

# ROBERT ROBERTS

BORN 1839 — DIED 1898

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an

## AUTOBIOGRAPHY

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with an

### APPENDIX

by

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ROBERT ROBERTS

*(From a photograph taken in 1895)*

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## PREFACE

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THE first thirty-six chapters of this book consist of an autobiography, under the heading of "My Days and My Ways," that originally appeared in a little monthly magazine called *Good Company* (1890-1894). The volumes of this have long been out of print. The remaining seven chapters of the book consist of An Appendix concerning "His Days and His Ways," from 1871 to 1898, when he died. This part of the story is of necessity told very briefly, and with some scruples concerning a few left in the land of the living. The writer hopes he may be pardoned if anything is thought to be amiss. He aims only at a truthful record, without "malice aforethought" to any living soul. The portrait is from an excellent photograph taken at Malvern in 1895.

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# MY DAYS AND MY WAYS

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

## CHAPTER I.

### BIRTH AND BOYHOOD.

I HAVE frequently been asked to write an account of my life. I have never felt sufficiently interested to make the attempt. My life has seemed so common as to be devoid of interest; and I have a feeling that all human life, as it now is, is so intrinsically weak and imperfect as to fail in affording the requisite enthusiasm for literary effort. Men as they are, and not as they appear in the atmosphere of narrative, are best described in the sober and literal words of the scriptures which tell us that rich men are a lie, and poor men vanity, and all the glory of man as the flower of the field. While they live they are full of shortcoming and trouble—a fragile organization of corruption in the best state, and in a generation, disappear one and all in native dust. Strongly sharing this feeling, I have hitherto refrained from the least record of a biographical character. If I make a beginning now, it is because I yield to the wishes of those I love, from whom I will pass away in due course of time.

I was born in the city of Aberdeen, in Aberdeenshire, Scotland, on the 8th of April, 1839; so the evidence goes to prove I believe the house is still standing in Link Street where the (for me as yet) unhappy event occurred. There is no affectation in my use of Jeremiah's words: "Wherefore came I forth out of the womb to see labour and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame?" (20: 18); "Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast made me a man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth" (15: 10). But there are many alleviations that make it easy for me to say, "The will of the Lord be done."

My father was a seaman, and for some years later in life, captain of a small coasting vessel. He was a quiet, kindly, truthful man, without much force of character. He was much away from home, and we were all left much to the care of our mother, who made up for his defect of mental energy. There were six boys of us and one girl, the eldest—all of whom grew up to manhood and womanhood. There had been four others who died in infancy. Ebenezer, the youngest of the six referred to, died in early manhood. William was drowned at sea. John, the eldest, died at Ottawa, Canada, in middle life. My other two brothers, Arthur and David, went to sea, and are at the present time (1890) captains, one of an emigrant vessel and the other of a trading steamer.

My mother was a superior woman of an energetic and strongly religious turn of mind. There was a mystery about her antecedents. We had no relations on her side of the house. If we were told the truth, which there is no reason to doubt, we learnt the reason from an old nurse of the Duke of Gordon's family, when I was 12 years of age, according to whom there was a bit of romance in the case, which led to my mother being sent to London under the charge of her father, a London merchant. My mother was educated in London, where she remained till her father's death, when she was sent back to her friends to Aberdeen, and there maintained herself as a school teacher till her marriage with my father.

My father's circumstances were very lowly and my mother had many difficulties to cope with in the rearing of a large family. She successfully surmounted them all in a measure. She gave us all a moderate education, and brought us up in strict separation from loose and frivolous neighbours. Home was, however, rather a place of wholesome discipline than of love's comfort, though my mother was not wanting on that side when other things were right. Looking back, I can now realise her difficulties and her worth as I could not at the time. We all received a religious bias, which was of value to

us afterwards, though I had a rough time of it at the beginning in consequence of having soon to run counter to my mother's views, which were orthodox, and which she herself finally gave up.

At ten years of age, I was taken by my mother along with my brothers to hear a Dr. Thomas in a chapel opposite the Baptist chapel in John Street, which my mother then attended. The usual preacher in that place was a Mr. Hart, an eccentric sort of man who had once been a soldier, and who made a trade of "christenings" at 2s. 6d. a head—anybody welcome. On this occasion, he did not appear in any way. The pulpit was occupied by two men—one an Aberdeen tradesman and the other the Dr. Thomas we had come to hear. Dr. Thomas was a quiet, stern, firm, neatly-made gentleman with jet black beard. His companion in the pulpit gave out the hymns and offered the prayer. Dr. Thomas delivered the address. I discovered from the remarks afterwards made as the congregation were dispersing that the address was regarded as something extraordinary, and that it was on baptism. The address had not struck me at all. I was too young to receive any impression. I had in fact wearied and slept under it, and was glad when it was over. The one thing that interested me and my brothers was the speaker's beard, which was a novelty in those days. As we went home together arm in arm, we vowed we should never shave. I had much occasion afterwards to know who this Dr. Thomas was.

