. i we have the Burnt Offering which is perfectly distinct in its typical teaching from the Sin Offering, and expresses the other side of truth, the infinite delight the blessed God had in the perfect offering which He offered to God (Heb. ix:14). And therefore every part was consumed by fire on the altar. But of what was *that* fire a symbol? Not of wrath, but of delight in the sacrifice. How God delighted in,—how, so to speak, He lingered over the repast. You see from Lev. vi:13 that the fire was never to go out. In almost all the sacrifices God has part, and the rest the worshipper eats, so God and the worshipper are having communion feeding on the same sacrifice. But in the Burnt Offering the Father, for the purpose of showing His infinite delight in His Son, had all consumed, the priesthood might not touch it. And therefore we are told that the fire shall never go out. God's delight in the perfect sacrifice of His son never ceases, this very moment He is delighting in it. Are you? It is the secret of communion that we have harmony of thought with the blessed God about the Sacrifice of His Son. It is the essence of communion and in pro-

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portion as our delight in His Sacrifice on the Cross increases, so increases our communion with God.

So we see at once the perfectly contrasted meaning of the two fires, the fire of wrath burning up the Sin Offering, burning against sin, and the fire which does not cease, feeding on the Burnt Offering, and setting forth the infinite delight of God in the Sacrifice of His Son.

Now in connection with that we must look at a very solemn passage (Ps. xi:6). This fire again expresses God's hatred of sin, and also the necessity of punishing it (Rom. i:18). "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven," it is not executed yet, but it is a matter of revelation (Ps. xcvi:1-3). "A fire goeth before Him," again the fire of God's wrath consuming His enemies.

Now I want that we should just keep before us these contrasted aspects of the typical meaning of fire, along with Ex. iii, and notice the difference.

The fire in the bush burned the bush without consuming a twig of the bush, and that fire was the *fire of affliction or discipline* through which the people of God were passing. Doesn't this help us to understand that passage in Heb. xii:28, 29. Some, to harmonize that, as they think, with other declarations of Scripture, add these words, "God, *out of Christ*, is a consuming fire." But it isn't so, it is the God of the reconciled sinner, of those whom He is "not ashamed to call brethren," the God of those who have been brought nigh.

Now the fire symbolised by the burning bush did not do any harm to Israel, it was a terrible experience, but it did not consume them, on the contrary, they "multiplied and grew." And this represents another use the Holy Ghost makes of fire to set forth the discipline of our heavenly Father. Just as Israel had to pass through that

sore affliction for centuries, and was ultimately brought out of it, so the Israel of God, the spiritual Israel of this dispensation has a parallel experience. "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." The pathway to the heavenly kingdom is never, in the Word of God, regarded as a path of roses. "If ye endure chastening God dealeth with you as with sons," and if we are without chastisement, we are not true sons at all, we can't be; in other words, every son passes under the disciplining hand of the Father.

Now what is the object of this? Is it to consume, to destroy? Has it to do with wrath? What is it for? "That we might be partakers of His holiness." "Shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits and *live*?" not *perish*. The soul in subjection will come under the disciplining hand of the Father and *live* by it. Just what Hezekiah said when he had been stricken with a mortal sickness and brought up again. "By these things men *live*, and in all these things is the life of my spirit." So when we are tried, and have to pass through the severest trials a believer can pass through, it is in order that we may *live*. How live? Spiritually live, that is the only life worth living; the life of this poor, weak body, is a poor thing compared with the life of the spirit, and if the life of the spirit increases by the wasting of the body, it is a good exchange; for the believer becomes more and more like his Father, like God, even down here. And one of the Father's ways to bring us to that position is to cause us to pass through severe discipline. "We went through fire and through water; but Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place" (Ps. lxxvi:12). Do you observe the Lord passes them through the fire, but what is it? It is a *refining* fire, a fire over which the refiner sits

as he watches the effects of the flames. "The Lord trieth the righteous" (Ps. xi:5). The refiner sits over the furnace as he passes the ore through the furnace, and when he sees his own image in the metal in that fire he withdraws it. So God tries the righteous in order to bring about increasing conformity to His own character, but He pours the fire of His wrath in destruction on His enemies.

So we have the fire expressive of the wrath of God in regard to the Atoning Surety, the Sin Offering in Lev. xvi. In Lev. i we have the fire that consumed the Burnt Offering and symbolised God's delight in the perfect all-sufficient sacrifice of His Son. We have the fire of God's wrath poured on His enemies, judgment against them for their sin in Ps. xi, which wrath is yet to be executed, for God will not destroy the universe again with water, but with fire. And then fire is the symbol which brings out the disciplining action of our blessed God and Father in fashioning us and transforming us and gradually assimilating us spiritually, more to His own character.

