

A Lily Early Gathered ;

OR,

THE HISTORY
OF SAMUEL PALMER.

BY

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SAMUEL PALMER.

THE Scriptures of truth declare that all flesh is grass, and the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field. In the morning it flourisheth and groweth up ; in the evening it is cut down and withereth. Now, if this is truly spoken of those who may attain the years of fourscore, how much more of those who are withered in the bud, and taken away before they reach maturity !

But those same Scriptures speak of LIFE ETERNAL ; yea, they speak of a manhood “ whose roots are in the living waters, whose leaves never fade, and that bringeth forth his fruit in his season ; ”—the Second Man, the Lord from heaven, who hath, by dying, abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light by His gospel. For as *in* Adam all have died ; so all *in* Christ are surely made alive. Indeed, the gospel

testimony consists in the fact of resurrection to eternal life by Jesus Christ. If, therefore, it is a sorrowful and awful truth, that "by one man's disobedience many were made sinners;" is it not a joyful and glorious fact, that also "by the obedience of One many are made righteous;" that, "as sin hath reigned unto death, even so doth grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord"? There is, then, a gloom over every child born into the world dead in sin; but what inexpressible joy and triumph to witness such an one bursting through this gloom, and arising from this death into the light and life of Jesus Christ. What joy for angels in heaven! what a topic for praise and admiration from believers on earth! Such then, dear reader, is the subject of this memoir, who slept in Jesus at the early age of twelve years and two months.

SAMUEL HART PALMER, the son of a clergyman, was born at Ideford, in South Devon, on the 24th of Feb., 1842. An extremely delicate infant, he was peculiarly susceptible of cold, and betrayed symptoms of pulmonary weakness, until he was ten

years of age; from that time until a few months before he died, his health was uninterrupted, and his spirits were very good. When he approached his ninth year, the word of God evidently wrought powerfully upon his youthful mind. He became remarkably thoughtful, and fond of reading the Scriptures. It had pleased God, in His Providence, that he should be at a school where he had regular and constant opportunities of hearing the blessed Word of God read and explained. He delighted in the Scriptures; and perceiving, through grace given to him, that Jesus was the key whereby to unlock all mysteries, and lay open the full meaning and purpose of God in His word, he appeared to esteem all teaching in proportion to the prominence given, and the love shown, to the name and work of Jesus, by the teacher. It is very difficult to say when or in what manner Samuel was brought to living faith in Jesus as his salvation—when he passed from death unto life, from the power of Satan unto God; but it was first manifest to others by his deep delight in the word of God.

He would be found at school awake and

searching its sacred pages, while his companions still slept. His fixed and interested countenance, his manifest earnest attention when reading the Bible with others, declared him to have a more than natural value for its precious truths. "Thy word hath quickened me," saith the Psalmist. "Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth, to be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures," are the words of the Apostle concerning those who, "looking into that perfect law of liberty, and continuing therein, are blessed in their deed." And truly this was most clearly seen, as the hand of God, upon a boy of high and cheerful spirit, at an age when nature's energies are always joyously and freely exercising their newly-found capacity for present pleasure, and for future joys.

His whole soul seemed arrested by the great fundamental gospel truths. The death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, and His coming again,—these were to his mind all-absorbing facts. The blood of the Lamb, its value, its cleansing power, the measure of our guilt, and of God's love; His coming again to take vengeance upon

them that know not God, and have not obeyed the gospel,—to be glorified in His saints, and admired in those that believe ;—these truths especially took possession of his heart and reigned in power there. Such, dear reader, was the power of God upon a boy's soul. It was not natural ; it was the *grace of God*.

He was endowed with a very refined taste, and intellectual mind. He was so diligent in the pursuit of his studies, that often, when he feared he might not be well prepared for his classes he would take his play-time to perfect his preparation, and master the lesson appointed him ; yet the word of God was his more favourite study. His taste never seemed so gratified as when he was speaking on its sacred and precious truths ; and often would he retire quietly from the amusements of his school-companions, to peruse in solitude its sacred revelations.