About a year after this incident, I left school. I was then eleven years of age. My first experience in responsible life was in filling my brother Arthur's place while he was either unwell or sent somewhere else by his employers. He was clerk or keeper of a "rope cellar" in connection with a rope factory in the neighbourhood of the ship-building yards of the harbour (for Aberdeen is a seaport). My business was to keep a record on a slate of every article supplied to callers. It seemed very interesting work, as all work does to all boys, till they get enough of it and more,

and get to know what life as it now is really means—a struggle, a scramble, a merciless competition for mere liberty to exist: a state of things due to the larger and earlier circumstance that God hid His face from the human race for a season, because of sin, and left them to look after themselves—which they are not fit to do). The work in the rope cellar did not last long, as my brother returned to his place: I had a strong desire to become a “cabinet maker,” as joiners are called in Scotland. I got my mother to go round the shops with me, but they would have none of me: they thought I was not strong enough for such work. In this they were mistaken; but it was as well. Had they thought otherwise, it is certain my course of life would have been entirely different. My mother then spoke to an uncle of mine, who got me into a small grocer’s shop. I had not been long there when it became apparent that it was a drinking place as well as a grocer’s shop, and my mother would not let me stay a moment after this discovery. She then spoke to the leading printer of that town, who was a member of the Baptist congregation (John Street) to which she at that time belonged. This gentleman was a lithographer as well as a letterpress printer, and he gave me a place in the lithographic department under his son, Ebenezer. Here I had lessons in drawing and stone work, and was making satisfactory progress when, at the end of three months, my mother thought I was getting hurt in the chest through stooping over the stones, and she obtained my removal to the letter-press department, where for more than twelve months I was engaged both at the press and case.

About this time, photography was coming into notice, and my master’s son, Mr. Ebenezer Cornwall, took an amateur interest in it. He obtained a camera, and used to visit Dr. Munroe’s hydropathic institution at Loch Head in the early mornings to take portraits of the patients. On these expeditions, I used to accompany him as his “boy,” to fetch and carry. On one occasion, the group of sitters included my future wife,

without any knowledge on my part or hers. She had come from Edinburgh to visit her sister, who was an invalid in the institution, and noticed the photographer’s boy, with whom she was destined afterwards to have much to do. She was at this time a grown girl, close on the threshold of womanhood, and would have been disagreeably impressed had she been told that the mite of a boy in attendance upon the amateur photographer was her future husband. But so it came to pass, to my great blessedness.

I cannot now remember the cause of my leaving Mr. Cornwall’s, but leave it I did when I was about 13 or over, and found myself among “the unemployed.” About this time my brothers went to sea, and I felt a strong inclination to follow their example. That I did not do so was due to a strong sense that came over me one day as I was walking among the ships in the harbour, that if I went to sea, I would be cut off from all opportunities of improvement, and would probably grow up a barbarian. This feeling was due to the encouragement I received in superior directions from my sister, and to the interest I had begun to take in religion. My interest in religion dated from the hearing of a certain sermon to which I was taken by my mother. The preacher was a fervid minister from the Highlands, whose intense, stimulating oratory found a ready response in the state of mind to which I had been brought by recent misbehaviour. This misbehaviour consisted in staying away from the night school which I attended after I had begun to go to work; and in spending the time on the streets with a companion, who regaled myself and my brother with all sorts of crazy delights from the shop windows, to the ruin of health. This had gone on for some weeks, during which I was the unworthy recipient of my mother’s pity at my deranged physical state. Being found out, we were summoned before the schoolmaster by the boy’s father, and subjected to an examination which made our teeth chatter with apprehension at the prospect opened out by their combined threats. The result of the examination was that we were

to be handed over to our parents for punishment. Though this was not so bad as we had feared, previous experience made it sufficiently alarming ; but the cloud blew over. My mother gave me an awful lecture, the whole force of which was taken away by the concluding declaration that she would not punish me herself, but leave me to the punishment of my own conscience—a punishment which at that time did not trouble me much. With a feeling of entire relief, I proceeded to the next thing.

## CHAPTER II.

“CONVERSION”—*Elpis Israel*.

ALTHOUGH the terrors of conscience were not very powerful at that early age, I was miserable enough, notwithstanding ; and when my mother took me to hear the excitable preacher referred to in the last chapter, I was fairly overcome by his glowing representations of the Divine mercy for miserable sinners. I was in tears during his entire discourse, and went home in a state of mind that lasted some time.

My mother considered me “converted,” and her religious acquaintances rejoiced with her in the change, and encouraged me in the new views of my state. I tried to respond to their ideas as earnestly as possible, and became as absorbingly religious as was possible with me. I conformed to the recognised ideal of religiousness according to the standard in vogue among the Calvinistic Baptists of Scotland. I had six months of tormented “experience,” with occasional gleams of satisfaction—as to which I adopted the view that God and the Devil were thus struggling for mastery in my “soul.” I found great comfort in the reading of the sensational religious tracts which inculcated this view, and was especially solaced and encouraged by James Angell James’s “Young Man’s Anxious Enquirer.” In the reading of the Bible, I found very little satisfaction, and that only in a very few selected parts.

When I had got through the stock of religious reading within my immediate reach, I searched among a collection of old books and pamphlets which lay neglected on some shelves in the house, in the hope of finding a further supply. There was very little of a suitable character in the pile. But I made one discovery of great moment. I came across a copy of the *Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come*, which was being published monthly by Dr. Thomas. I had not the least

idea of its character. I had never heard of it before that I know of. The one thing I perceived was that it was a religious magazine ; and in my state of mind I withdrew it from its place with a feeling of satisfaction, and sat down to read.