Now, keeping these various instances before us, we find that this fire in Ex. iii is the last, showing out the disciplining action of God toward His people.

And now, let me remind you, Israel is in the fire of discipline and has been ever since they killed the Prince of Life and rejected the true Messiah. They are in the fire to-day, scattered among the nations, still outcast and persecuted, but instead of being consumed they multiply. To-day they are increasing in numbers, in intellectual power, and in influence in the world. Yet they are perfectly distinct, they do not mingle with the nations among whom they dwell; you can tell a Jew instantly. God has separated them and made them a permanent nation. Baby-

lon, Media, and other nations have passed away, but Israel lasts, and will yet be "the head and not the tail," and will yet be God's governmental nation in the earth, for His promise that cannot be broken involves it. But now they are in the fire, it is the burning bush over again.

Now notice one fact in this, "*The angel of the Lord* appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush," and as long as He was in the midst of the fire, the bush was not consumed. That brings out a beautiful truth regarding the disciplining act of our heavenly Father. The spiritual Israel have to pass in their experience through the testing of this fire, not the fire of wrath, but the fire of the Father's discipline. But what is the truth of it? *The Father Himself is in the flame*, and that insures there will be no consuming of His children; they are as indestructible as the bush in which dwelt the Angel of the Lord. We are the bush, and some of us are very little feeble tendrils in the bush, but God does not consume one of us, He only tries us, in order to consume the dross out of the metal, to change the figure to that of the refiner. He does not destroy the metal. Let us take that to heart, dear, tried believer; the utmost intensity of the fire of our heavenly Father's discipline has just one object, one blessing.

"The flame shall not hurt thee, I only design,

Thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine."

That is the only way in which He is a consuming fire to His children, to purify and refine the metal from dross. Oh, how precious this is!

Now notice another thing. We have a remarkable expression in Deut. xxxiii:16 in the blessing of Joseph. "*The good will* of Him that dwelt in the bush." That fire is consistent with the good will, the good pleasure of

Jehovah. As we have it in the angel's song, "Peace on earth, good will to men." Now the good will of God to sinful men is one thing, but "the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush," teaches me that it is the good will of my Father, who is seeking to bring me into conformity with His will. Now don't you see how differently we shall look upon affliction's fire? just, as it were, use God's own eye-glass; and so in the intensest affliction say, "It is the expression of my Father's good will to me." If not walking by faith, but by sight, we say, "How angry God is with me, He has taken away that beloved one from my side!" But it is "the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush." A tender, wise love, surpassing the tenderest of earthly loves, does that thing which makes me shudder and feel as if I were cut in twain. Hold to it, my beloved brethren and sisters, it is "the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush."

Mr. Wright then closed with a few words to any unsaved ones present, on Ps. xcvi:1-3 and Ps. xi:6, which tell of the fire of the wrath of God against the final rejector of God's way of salvation, which is the blood of His only begotten Son.

EXPOSITION OF PS. LXXXVI BY MR. WRIGHT.

BETHESDA, DEC. 25, 1904.

I. "Bow down Thine ear, O Lord, *hear me.*" We have various reasons given by the Psalmist, why God should hear him. He finds a plea first, in his very poverty and need. "For I am *poor and needy.*" This is one of the pleas we should bring to God, it is a plea put into our lips by the Holy Spirit Himself. He delivers the poor and needy, that is the revealed character of God.

So our poverty and need constitute a reason why He should bow down His ear and listen to us.

2. The second reason is, "For I am *holy*"—"one whom Thou favourest," margin. And surely believers in Christ are favoured, they are called in Heb. iii:1: "Holy brethren," because of union to Christ. In experience we have to speak hourly of failure in word and act, but we should never lose sight of the other side, that we appear in Christ without spot, and we can plead the fact of the holiness which is given us in Christ, as a reason why He should listen to our prayers.

There is another plea in the same verse "Save Thy servant that *trusteth* in Thee." If we can honestly say that to God, it furnishes another ground of confidence because He shows Himself strong in the behalf of him "whose heart is perfect toward Him," who simply trusts, who does not look this way and that way, but straight to Him; who does not lean on two props, but who leans on the Living God.

3. In this verse, it is *continuance in supplication*, "For I cry unto Thee daily," not only Sundays, not only at Prayer Meetings, but "*daily*," that is, as often as a sense of need oppresses my spirit, I instantly lift up my heart to Thee. If we do, whose work is it? Not the work of our natural heart, it is the work of the Holy Spirit in us. Every inclination of the soul God-ward, is the inworking of the Spirit of God. And if we have the least desire to approach Him, in that, we have the pledge that He will listen, and also answer.

4. The world rejoices when their corn and wine, their material possessions increase; this is their only joy, and when these decay they are depressed and sad. But the Psalmist speaks of another source of joy,

"Rejoice the soul of Thy servant, for unto Thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul;" that is, *God* is His joy—another plea.