The salient features of his character were an exceedingly keen moral perception ; extreme reserve in public ; a correct judgment and natural decision, which would have surprised many an older person ; and an integ-

rity that sometimes involved severity in referring to breaches of it in others. He seldom spoke of himself; but delighted to converse about the Lord and His word.

During his illness, he desired especially to possess his soul in patience; and, fearing lest his great difficulty in expressing himself connectedly, from the shortness of his breath, should be taken for impatience, he often said, "I hope you do not think me cross;" and to the nurse, "I hope you do not think me rude."

He was a peculiarly inartificial child; his words and actions being a true indication of his mind, and the thoughts within him. Often during his illness, his poor emaciated frame was seen resting on his little arm, in order to pore over the pages of his favourite Testament, that his soul might be fed and solaced with the bread of heaven, the knowledge of Jesus; then at intervals you would see him amusing himself with his playthings. Unlike most children, he liked the Word in its purity, and cared little for any religious books but the book of God. That Word had a place in his heart and understanding.

He spent much time in copying parallel texts, which he would afterwards read with one or two of his school-fellows. He felt very happy in prayer with others,—often spoke of the prayers of Mr. E—— and Mr. Mc G——; how he felt their earnestness and faith; while the inattention of others much distressed him. The moment any spake of the things of God, the love of Jesus, or the hope of glory, the immediate lighting up of his countenance spoke out the happy feelings and the deep interest of his soul in such a topic. He always manifested his firm conviction, that it was better to follow the truth, to own and serve the Lord, whatever scorn or derision such conduct might bring upon him. He had much pleasure at times in the thought of being a missionary or a clergyman; yet he, on one occasion, said, “But it would be happier to die now, and be with the Lord; would it not?” The natural reserve of his disposition, or perhaps fear of letting his words go beyond his practice, hindered him from speaking on these subjects to any of his school-fellows, with the exception of a few, who could, at least in some measure,

feel with him. In conversation with two of them about the hope of a Christian—the coming of the Lord—he said, “he wished all were as sure of meeting the Lord as he was;” asking them “if the Lord should come to-night, how would it be with them?” They were silent; upon which he repeated the question solemnly to each boy; and added, “he should not fear, if it were to happen at that moment;” wondering how any one could sleep happily, without feeling they were safe in Jesus. Thus was it made manifest, that the truth was in him. That life in Christ was a reality in his soul, was also shown by his fondness for the Psalms, as expressive of the feelings and desires working within him. The prophecies of Daniel were often his meditation; and his deep interest in the certain events of the last days, which seem to be setting in, with the hope of glory for believers in Jesus, as children of God and co-heirs with Christ, proves that the hand of God was upon the child; that he walked in the light of God, and looked for a city that had foundations.

One day, in conversation on prayer, his brother said, “I always say the Lord’s

prayer." He replied, "I advise you never to say that, unless you are converted, because of three things.—1st. You will be calling God your Father, when He is not. 2nd. You will be asking for His kingdom to come, when you are not prepared. 3rd. You say you forgive trespasses, when you do not. The Lord's coming," he said, "will be to the Christian a morning without clouds; but to the world He will come as a thief in the night." A thunder-storm passing over the town at night, and awaking the boys in their beds, he repeated, "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matt. xxiv, 27).

We may remark here, that dear Samuel, when in health, had a peculiar joy when going to bed in talking of the Lord, and the things of the Kingdom. The close of the day would find his heart and tongue occupied with eternal realities; and many a happy time did he spend in companionship with a Christian friend at these periods, whose sweet privilege it was to seek to *help* on this little Zionward traveller. On one

occasion he left a company, who were decorating the house for Christmas festivities, to administer comfort to a weeping mother, whose little one had gone to the Lord. "Don't grieve about Tommy," he said; "he is much happier than we are."*

During the summer vacation of 1853, being at home, he offered a fourpenny-piece to a person who was employed at needle-work in the house. The woman at first refused to take it, enquiring if his Mamma knew it. He replied, "Mamma will not object; it is my own money, I can do what I please with it. You are a widow, and work hard for your living. I will make you a present of this trifle, if you will accept it." He then left the room, but, immediately returning, added, "This is as much as if Mamma had given you a sovereign. You know about the widow's mite, how that was accepted."