The experience was extraordinary. I expected the usual sort of religious reading—dealing with the “experiences of the soul,” in the light and shade of depressed and joyful feeling. But lo! here was a religious book that denied straight away in the first article that there was such a thing as an immortal soul in man at all, and then denounced the whole religious system built upon such an idea as a superstition, and an imposture for which the Bible was not responsible. I was startled. I was awakened. I was filled with a new joy. The power of the article lay in its argument. Mere assertion would, of course, have filled me with aversion : but the Scriptures were quoted in disproof of the immortality of the soul in a way that literally carried me away.

I began to make inquiries which alarmed my mother, but filled my sister with satisfaction. I ascertained that this *Herald of the Kingdom* came to the house every month to my sister. How it came to do so I also learnt. This was in the year 1852. Dr. Thomas had visited Aberdeen, and lectured in 1849. My grandmother (my father’s mother, a descendant of the Clan Macbeth, a tribe of barbarians as I now see, but who at the time figured in my eyes as glorious ancestors), and my sister had attended his lectures, and had become deeply interested in the things presented concerning the Kingdom of God, and the signs of the times ; and learning that he published a monthly magazine, they became between them subscribers for one copy, which first went to my grandmother, and then came to my sister before going elsewhere. The copy I had stumbled across was on its monthly visit to my sister.

I was delighted to know that the magazine would come regularly every month. I looked forward to its arrival with intense eagerness. I became a voracious, and even excited, reader of it and the Bible. I dis-

covered from letters published in the *Herald*, Dr. Thomas had written a large book called *Elpis Israel*. This was a joyful discovery. I felt a strong desire to read it, but I could not get at it. My mother would not help me, but much the reverse if she could have done so. My sister had no copy, and did not know where to get one. An old woman, Miss Isabel Smith, that lived in the same tall house of flats (in Castle Lane), heard of my desire, and told me she would get a read of *Elpis Israel* for me. In due time she brought it to me. She could not have made me happier. I was overjoyed. I never experienced a purer pleasure than when I commenced with the majestic opening sentences :—

“Revolving upon its own axis, and describing an ample circuit through the boundless fields of space, is a planet of the solar system, bearing upon its surface a population of nearly a thousand millions subject to sin, disease, and death.”

I never ceased the reading (at my leisure intervals) until I got through. I rose early in the morning to have more time. My mother, who was grieved and angered beyond measure at the change that had come over me, said I would not get up so soon to read my Bible : but in this she was mistaken, for the effect of Dr. Thomas’s writings, while causing me to lose all taste for the religious literature which had for six months been my sustenance, was to impart a keen interest in the Bible, which before had been uninteresting to me, and to lead me to its daily and early, and persevering perusal. My mother afterwards (15 years afterwards) changed her mind, and herself joyfully and thoroughly embraced what at first she condemned, and became, as she now is, in the 84th year of her age (1890), the most enthusiastic and admiring reader of Dr. Thomas’s works that I know.

When I had completed the perusal of *Elpis Israel*, my mind was made up. The concurrent reading of the Bible with it, had enabled me to arrive at the conclusion (never since disturbed) that popular theology was a hideous caricature of divine truth, and that the system

of things contended for by Dr. Thomas was according to a full and correct understanding of the whole Scriptures of Moses, the prophets and the apostles. In this conviction, I resolved to have nothing more to do with church or chapel; but how to give effect to my resolution was a matter of difficulty. I was only twelve, and in the habit of going regularly to chapel with my mother and brothers, from whose authority and example it seemed no more possible to liberate myself, than for a soldier to absent himself from drill without the permission of his commanding officer. As time went on my determination grew, and I resolved to act at all hazards.

I had meanwhile discovered through the same old lady that got me *Elpis Israel*, that there was a small meeting of believers in the things taught by Dr. Thomas. I got her to take me to their place one Sunday afternoon. It was in a curious corner, and in a curious building. I forget the name of the street. It was a narrow back street, with a steep descent at the lower end, which passed by a bridge or tunnel under St. Nicholas Street or Union Street, near their junction. At this point there was an old castle, that at one time would stand by itself, but was now built in among the houses, forming the north side of Union Street. The meeting place was an upper room in this castle, up a spiral staircase, entered by a door not far from the dark deserted end of the road. It was a room about 10 or 12 feet square, and about the same height. There was a table in the centre, and benches round the sides. About twenty people were assembled—all plain, unpretending people of the working class. My satisfaction in attending was out of all proportion to the nature and surrounding of the assembly. It was not in reality due to them. It was derived from the great and glorious things I had learned from Dr. Thomas's writings with which this insignificant assembly was associated in my mind. I supposed every one composing it would be aglow with the love I felt for these things, and therefore felt purely glad—as I did not often feel afterwards.

I attended this afternoon meeting regularly for a time. A meeting was held in the forenoon, but this I could not attend on account of having to go to chapel under the iron law in force at home. From this I finally determined to break away, as already indicated. Accordingly, one Sunday morning, I left the house an hour before the usual time, and made a long detour outside the town, avoiding on my return the road where I would be likely to meet my mother and brothers going to chapel, and coming in by a road that led me to the neighbourhood of the brethren's meeting place. Attendance at chapel had become a pain to me, and therefore it was with an unspeakable sense of relief that I found myself in the small room among the brethren, instead of among the pews in a large congregation. I do not remember what passed at the meeting. I know I enjoyed it. It was the going home that was the anxiety.