5. We have had precious pleas grounded on the Spirit's work in our hearts, our poverty and need of which we are made conscious,—conscious separation to God,—and the joy that the soul through grace finds in God Himself. But now comes the strongest plea of all, *the character of God Himself*. "For Thou, Lord, art good," and for this reason He listens to our cry. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." On this ground who is preëminently blessed? The blessed God Himself, He is the supreme Giver, and therefore the supremely blessed One. So there is no stronger plea when coming to God in prayer than the character of God, "Ready to forgive"—Yes, the moment there is true hearted confession, there comes forgiveness. (1 John i:9.) "Plenteous in mercy unto *all* them that call upon Him." So that we may each one write our names under this, it is like the gospel invitation, there is no narrowing it, it is as wide as the necessity of God's people, and includes every condition in which you and I may be, and if you and I call upon Him, it is like appropriating the promises of God in His Word, and it delights our God and Father when we grasp a promise and say, "That is mine."

7. "Thou wilt answer me." How confident the Psalmist grows through the experience of God's faithfulness. And that is the result of trusting God, and living in some measure upon Him,—we grow in confidence in His willingness to meet us in blessing.

ADDRESS BY MR. WRIGHT. PRAYER MEETING.

BETHESDA, DECEMBER 26, 1904.

“PEACE I LEAVE WITH YOU, MY PEACE I GIVE UNTO YOU.”

Peace *left*, and peace *given*. The Lord was about to leave His disciples, they would no longer have His personal presence. But connected with His leaving them, there was the finishing of the work which the Father had given Him to do. Between the moment at which He spoke these words, and His actually being with the Father, came the Cross, where He “made peace,” so I suppose “*Peace I leave with you*,” means that He left peace as the result of His finished work on the Cross—that was the result to every one who beheld His glory, and rested on Him by faith. “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” The Lord speaks of *leaving* it, as the result of His finished work.

“*My peace I give unto you*.” Isn’t that connected with the promise just given, the promise of the Comforter. He is the speaker of peace, whose office it is to take of the things of Jesus, and show them to us—to put us into actual, conscious possession of the results of His finished work. And it is by Him that our hearts enjoy peace—it is *given* by the Spirit of peace to all who believe.

And then the Lord in connection with that legacy and gift, repeats the words with which the chapter opens—“*Let not your heart be troubled*.” The cure for heart-trouble is faith in God, and in Jesus Christ whom He has sent, and He leaves this with us as our constant portion. There is no need that our hearts should be troubled.

This is quite consistent with that other statement, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." But tribulation in the world, and a troubled heart, are two different things. A ship may be tossed on the waves, but if the waves do not enter the ship, the mariner is not alarmed. So we go on our way in a troubled world, with a centre of peace in our hearts, resting in Him, on whose shoulder the government rests.

He "made peace by the blood of the Cross," *peace with God*—we must always go back to the Cross as the foundation of that peace, for it is a righteous peace.

But *the peace of God* filling our hearts, is a distinct truth, and that is connected with the present position of Christ—"All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth." He ascended to the Father knowing that all things were given into His hands. And it is because He is there, that we have the peace of God in our hearts and in our minds, because as we go along, we realise that the risen Christ is ordering all things for us.

We look back to the Cross as the foundation of *peace with God*, and we look up to the throne as the ground on which *the peace of God* garrisons our minds.

CHAPTER ELEVENTH.

VARIOUS DOCUMENTS AND RELICS.

Other documents, kindly gathered by Dr. G. F. Bergin, reached the writer too late for incorporation in the body of the memoir, it being ready for the printer at the time of their reception. They are added however as contributing valuable material to the volume.

I.

MR. MULLER'S CHOICE OF MR. WRIGHT AS CO-DIRECTOR.

Mr. Müller wrote on August 4th, 1871: "To-day Mr. Wright, my principal helper in the work of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution, asked for the hand of my beloved daughter. This request was as unlooked for on my part as anything could have been, while, at the same time I knew no one to whom I could so willingly entrust this, my choicest earthly treasure. My beloved daughter had the greatest conflict in her mind for about two weeks before she accepted this offer, her only and great difficulty being because of having to leave me. It was only on beseeching her not to let this stand in the way, and pointing out to her how great my comfort and joy would be in seeing her united to such a husband, that she at last decided to accept the offer. They were united in marriage on November 16th.