His deportment had been remarked as more serious for the last three vacations; he had been much more thoughtful; would

* This was about the time that he commenced to be thoughtful about his soul, as far as we can judge.

not talk lightly ; was very careful in speaking the truth always, and would recall his words, if he felt they might not be correct. Talking with his Mamma one day, he said, “ Mamma, faith can save the soul in a moment ; but if a person does not live a holy life, he cannot be a saved person. Another person may live a wicked life, and never hear the gospel till he is dying, and then he may believe and be saved : even in the eleventh hour there is hope, but I should not like to trust to it.”

He was a very happy joyous child ; happy at school, attached to his teachers ; happy at play, happy at his lessons, happy to go home for the holidays. His mind was often seriously exercised about the condition of others. A conversation with a servant who attended him in his illness, and of whom he was very fond, may be interesting, as indicating his thoughtfulness for the good of others.

Sam. “ I do not think I shall recover, Eliza.”

Eliza. “ Are you happy, my dear ?”

Sam. “ Yes, I am happy ; but I should like to live longer, if I were stronger.”

Eliza. "I am not happy, my dear."

Sam. "No, I do not think you are."

Eliza. "What shall I do to be happy?"

Sam. "I am too weak to talk to you now, Eliza." After a pause, he said, "Read the New Testament all through, and you will find there all you want."

Some of his companions also bear witness of his anxiety for the welfare of their souls, telling them that they never could have salvation but through the blood of Jesus; that through that blood his sins were forgiven, and he wished they were all as happy as he.

I said that, from ten years of age, he was a healthy boy; and it was not until the commencement of 1854, that symptoms of a latent disease caused uneasiness, although at first they were not of an alarming nature. At the close of February, his illness assumed a dangerous character; his poor tabernacle was sorely afflicted, and he sunk under a rapid consumption, which terminated his brief earthly career, May 17th, 1854.

After he was taken so ill, he used frequently to say, he should never recover; and observed to the servant, "I must try and forget all about going home to Torrington."

ton." He frequently sought the help of others' prayers, and never had any doubt but that the Lord would grant their and his petitions. On one occasion, his breath becoming painfully short, he asked for some one to pray for his relief; and when during the night he felt much better, he expressed his conviction that it was an answer to the previous prayer; and added of the one who had prayed with him, "I owe much to M——."

One morning, a watcher over this loved and suffering boy looked towards his bed to see how he was, as he had passed a very restless night. She found him reading his Bible. Seeing her, he asked for his New Testament, as the Bible was so heavy. She asked to let her read it to him, to which he felt his weakness forced his compliance, though at first he declined the offer. He then expressed his intention to read the New Testament through, and asked her to read the third of Matthew. To the remark of "How blessed to be the Lord's wheat, gathered into the garner," he most heartily assented.

One evening after this, he asked the

same kind watcher to read for him again. He had read on to Matthew the tenth. Many verses had not been gone over, before his manifest weakness caused the reader to cease. After a pause, he said, "Read something suited to me." "Where, my dear?" was the reply. He said, "Over in Thessalonians; but you know best." His friend repeated Psalm xli, 3, Psalm ciii, 13, 14, and then read some verses in 1 Thess. iv. To the remark made upon this scripture, he said, "But all say they believe that Jesus died, and rose again!" His friend then spoke of personally appropriating Christ as our *complete Saviour* by believing; and asked, "Where is YOUR trust, Sammy?" He immediately replied in one word, "*Jesus.*"

After this he suffered much, and asked his loving friend to sit near him. At half-past two in the morning he again asked her to read to him. She commenced the 14th chapter of John. The Bible was on the bed, he moved nearer and nearer to her; then, resting his pale cheek upon his little white hand, he looked over while she read the chapter to him.