## CHAPTER III.

## BAPTISM.

I HAD said nothing beforehand about my purpose to cease chapel attendance, because I knew that would have frustrated my object. My absence from chapel would come as a shock, and lead to a storm I feared. It was so, but it did not break at once. When I got home, my mother was sitting over the fire, with her chin upon her hands. She did not speak to me: but there was thunder in her face and manner. The day passed in cloud and sultriness. At night, the storm broke. I had got to bed, when my mother came, and she told me I must attend chapel or leave the house. I gave her to understand it was impossible I could attend chapel; and, as for leaving the house, it seemed equally out of the question. There was much loud talk and tears. My eldest brother (John, who afterwards died in the faith at Ottawa, in Canada), understanding the situation, came from another room, and took my part. It was finally arranged there should be a compromise—that I should attend chapel in the evening (when there was no meeting of the brethren), but that I should be at liberty to attend the meetings of the brethren morning and afternoon.

With this treaty of peace, the war ended. But it was soon resumed. On the next Sunday, with a glad sense of relief, I attended the meetings of the brethren morning and afternoon, and in the evening I went with my brothers to the chapel (or church, as all chapels are called in Scotland). On the way to church in the evening, my brothers asked me why I wanted to absent myself from church. I replied, "Because Mr. Anderson (that was the name of the preacher), does not preach the Gospel." My brothers reported this remark to my mother, and this led to a renewal of the storm. My mother was greatly excited. Her chief distress was for my brothers. "What were my poor brothers to think,

as they sat listening to Mr. Anderson, when their elder brother told them he did not preach the Gospel?" so she said to me, in the midst of grief and anger. I feared terrible consequences: either exile from home or a cancelling of the liberty I had received. I was agreeably disappointed. The terrible outpour ended, with a command, never more to enter the church door. This was my final emancipation. From that day, I bade farewell to pulpits and all kinds of ecclesiastical edifices, and clerical operations. I have had nothing to do with them since. It was a great rupture of home friendship, but this was mitigated to some extent by the sympathy of my sister and elder brother, who both ultimately became obedient to the faith. The unhappiness of home drove me to take a closer refuge in the Bible, and in the companionships arising out of the understanding of its glorious contents.

About this time, on the recommendation of my sister, I became apprenticed to a druggist (James McLean, 43, Castlegate, Aberdeen). He died six or eight years afterwards. I derived great advantage from my experience here. It gave me an opportunity of improving my education on various points, and greatly extended my knowledge of men and things. I took lessons in Latin, and learnt Pitman's shorthand. The latter acquisition was due to my acquaintance with brother Mowatt's family, who formed the kernel of the Aberdeen meeting. The eldest son, "Aleck," was a member of a shorthand mutual improvement class, which I joined through him. The class met once a week, and was a great help to me in the matter of learning to speak and write.

I remember my first attempt at the former. I had never previously uttered two consecutive sentences, otherwise than in conversation. I was called on, in rotation with the other members, to make some criticism on an essay that had been read. I got up in imitation of the others; I leant forward, with my hands helplessly outspread on the table before me. My brain got into a whirl. I managed to gasp out a few words and

then sat down. In itself, the effort was a frightful failure : but it was of great importance as the breaking of the ice. Next time I was called on, the ordeal was not so severe, and gradually the embarrassment diminished with every occasion, until I found facility of utterance taking its place. This result was aided by the practice of trying to take down all the speeches delivered at the meetings of the brethren on Sundays. At last I ventured to speak at one of these meetings. I made a few remarks on the 95th Psalm, contending it was a picture of the kingdom from its introduction of Samuel and Moses. Brother Mowatt congratulated me on making a start, but thought I had made a mistake in the application of the Psalm.

Before this, my immersion into Christ had taken place in 1853, when I was 14 years old. I was examined by brethren A. Black and J. Mowatt, and immersed by the former in the River Dee, about a mile outside the town. A fisherman's hut afforded undressing convenience. It was a beautiful summer's Sunday morning. There was a crowd of Sunday strollers on the bank, who gave a loud laugh when the act of baptism was performed. Another was immersed at the same time—I think a farm-hand, by the name of Lawson. I am also under the impression that the same morning, my grandmother and uncle (Reid) were immersed. If not then, it was not long before or after. Next Sunday morning, we were very affectionately received at the breaking of bread. It was a very gratifying occasion, as I suppose it is to every one who is received among the brethren for the first time. We received the right hand of fellowship by being made to stand at the door of exit as the meeting dispersed,—each one shaking us by the hand as they passed out. I was a diligent attender at all the meetings afterwards.

It was about this time I commenced the systematic reading of the Scriptures, which is now so general a practice, with the aid of *The Bible Companion*. I found I must read, first for information, and then for daily sustenance in the things of the Spirit. Reading

led to marking special passages with ink—arising from the need for ready quotation in conversation with those who opposed the truth. I think I first got the idea of marking from Mrs. Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, over whose case (Uncle Tom's) I cried bitterly at the idea of his exclusion from the kingdom.