"May 26th, 1872. For more than twenty years it had been asked of me again and again, by many different individuals, 'What, Mr. Müller, will become of the Orphan Houses when you are removed?' My reply was, invariably, 'The Orphan Houses and the land belonging to

them are vested in the hands of eleven trustees, and therefore the Institution stands on the same footing in this particular, as other charitable institutions.' Then I heard it said, in reply, again and again, 'But where will you find the man who will carry on the work in the same spirit in which *you* do, trusting only in God for everything that in any way is needed in connection with the work?' My answer to this was always something like this: 'When the Lord shall have been pleased to remove me from my post, He will prove that He was not dependent on me, and that He could easily raise up another servant of His to act on the same principles on which I have sought to carry on this work.' It was also stated to me again and again, by Christian friends, that I ought to pray that God would raise up a successor to me in the work. To this I generally replied that I did so, and I have now the joy of announcing to the reader that God has been pleased to give me the desire of my heart. In my son-in-law, Mr. James Wright, I have found what I had longed for, and prayed for, even a helper in assisting me in the direction of the Institution, and, in the event of my removal, a successor.

"But lest any, who neither know me nor him, should suppose that because Mr. Wright is my son-in-law, I have chosen him for this post, I state the following particulars. Mr. Wright was known to me for thirty-one years as a consistent Christian. From his boyhood, when he was brought to the knowledge of the Lord, I have known him; and for above twenty years I had especially good opportunity of watching his most consistent, godly deportment. During thirteen years, previous to May, 1872, he had been one of my most valuable helpers in the work of the Institution, I may say my right hand, in all

the most important matters. As long as twelve years before May, 1872, my beloved departed wife and I began to pray regarding him, that God would fit him more and more to become my successor. This prayer was repeated hundreds of times during the lifetime of my late beloved wife, and both of us became more and more assured that in Mr. Wright God had given to us what we desired regarding this point.

"In February, 1870, my beloved wife was taken, and about ten days after I became very unwell. During this time it was, when the late Mrs. Wright was in her usual health, and when there was therefore not so much as a shadow of appearance that Mr. Wright would ever become my son-in-law, I sent for him and opened my mind to him that I considered it to be the will of God that he should become my successor. His great humility, however, found a number of reasons, why he considered himself unfit for it, none of which I could allow to stand in the way as a hindrance, as I knew him so well with regard to his fitness. A second difficulty was this, his excellent Christian wife considered that he would be greatly burdened by accepting my proposal, and therefore sought to induce him not to accept it. After some weeks, however, her mind was altered on the subject, and she yielded her objections, if he saw it to be the will of God. Mr. Wright then, after long hesitation, came to the conclusion that it would not be his duty any longer to refuse.

"It was eighteen months after I had spoken to him on the subject that he asked for the hand of my daughter, a thing of which I had not the faintest thought, though so intimate with him. I have been so minute in all this, that there may not remain in the mind of any of the readers the slightest thought that the relationship in which Mr.

Wright now stands to me has had anything to do with my uniting him with me in the direction of the Institution, and appointing him as my successor.

"By the Lord's kindness I am able to work as heretofore, I may say with little hindrance through illness; yet I cannot conceal from myself that it is of great importance for the work that I should obtain a measure of relief. This relief, however, can be really only given to me by one who stands in a similar position to the work, and who, when I am away, or when I may feel it desirable to have real rest, could do all I ordinarily do in directing. On this account, therefore, I not only appointed Mr. Wright as my successor, in the event of my death, but from May 26th, 1872, associated him also with me in the direction of the Institution, which year by year increases in extent; and I cannot describe my joy in having found in him a successor in the event of my death."

II.

MRS. WRIGHT'S FUNERAL.

Mrs. Wright was interred on Jan. 16th in Arno's Vale Cemetery. A preliminary service was held in Bethesda Chapel, Great George Street, at which many of the Orphans were present. The Chapel was crowded. Some particulars of that service will now be given. After the singing of the Hymn, "The sands of time are sinking," which was a special favourite of the dear departed one, Mr. Henry Groves, of Kendal, read 1 Cor. iii:21-23, "*All things are yours,*" and said: "Our treasures, fellow Christians, and amongst them each individual Christian is a treasure to his fellows, and life is amongst them, and death is amongst these treasures. Yes, *death amongst our treasures*, that for which we can thank God. Sorrow

brings us very close to the 'Man of Sorrows.' I believe as Christians we very little know the mighty blessing which through Eternity will be connected with the sorrows of the way. The Lord give unto us to learn these glorious mighty lessons! Friends, if it were not for death and the grave we should never have had John xi, and John xi is worth all the anguish which John xi represents, and we find every death of the Lord's dear ones is but a repetition of it. '*Jesus wept*' there, and Jesus weeps here, and now it is so delightful to think of those tears of Jesus at the grave of every departed child of God. I often feel that as believers in Christ we do not sufficiently realize that the depths through which God oftentimes leads us, are amongst the most precious experiences of soul, because then we find Christ to be what otherwise we should not know. Among the saints it is only needful to get into deep sorrow, and oh! how the sympathy rises up on the right hand, and on the left, and we find many friends whom we never knew had half the love in their hearts to us, till trouble and adversity came, but when it comes, then we learn how we are loved. And I believe it is precisely so with Christ Himself—we never know half the love of Christ until we get into depths of sorrow and find that love pouring, and pouring, and pouring on us. Luke xxiii:43 is left as a precious legacy to every dying child of God to hear the voice of the Son of God saying, '*To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.*' '*To-day,*' not when He comes in the time of His glory, no we needn't wait till then. '*To-day.*' Oh! let us lay hold upon the word '*to-day,*' and it will chase away the darkness and gloom, and make the grave of the child of God radiant with the hope that God has sent to light its darkness. '*To-day*'—Oh, may God speak to the dear Orphan child-