A few days before he died, he said, "We need not kneel down, nor shut our eyes, nor lift up our hands to pray!" It was replied, "No, my dear; if those things were *necessary* in order to pray, you could not, as you are too weak to kneel." He then repeated Matthew vi, 6, beginning at "Enter into thy closet," and remarked, "There is nothing said there about kneeling down, or shutting our eyes, or lifting up our hands. I sometimes pray with my eyes open."

The Tuesday night previous to his death, which took place the following night, at 10 o'clock, he looked round the room, and asked if any other person was present. Being answered, "No;" he said, "Pray for me." When the prayer was ended, he said, "Pray for Thomas" (a favourite servant). In answer to the question, "What shall I pray for him?" He replied faintly, "That he may be washed in *the blood of Jesus.*"

Very early the following morning he asked the nurse for his New Testament. He only read a few verses, and said, "I cannot see to read any more." In the afternoon the nurse, who was a believer, said, "Shall I

fetch your aunt to pray with you?" This he much desired, but, she being absent, he said, "Never mind, I am too weak to bear it now." After this, he gradually sank away, and at ten o'clock the good Shepherd received this lamb to His loving bosom.

Thus closes this simple memoir of the "Grace of God," manifested in the salvation of a boy who was permitted just to attain the maturity of the holy child Jesus, when he, in flesh assumed, did "His Father's business," and went down to Nazareth, subject to His earthly parents (Luke ii, 42—52). Yes; his birth and boyhood sin, washed out for ever through the death and by the blood of the Lord Jesus, he was represented in heaven by the Holy Child.

For a little while was he allowed to bear fruit and fragrance in the Lord's garden. When coming down to gather lilies He removed this flower above, to shine forth in the day of His glory as the sun in the kingdom of His Father. And shall not our hearts be glad with the heart of Barnabas to see the "Grace of God"? Shall we not bow down and adore, and with firmer purpose of heart cleave unto this Lord? And

has not the Lord a voice in the salvation of this dear boy to all of you who knew him, and are connected with him, and his brief history, by ties of nature or companionship? "Doth not wisdom cry," and lift up a voice to us all in such a simple tale as this? If she is crying in the gates and cities of this great world by testimonies to the death and resurrection of Jesus, the proclamation of remission of sins and eternal life through faith in His Name; is she not also entering into our doors, and opening her mouth in our domestic circles by such sweet acts of grace as this; rolling back the waters of death and condemnation from off the soul of this boy, and ere his sinful heart had time to ripen and mature its natural independence and enmity to God, bringing him to Christ for pardon and salvation; planting in his youthful soul the holy life of Jesus, and making him a temple of the Holy Ghost? Glory be to God and to the Lamb of God that taketh away our sin!

"He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death."

Yea, "Wisdom hath builded her house,

she hath hewn out her seven pillars: she hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath furnished her table. She hath sent forth her maidens; she crieth upon the highest places of the city, Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: Come eat of my bread, and drink of the wine I have mingled. Forsake the foolish, and live."

The following hymn was a great comfort to dear Samuel during his illness:—

THERE is a fountain fill'd with blood,
 Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
 And sinners plung'd beneath that flood,
 Lose all their guilty stains.

The dying thief rejoiced to see
 That fountain in his day;
 And there would I, though vile as he,
 Wash all my sins away.

Dear dying Lamb, thy precious blood
 Shall never lose its power,
 Till all the ransom'd Church of God
 Be sav'd to sin no more.

E'er since, by faith, I saw the stream,
 Thy flowing wounds supply,
 Redeeming love has been my theme,
 And shall be till I die.

Then in a nobler sweeter song,
I'll sing thy power to save,
When this poor lisping stamm'ring tongue
Lies silent in the grave.

Lord, I believe thou hast prepar'd
(Unworthy though I be),
For me a blood-bought free reward—
A golden harp for me.

'Tis strung and tun'd for endless years,
And form'd by pow'r Divine,
To sound in God the Father's ears
No other Name but Thine.

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