My Bible reading was at first discursive. Then I began to see the need for system. I adopted a system of my own. I divided the Old Testament into four parts, and the New Testament into three parts. During my breakfast hour, I read a chapter from each of the New Testament parts ; and during my dinner hour, a chapter from each of the Old Testament parts—seven in all. I continued this for eight months, gradually finding it too much for continuance. I then reduced the whole to four parts, taking two and two, breakfast and dinner. This I persevered with for some years, and finally came down to three at one sitting—which I have continued ever since. At the commencement of my Bible readings, I trusted to memory for the next chapters to be read. But after several years' experience, I found it convenient to have a written guide. So I made a calendar of the entire readings for the year, in a penny pass book, which greatly facilitated the process.

Friends got to know of this, and first one and then another asked me to provide them with a copy. I did this with much pleasure, until I had written 18 copies. Then I came across a printed little work of the same character, which suggested the idea of having my guide printed. This was done, under the name of *The Bible Companion*, which, with some modification, has continued in use ever since. Many, many thousands have been printed and circulated—(I know not how many), and to this day there is no pamphlet in connection with the truth in such steady demand. This result is gratifying, as it means that the enlightened reading of the Scriptures is a growing custom, which cannot fail to be a blessing to all who practise it.

For about five years, I assembled with the Aberdeen brethren. During this time, the Crimean War



broke out. We had all been looking out for an advance by Russia upon Constantinople, and it was very exhilarating to find events apparently shaping in that very direction. It was a great disappointment, however, to find Russia foiled and finally driven back by the allied defenders of Turkey. We were able to take some consolation, from the reflection that the time had not come for the Gogian invasion of the Holy Land, that is, that according to our chronological reckoning, the time was premature by 15 years. We all recognised that the Papal period did not expire till A.D. 1866-8, and that the Lord's coming could not be looked for till then at the earliest. Russia's advance had come upon us as a refreshing surprise, and had excited premature expectations. When it ended in her repulse, we interpreted it in harmony with the fact just stated. Brother Mowatt indeed contended for it as a necessity, on the strength of the statement in the Ezekiel prophecy:—"I will *turn thee back* and put hooks in thy jaws: and I will bring thee forth and all thine army." He argued from this that there was a "turning back" before the "bringing forth." We did not quite agree with him. At all events, it enabled us to be reconciled to the disappointment of our hopes. Our idea had been, that though Russia was evidently coming on before the time, her movements, actually commenced, might extend to the very time, and that Christ might come in the meantime to prepare Israel and his house against the Gogian catastrophe. The events of the time gave me a powerful interest in public events, which has never ceased, though time and delay have sobered it on some points.

## CHAPTER IV.

WRITES TO DR. THOMAS.

THE regular receipt of the *Herald* every month was a great educator to me, in conjunction with the daily reading of the Scriptures. My mind opened on a great variety of subjects, and I felt much drawn to the editor of the magazine. Letters from indebted readers used to appear in its pages; and I at last ventured to address him myself. In the Autumn of 1856 I wrote the following letter, which appeared in the *Herald* for 1857, page 43.

It now strikes me as being an inflated and raw production of the sort that usually comes from impetuous youth when permitted to air itself—interesting only as the premonition of a laborious and painful day. There was no one to control or check me, otherwise the letter would not have been written, or, being written, would never have gone across the Atlantic:

MY DEAR BROTHER,—Although personally unknown to you, I have, nevertheless, in virtue of a unity and identity of "hope," presumed thus far upon your forbearance. It has long been my intention to write you, but hitherto I have been deterred by various considerations. At last, however, I have got the pen in my hand, which I am resolutely determined not to relinquish till I shall have transferred my ideas (such as they are) to paper. My object in writing, is more to encourage you in the struggle in which you are engaged, than to perplex (?) you with pointless questions and imaginary difficulties.

Allow me to remark then, that, to my mind, you seem to be carrying forward the "good fight" to a successful termination, for I conceive that the capture of the "good and honest-hearted" (of which I painfully testify there are but few) by the truth, is the very highest point of success to which we could aspire. This, then, you are certainly accomplishing. True, in

relation to the mass, the progress of the truth is slow and uncertain. While the state superstitions, and the most extravagant absurdities of the multifarious "sects and denominations" meet with respect, and command attention, "the truth," even with the most "learned" and "intellectual" among them, meets with the bitterest opposition, and its adherents they treat with the most profound contempt. In fact, their "divines," "philosophers," "fathers," etc., do not deem it worthy of investigation. They summarily discard it as altogether unworthy even of notice, while they will gravely discuss such monstrous absurdities as Romanism, Campbellism, Mormonism, etc!!! But with the other class it is the reverse. When the "word of the kingdom" (Matt.) is sown in "good ground," it springs up and bears fruit, some an hundredfold, etc., a synonymous expression with the belief of the truth.