ren, and to those among us, who, if they were to die, would have no voice saying to them, '*To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.*' The Lord has opened to us the door of His everlasting kingdom, and gilded with brightness and joy death itself—the halo of His glory is around it, our very tears are turned into laughter, our very sorrow into joy, and that which seems one of the great and mighty triumphs of Satan, is one of the great and mighty triumphs of God. I know no greater testimony to the truth of Christianity than the joy and gladness with which we follow our loved ones to the tomb. Thank God, He has kept out the bitterness of the tears that say 'No,' to God. And we thank God on behalf of our beloved brother that He has taken away the bitterness of the sorrow, not the sorrow. There are many weeping eyes and hearts here, and now may God grant that those tears may be sanctified, and may all these dear children follow in the footsteps of the one gone before. It is not often we commit a dear one to the tomb with such exceeding thankfulness and joy—thanking God for the example of her life, for her unselfishness, and for the grace of God manifested in her. God grant that those of us here who are Christ's may gird our loins a little tighter, may keep our lamps burning a little brighter, and as faithful servants be always ready to go at the Master's bidding—always seeking to please Him, who has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light."

Mr. Bergin prayed and said, "There are two words to which I want to call your attention, 2 Tim. iv:6, '*I am now ready to be offered.*' The Apostle's words as he stood in sight of death—I know of no word more expressive of the condition of the departed loved one during the ten days of her illness than this. Through the grace

of God she was made '*meet for the inheritance of the saints in light*' forty years earlier, because resting solely on the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus, and so all through her pilgrim course she was ready to go and be with Him. But there was a beautiful readiness of spirit for whatever the Lord might see fit during the closing hours of her life. Her beloved husband said, 'Since the medical attendant told her of her danger, never by God's grace did a question rise as to the Lord's right to do as He would with His own.' When on Friday morning he judged it well to tell her how ill she was, she calmly received the intelligence and said, 'He can raise me up if He will,' and yet in reply to the question as to when she should next meet the one she so tenderly loved, she pointed upwards, exhibiting the same calm readiness. Such was the readiness of spirit in that loved one, that departing to be with Christ was a no more terrible thing than going from one room to another. Now on her behalf I give a word from Luke xii which I am sure would be her utterance to you beloved Orphans, and to you dear unsaved ones, '*Be ye therefore ready also.*' Just think what made her ready, not her good works, not the undefiled walk, in which we rejoice, not anything but the precious blood of Christ made her ready, and what you need is to accept salvation at the hand of Jesus, and then you will be ready if called to depart. Let this come as a voice from herself. And in another sense let each one of us who are the Lord's hear the words, '*Be ye ready.*' Oh, to have nothing to do, or to settle if the Lord send for us, as for our beloved sister, or if He should come, and take us to Himself, to be in readiness that we may respond, 'Yes, Lord.'"

Col. Molesworth prayed and read 1 Thess. iv:13-18,
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saying, "Beloved, our God comforts us with living words to-day. It was said by one of old, '*We must needs die.*' But the resources of God are infinite, and God gives us truly to rejoice, even in the presence of death, in the means He has devised whereby '*His banished be not expelled from Him*'—for by the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ hath He given the hope. '*Them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with Him.*' Her spirit now waits with Him, and He will call her body from the resting-place, where we lay it to-day, and she shall be '*for ever with the Lord.*' Beloved Orphans, I know how you loved Mrs. Wright, she was as a mother to you, her very presence was a comfort, and as she glided like a ministering angel through the corridors a word or a look from her was a reward to you, and you would go on your way comforted and strengthened to bear the burden of your bit of life. Of one it is written, '*Thy gentleness hath made me great.*' Truly it was that which made her great, and fitted her to rule.

"Now the blessed word we have gotten from the Lord to-day is, '*Them which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.*' There is no death to the believer—she sleeps, she is with the Lord Himself, and the Lord gives us the grand testimony to-day, '*If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.*' The morning of the resurrection will undo the sorrows of the present, and shall be to us a glad-some time, and though we sorrow now, we are not without hope, but with the hope that the Lord Jesus will raise the body of this loved one, and re-unite it with her redeemed spirit, which He has kept in intelligent enjoyment in His own presence, and that '*we who are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the*

clouds' to be with Him for ever, and the Church triumphant and the Church militant shall be united in one indivisible body to be with Him for ever."

Mr. Wright prayed for Mr. Müller, that the One who had carried him to hoar hairs would enable him to breast this new wave of sorrow. The hymn, "All, all beyond is bright," was then sung and Mr. Benjamin Perry closed the services with prayer.

III.

MR. WRIGHT'S SERMON AFTER HIS WIFE'S DEATH.

On the following Sunday evening, Jan. 19th, Mr. Wright preached at Bethesda Chapel to a large audience. The following extracts are from notes taken by a friend:

"*God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all*" (1 John 1:5). "It is very striking to notice the parallel between God's first message under the old dispensation and His first message under the new dispensation.

"(1) His first message to the people whom he had brought into covenant relationship with Himself, the children of Israel through Moses, was to make Him a Sanctuary, that He might dwell among them, and when the Sanctuary or Tabernacle was fully set up, the princes offered for the dedication of the altar of God. There were twelve princes, and each prince offered on his day, so that this solemn service occupied twelve days. And how can we but pause for a moment, to see the emphasis which God has laid on this part of the service. Twelve days they dedicated the altar. '*O send out Thy light, and Thy truth,*' said the inspired Psalmist. '*Let them lead me; let them bring me unto Thy holy hill, and to Thy tabernacles, then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God, my exceeding joy.*' There is no other way than by the altar,

by atoning blood. Twelve days were occupied in dedicating a shadowy, typical altar. With what emphasis our hearts say, *'We have an altar!'* Well, that scene was over, and then we read, *'And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with Him, then he heard the voice of One speaking unto him.'* Now comes the first message of Jehovah to those whom in grace He had brought into fellowship with Himself. What is this message? *'Speak unto Aaron, and say unto him, "When thou lightest the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light over against the candlestick."'* The first message then from Jehovah to that people whom in grace He had brought near to Himself, into fellowship with Himself, though this was an external thing, is about the seven-fold perfection of light which is in His presence.

"(2) Now we come to the Epistle of John and find the Apostle under the new dispensation unfolding the truth that God the Father now brings believers into fellowship with Himself, calls them to fellowship with the Father and with the Son, and the Apostle says, *'That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.'* And then comes the beautiful message to those whom God in the riches of His grace has brought into real fellowship with Himself, not an external fellowship such as Israel knew, but a *real* one. John is the bearer of the message, *'That God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.'* Again about the perfection of the light in His presence.

Now God help us in considering three aspects of this glorious truth. (1) In its bearing on our approach to God, and (2) on our walk with God, and (3) on His

dealings with us during the pilgrimage of our life.

“(1) Our *approach* to God and *walk* with God. ‘*God is light and in Him is no darkness at all,*’ yet there can be no light or joy out of His presence, therefore to be happy we must be with Him. Let us repeat this. God made us for Himself, and we cannot know any true happiness till brought to Himself, but ‘*In Him is no darkness at all,*’ this means that God is absolutely pure and holy. Now can anything impure and unholy dwell with Him? Nothing. Turn to Ps. v, ‘*Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with Thee.*’ It is impossible that evil can dwell with God who is light. ‘*Blessed is the man whom Thou choosest and causest to approach unto Thee,*’ the one whom He chooses to approach to Him and causes to dwell with Him, is pronounced ‘*blessed,*’ and well may God call him blessed—for he must approach in absolutely perfect holiness, he must appear in a holiness fitted for the presence of Him who is light, in a righteousness that will bear the scrutiny of the eye, that searches the reins and the heart. If man had not sinned and could have obeyed God perfectly, he might have come before Him in a holiness, a righteousness of his own; but what is the testimony of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures to which we must bow, for ‘*What saith the Scriptures?*’ must settle every question. ‘*All have sinned.*’ Then who is the one who can approach to that throne? Not one can approach in any holiness or righteousness of his own, and here the God of all grace appears, and provides in the Gospel of grace a holiness and a righteousness entirely outside the sinner. The Holy One who is light, who dwells in light, and in whom ‘*is no darkness at all,*’ sanctifies, sets apart, makes holy

through the blood of His Son, all who believe. He sanctifies the people, separates them, makes them holy and fit for temple worship. We can go further and say—echoing God—*‘By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.’* Yes, the perfection of holiness attaches to those who rest by faith in the blood of Christ, and thus are they fitted for His presence. Therefore the moment the poor guilty sinner rests upon the blood for acceptance, that sinner is *‘made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light,’* in God’s light. Have I not quoted sufficient to prove from Scripture that God hath provided a holiness and righteousness for sinners outside of themselves? And what remains but that I beseech and entreat any who are standing in a fancied holiness of their own which is but *‘filthy rags’* to leave *‘that refuge of lies,’* and lie down as guilty worms before Him, and rejoice in the glorious provision made in the perfect work and glorious perfections of His Son. Especially you dear Orphans, who, as some of you said in the letter you wrote to me last Thursday, have had a voice lately at the beginning of every year. And there came a voice to you last Thursday, *‘Be ye also ready.’* How many of you have heard it? How many have come? O beloved girls, I want you to listen to the voice of God, in His word, and in His providences, that you may know through faith in Him what it is to be made holy and fit for the presence of God.