Therefore, my dear brother, although it may appear anomalous that a young, inexperienced youth such as I, should be encouraging a hardy veteran; still, I cannot but speak from the fulness of my heart, and encourage you to persevere. What, if by your faithful advocacy of the truth, you entail upon yourself the contempt and abuse of all Christendom! That's nothing but what Paul experienced from the "philosophers" too! And it is nothing but what all must and do experience, who "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered in the saints." But, after all, these considerations would afford little consolation, were it not for the "gracious promises." "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

You will bear with me if I should appear too minute in detailing a case illustrative of the illuminating influence of the truth, as set forth in *Elpis Israel*. The case is my own, and I can, therefore, speak with certainty. Previous to coming in contact with the above-mentioned work, I was zealously affected for what I considered the truth, viz.: The ideas propounded from the pulpit I believed them, and so far as I am aware, walked consistently I was sincere, quite in earnest,

and my language mentally was, "Sirs, what shall I do to be saved?" On all hands, I invariably received the response, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," etc. Being in perfect ignorance, except of what I had received from maternal indoctrination, I accepted the generally received understanding of "Believe, etc.", as truth. I was just on the eve of being immersed on Baptist principles, when I fell in with a *Herald*. There was something so rational, so comprehensible, something which partook so much of common sense, that my attention was at once arrested. My curiosity was so much excited, that nothing short of an understanding of the whole matter, in some way or other, would satisfy me. I therefore procured a copy of *Elpis Israel*, and read it with intense interest. I then compared it with what the Scriptures *actually* said, and I was perfectly struck with the identity of the language. Without further hesitation, I renounced for ever the *absolute blasphemies* to which I had before adhered, viz., "immortality of the soul," "heaven," "hell," an atmospheric recompense at death, etc., etc., etc.; and, having become aware of the existence of a meeting of believers here, although then only in my fifteenth year, I identified myself with them, by putting on Christ by immersion.

In following this course of action, it is almost needless to add that I experienced the most abusive misrepresentation and utter contempt that vindictiveness could possibly devise. Former friends turned their backs and became sworn enemies; relations became cold; and all agreed to pity my infatuation. And yet, if you "reason with them from the Scriptures," the very strength of the arguments, the very overpowering nature of the evidence, seems to confirm them in their unbelief; they therefore hesitate stammer, sputter, and turn round and brand you as an "infidel," "materialist," etc., etc., reminding one forcibly of the words of Paul, "To the one it is a savour of death into death," etc. They will not *reason*, but resort to vociferous vituperations. Surely these are not sincere,

surely they are not interested in the absorbing question, "What is truth?" who will not *reason*. Their faith is certainly, as you express it, "An *unreasoning assent* to certain dogmas."

Brother Thomas, my gratitude is unbounded. I cannot possibly give utterance to my feelings. What a great salvation has been revealed! What a book is the Bible!! What a God is Jehovah!!! My heart swells with grateful emotion when I contemplate these things. My thanksgiving knows no bounds, when I revert to the former contemptible, effeminate appearance which these things made, when reviewed through the medium of sectarian theology.

My efforts for the diffusion of the truth, I regret to say, can extend no further than contention, of which I have plenty. Being only seventeen years of age, I am, of course, poor in this world's goods, or else, I can assure you, dear brother, the *Herald* should never go down for want of funds. As it is, however, my exertions in behalf of the truth must be confined exclusively to speaking; and, when the time comes, they will also be extended to co-operation in the way of funds; and then when Jesus returns, He will reward every man according to his work.

I am afraid I have trespassed on your forbearance, but then you know how to excuse one that is in earnest.

With an earnest desire that you may be spared until our Lord returns to Zion, I remain, your affectionate brother in the hope of the promise made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

\* \* \* \*

Aberdeen, Scotland,

October 8th, 1856.

## CHAPTER V.

### BECOMES A REPORTER.

**A**BOUT the time of the appearance of my letter to Dr. Thomas, an incident occurred which had a material bearing on my future course. A printer who had an office over the druggist's shop where I was employed, and who used to be a frequent visitor at the shop, started a daily paper, on a very humble scale, a mere sheet, of which not more than a hundred circulated. On the occasion of one of his visits, he asked me if I knew a young man who could do the editing and reporting for the paper. I thought of a young acquaintance of mine who had become an expert shorthand writer. I mentioned the matter to him, and the idea pleased him, and ultimately an arrangement was made between him and the printer, by which he became the reporter of *The Aberdeen Daily Telegraph*. (I think that was the name) He continued in this position several months, and then received an offer of the editorship of a small paper at either Fraserburgh or Peterhead, about 40 miles further north. I think it was *The Peterhead Sentinel*. He accepted the position. This made a vacancy in *The Aberdeen Daily Telegraph*, and the printer applied to me again. I could not tell him of a suitable young man this time. He then asked if I thought I could take the position myself.

This was a new idea. It set me thinking. The position I was in was ill adapted to my tastes and aims in life. The truth had opened the world to my view in its real meaning. The knowledge of the purpose of God, as revealed to the prophets, had thrown a new light on all sublunary things, and imparted a new interest to history, and a new prospect to life, in every way. My heart rose to the expansion, and I felt out of place behind a counter vending pills and hair oil. The idea of entering upon press work seemed to strike a new chord, and open up new prospects. It did not take me long to

come to a decision. There was a difficulty in the way. I was a bound apprentice to my employer for five years, and only four years of the term had run. This difficulty was got over by my master consenting to cancel my indenture, and accepting another apprentice in my place. Thus set at liberty, I entered upon a new field, which gradually opened out my sphere indefinitely. It was not many months, however, before I was obliged to call a halt.

My new employer, the printer, was in somewhat needy circumstances, and could not afford to pay the telegraph company for the daily telegrams. Consequently he used to require me to go to the news room and copy the telegrams as they arrived there. I did not at first know that this was an illegitimate proceeding. When I realised it, I gave the printer to understand I could not continue it, and so I had to leave.