I have said that this aspect of the subject has a bearing, not only on our *approach* to God; but second on our *walk with God*. Verses 8 and 9 in the chapter refer to this. The question of consciousness of sin in us, how is it dealt with? *‘If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves.’* You remember in Heb. x it is said—

referring to the perfection of believers for the presence of God—that if the shadowy sacrifices had made perfect *‘then would they not have ceased to be offered, because that the worshippers once purged, should have had no more conscience of sin;’* that is, no more conscience of the guilt of sin recorded in God’s book against us, and the argument of the Holy Spirit is, that if these sacrifices really took away the guilt of sin so that there was no conscience of sin as an obstacle to fellowship between the soul and God, they would have ceased to be offered. Now what the Apostle says could never be accomplished by these, is accomplished by the perfect work of Christ, and now being perfected we have *‘no more conscience of sin.’* When we receive Jesus as poor guilty sinners, then we are born again, then we are sons, and then God sends the Spirit of His Son into our hearts and the first cry of the Spirit is, *‘Abba, Father.’* Don’t we see the blessed harmony of the whole thing? There is no cry of *‘Father’* without being born again, then I cry *‘Father.’* Dear girls, can you all look up and say, *‘Father?’* I know some of you can, and I say, I would go again through all the sorrow of the last fortnight if I knew it would bring you to Christ. I say it before God and I repeat it, for I yearn over you, and it was the prayer of the beloved one who is gone, God grant it for Christ’s sake! But now comes the question of the *consciousness of sin*, of that I *am* conscious, and deeply conscious, and if I say I have it not, I deceive myself; I have it in me, though not charged against me, that’s the difference. I have it in me, as a bitter root, the up-springing of which often brings a cloud between the face of my Father and my soul, until I confess it, but the moment I confess it here is the provision, *‘If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive*

us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' Who? Take note of the difference. As born into the world unregenerate sinners, we stand before God as a holy Judge, that is our first relationship to God, the Judge of the whole earth. But when we trust in Jesus we are no more in our sins, to answer for them, and now that holy Judge has become what? My *Father*. I have seen a vivid illustration of this in my own experience of the difference between *conscience* of sin and *consciousness* of sin. I have had vividly before me an illustration of the compatibility of these two things: the entire absence of *conscience* of sin as to its guilt, with the *consciousness* of sin as a bitter root, in the person of that loved one. As she in secret mourned over her shortcomings I never saw her lovely face so clouded and bedewed as when face to face with the claims of Christ, and feeling how in innumerable matters she fell short. While I watched her course and saw it approximate more and more to the image of Christ, she got more and more self-aborrent, and would not listen to any word of mine, but would say, 'Oh, you don't know, you love me too well, to see it,' and yet at the same time she had no *conscience* of sin. She would go aside and pour out all to her Father in heaven, and would come back with a face calm and happy. She had no *conscience* of sin, but a vivid ever-increasing realization of the *consciousness* of sin, and yet by the Holy Spirit an ever-rejoicing apprehension of this remedy—confession. '*God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.*' Oh! how I remember the cry of that dear one, 'Oh! I do want to be good,' a very simple expression, but it just expressed her longing to be holy, to be Christ-like. She has now done with sin, for ever, and I will call upon you dear friends to rejoice with me. I refer to her case to help any who

are confused about the question of sin. There is a lot of morbid, unscriptural teaching about this subject, and I shall rejoice if this testimony should be a help to such.

"Now I come to the third aspect of this truth, this glorious truth, bearing upon *all the dealings of God* as Father throughout our earthly pilgrimage '*God is light*,' and of course, if He is light, every action of His must be light, as we sung just now:

'His every act, pure blessing is,
His path unsullied light.'