While I was with him I remember a ludicrous incident, which showed me how small is the incipient mind of boyhood at eighteen. The Assize judges came to Aberdeen once in six months, or some such term. Up till now I had only contemplated their proceedings from the distant point of view of a reverential spectator. I was now sent to report the proceedings for the mid-day edition of the little daily. To do this it was needful that I should leave the court at a certain stage, and repair to the newspaper office and provide assize "copy." But I was so overawed by the majesty of the proceedings that it seemed to me sacrilege to stir till the proceedings were at an end. My employer, Mr. Bennett, wondered what had become of me, and had to bring out the paper without Assize intelligence. My explanation caused amused irritation. I came to see such matters in a very different light.

For a few months after this, I was idle; but during the interval I received several reporting "jobs" through the acquaintance with the reporters of the other papers which my brief connection with *The Telegraph* had given me. I was called on to assist in

the reporting of the speeches delivered at an investigation into the merits of the Suez Canal scheme, conducted by the Town Council on the occasion of a visit by M. de Lesseps, with whom, and his canal, I always felt specially acquainted after this.

Another appointment was of a more onerous character. A project was being promoted for the construction of a railway through Aberdeenshire which, as yet was only traversed by stage coaches. There were two rival railway projects. A committee of the promoters was about to pay a visit to the principal points in the county, to enlist the support of the farmers and others on behalf of the Buchan and Formartine line, and it was needful that a reporter should accompany them, to make notes of the meetings, and furnish a report to the weekly paper, *The Aberdeen Herald*. The paper could not spare a man from the ordinary work of the paper, and I was applied to, and duly commissioned to do this work. I was away some week or more, jolting over the country in a road conveyance with these railway people, putting up at hotels, and attending meetings in all kinds of out-of-the-way places. It was my first real peep out into the world. I got my first look at an aristocrat during the journey (I think at Fraserburgh), in the person of the chairman at one of the meetings, Mr. Grant Duff, M.P. I was agreeably impressed with the superiority which I saw human nature was capable of attaining, for I had been accustomed to the utmost commonplaces, both in respect to people and circumstances.

I delivered my first lecture during this journey. I came across a Mr. Bruce—a kind of a Plymouth brother—who knew me through my mother, though I was unaware of the fact. He asked me to his house, and convened some religious friends, to whom he introduced me. He then asked me to address them. I said I was not a speaker. They said they knew I could say something to them about the Bible, and pressed me. I complied at last, and getting on to my feet, spoke for half-an-hour or so on Daniel's vision of the four empires and the coming

of the Kingdom of God. They expressed themselves as greatly delighted, and hoped we should meet again, which, so far as I am aware, we never did.

There was an unpleasant incident at the same time. A solicitor's clerk accompanied the expedition, and it was his business to make a duplicate of my manuscript for some other paper. But on an important day, he had taken drunk, and was unable to do his work, and he implored me to make the second copy for him, otherwise he would lose his situation. I did so, but had to sit up all night to accomplish it. When my work was done, it filled five or six columns of the weekly paper, and I had the satisfaction of knowing that my temporary employers were pleased with my work, which they also paid me for, on a scale which, in my inexperience, overwhelmed me with its munificence. In reality I was paid only half of the professional charge. This I did not know at the time, and to me it seemed almost criminal to accept such liberal payment. The sub-editor of the paper laughed heartily at my scruples, and said the day would come when the acceptance of earned money would not distress me. Out of the money paid me, my mother got me my first watch, and for some weeks afterwards, the time of day was a subject of special and constant interest.

About this time, there was an annual meeting at Edinburgh of brethren from various parts of Scotland. Brother John Barker was appointed to go on behalf of Aberdeen; and he asked me to accompany him. This was a great matter for me. Edinburgh was interesting beyond anything I had seen in the north, and the meeting of brethren, though not very large (perhaps from 70 to 100) was interesting to a degree I could not express. But the chairman struck me as being rather obtuse. There was a proposal to publish some things from Dr. Thomas's *Herald* in tract form. He offered strong objection to this, principally on the ground that such a course would infringe Dr. Thomas's copyright. When everybody had spoken, and the last appeal for further remark had been made, I rose and said I scarcely dared to speak, but it seemed to me the objection to the publication of

good tracts from Dr. Thomas's works was one that should be left to him, and that I did not believe he would raise it, as we could not suppose but that he would only rejoice at anything that would extend the knowledge of the truth. My future wife was present. I did not know it, for I had no acquaintance with her; but she has often since remarked that my words on that occasion commended themselves to her as a little young common sense, in the midst of much senior fog. I had occasion afterwards to know the nature of the fog of whose existence at that time I had and could have no suspicion.

Returning to Aberdeen, my future wore a very uncertain aspect. I had no regular occupation, and no likelihood of obtaining any settled reporting appointment in the limited world of Aberdeen life. Several months of indefiniteness and wearisomeness wore away, and then a letter from the south changed the current once more. Aleck Mowatt, who had gone to Peterhead, was now reporter on the staff of *The Caledonian Mercury*, a daily paper published at Edinburgh. From this city, I received a letter from him, apprising me of a vacancy that had just occurred on his paper, and of the fact that he had recommended me for the post. This was glad news, and after a few days' preparation, I left Aberdeen for Edinburgh, never to return to my native place except as a rare visitor.