"There is not a single action of His but that is light, purity, blessing, and goodness, and I can say that never since Saturday week, when Dr. Williams came to me at the Orphan Houses and said, 'Mrs. Wright is very ill,' never for a moment have I doubted the absolute light of God's action, or thought He had made a mistake. Now I can't promise to keep myself in that mind till nine o'clock to-night. How am I kept? If you say, 'How can I be kept so in the light of God that I am never allowed to question the light of His actions?' I say there is no royal road. I will tell you the secret. It is *believing* before *feeling*. God's truths repeat themselves again and again. When an anxious soul says, 'I don't *feel* I am forgiven' you set before that one, that feeling does not come before faith. I remember Dr. Guinness saying here twenty-four years ago, 'Feeling is no more faith than a headache,' and I have never forgotten it. Now just as feeling has nothing to do with cleansing the conscience from sin, but that it is a question of believing the words of Him who said, '*Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life*'—so let us say to our own hearts as

children of God, when God deals with us, in some surprising way. 'It is a question of believing, not feeling.' Never put feeling before faith, either in the matter of forgiveness or in the matter of acceptance of God's providences. Do I mean that we are to be Stoics? No, we are to feel the Father's rod, that is an essential part of the business, we do not get the benefit from it if we do not feel it, but while we feel it keenly, we must just lie before our Father, and not say a word against Him. We must not allow feelings to judge; feel it we must, but we must not let feelings judge Him, there's the difference. Let me illustrate it. The king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh to insult King Hezekiah and menace the Jews, and he came and stood outside the walls, and there spluttered out blasphemy against Jehovah. Well, what was the command of Hezekiah to the Jews on the walls? '*Answer him not.*' That is the way to treat feelings, the moment they rise up to discuss and criticise; as works before faith are dead works, so feelings before faith are corrupt, blasphemous. Therefore, let us lie in silence before our Father, and while by grace we keep in that position we are safe. Don't give way to feeling. I don't mean by that, don't feel the sorrow, feel it to the utmost, but don't let that feeling get into the judgment seat and judge God, and question God, and say at last, 'God is unkind, what right has He to do this,' then we are obeying feeling. '*The Lord God hath opened mine ear,*' all is attributed to the Lord God, I get the ear from Him (for '*the hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the Lord hath made even both of them*') that is *faith*. Now I get the open ear from the Lord, and then if I have the opened ear, I must *use* that ear, and what is the proper response of this opened ear? '*I will hear what God the*

Lord will speak.' If you are enabled by grace to take that position, He will speak a word in season.

'In season, the sustaining word'
Is ever sure from Thee.'

"When the bitter heavy stroke came upon me, and '*the desire of mine eyes was taken away*,' He spoke this soothing word to me, He opened my ear; I said by grace, '*I will hear what God the Lord will speak.*' What did He speak? I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, '*Happy are the dead which die in the Lord.*' Now by grace I took that home and said, 'That is a voice to me.' Well, if that voice is from heaven, from whose lips can it come, but from the lips of the One on the throne of God? And dear friends, if *that* voice speaks to me, what business have I to listen to other voices? It has power to quell every voice on earth. And then I had just to take in what that voice said to me. '*Happy are the dead which die in the Lord,*' not explaining to me that happiness, but simply saying, '*Happy.*' This is God's wont, and He does not give an inventory in this case. When He said 'I will bless thee,' Abraham, according to the flesh, I would have liked an inventory of the blessings God would give, but He only said, '*I will bless thee,*' which was far better, for Abraham had simply to write behind that—'I,' all the attributes of God, the God of love; the Almighty, unchanging, eternal God. Write all these behind this 'I,' and you get the blessing of Abraham. Now just on the same principle the voice of God says, '*Happy are the dead,*' which is ten times better than an inventory of the idea, because the voice from heaven tells me so, and He knows all about it. This is an illustration of the principle that God opens the ear and we say, '*I will hear what God*

the Lord will speak.' He gives to every tried heart a word in season. If you only do this, He will speak such words to you that you will not complain, or find fault, but say *'My heart is fixed,'* and you will sing and give praise unto Him. Take care to sing to *Him*, and to sing because your heart is fixed. Now, then, this precious word, *'God is light,'* tells us (1) the ground on which we *approach God*, by atoning blood; (2) and the way in which though sin is present with us, we *walk* with God in light, because of our Advocate the Lord Jesus Christ, and because of the eternal efficacy of His blood; and (3) it tells us also that in every dealing with us, He is light. If I walk with God, if I am a servant of Jehovah, then *'Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light?'* clearly not moral darkness, or darkness about the purposes of God in the future, but having no light about God's dealings in the present. I can't understand them now, but I expect such an interpretation of this sorrow as will make it radiant with the light of heaven. I bow before it, but I want One to interpret it, a Daniel to explain the mystic words on the wall. As to the meaning of this dispensation, though I understand it in some respects, yet as to its *full* meaning I walk in darkness, and have no light. What am I to do in this case? *'Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.'* By His grace I do, and I say that my God who *'is light,'* will make this darkest passage in my life as light as the very day. *'Let him trust in the name of the Lord and stay upon his God.'* I leave you there. Stay yourselves on God and nothing will ever move you."

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