My duties as a reporter of a paper like *The Caledonian Mercury* (published at the historic and intellectual centre of Scottish life) introduced me to many matters and things that greatly extended my acquaintance with life, of which, however, I was not able to take the full advantage. The Scottish law courts, the ecclesiastical synods, the monthly Presbyteries, the art exhibitions, the scientific lectures, and annual prize convocations of various educational institutions, and numerous miscellaneous occasions gave me many opportunities of a widened view in all directions. But my heart did not go out to the things with which I had to deal. I was content to get my duties done. My sympathies were centred in the Scriptures and the things that stood

related to them. Professional matters were repugnant to me, as the embodiment of the world to which Jesus did not belong, and in which I felt it was my part to be equally a stranger with him

The meetings of the brethren were the point of attraction with me. Fresh from the crudenesses of the north, there was much in these that for a considerable time was charming. There was more culture and mellowness than I had been accustomed to, and there was the pleasantness of good singing. The love of the truth I took for granted and was therefore entirely in my element. If the charm was broken by and by, it was because the truth stood in a different position among my new friends from what I had assumed. Dr. Thomas was not esteemed as I esteemed him, his works were not appreciated as I supposed they necessarily must be by every one, understanding the truth, and the Bible and the truth had not that earnest place which seemed to me essential in a company professing subjection to apostolic principles. It was some time before I discovered this.

Meanwhile, I was solaced with the sympathy and love of one sister in their midst, whose society created an atmosphere that I mistook for a time for that of the whole circle. To this sister I have twice already referred. She had seen me twice before, but I had not seen her at all till I came to Edinburgh, and when I was introduced to her, I was drawn to her with a power that soon ended in the closest intimacy. She was my senior by eight years, but this, so far from being an obstacle, was the reverse. It imparted to her a weight and sobriety of character that fitted her for the companionship which I desired. Girls of my own age were frivolous. One with whom I had tried to cultivate acquaintance in Aberdeen (a brother's daughter) asked me why I "jawed so much about the nations." There was no repugnance of this sort to the truth about Jane Norrie. On the contrary, her tastes were all in the line of intellectual and scriptural things. There was an inexhaustible fund of interest in this direction which supplied the material for conversation that never flagged. I met no one like her in this

respect, and it was inevitable that our acquaintance should ripen fast, as it did, into the tenderest relation. I was only nineteen when we mutually agreed that we were suited for life companionship. Some of our friends were scandalised at such a result, but we felt sure our decision was a wise one, and therefore, without making a secret of it in any way, we shut our eyes and ears, and went on our way. Time justified our policy.

## CHAPTER VI.

## HUDDERSFIELD AND HALIFAX.

ALMOST immediately after I had made the comfortable arrangement referred to at the close of the last chapter, there was a rough jolt in the hitherto smooth and pleasant course of events. In fact, the train went off the line, and landed me in the blackness of night for a short time. I received a sudden discharge from my place on the staff of *The Caledonian Mercury*. The reason was, I had made a mistake in copying a legal document, from which the editor had to quote in the course of a leading article, on some controversy that was going on. The editor quoted from my copy, and happened to quote from the part in which I had blundered. The parties on the other side (as I understood) came up next day and pointed out the mistake. The editor, who was an Irishman, felt thoroughly vexed, and at once wrote me my discharge.

The serious aspect of the affair for me lay here, that my employment on *The Caledonian Mercury* was somewhat in the nature of a trial trip, and here it had ended in failure. How could I hope to get another situation after being discharged for incompetency? It was my first real calamity. My chief distress was the fear that it might end the sweet and (as it was considered) rash arrangement I had established with a true daughter of Sarah. The idea of having to return to Aberdeen and resume the compounding of pills behind a mahogany counter was depressing indeed. I wrote a despairing appeal to my employer for another trial, but without effect.

In the midst of my gloom, the light suddenly broke—as suddenly as the darkness had come. Before my notice had half expired, a gentleman walked into the reporter's room, where I was sitting, and asked me cheerily if I would like to go to Yorkshire? I had never seen him

before that I knew of. He was the sub-editor of one of the other Edinburgh papers, and said he had heard I was leaving, and understood something of the insufficiency of the cause, and he had just received a letter from an old employer of his at Huddersfield, in Yorkshire, asking him to recommend a Scotch reporter, and if I was willing to go, he was willing to recommend me. I said I was willing to go anywhere. He told me something of the terms, which were far superior to those of my Edinburgh appointment, and then took his departure, leaving me in a state of indescribable relief and elevation.

I was not long in communicating the good news where I knew it would be most appreciated. We got a map and looked out Huddersfield together, and rejoiced at the prospect of going to England. It seemed a prospect of emancipation and enlargement, much more so than the event proved, as is the common lot of human prospects. England, in our ignorance, seemed synonymous with everything that was genial and intellectual and superior. Alas! It has much to redeem it from the barbarism that prevails in nine-tenths of the habitable globe; but in the light of the ideal we had formed from reading, Yorkshire and the Midland counties, where we have spent 30 years of our life, are as the desert through which the panting and almost despairing traveller has to trudge his way to a hoped-for city beyond. We did not know this at the time, which was well. We drew all the consolation from the prospect that our ignorance allowed, and we agreed that if all went well, I should return in twelve months to fetch my companion to the fair land of promise.

I left Edinburgh on the 8th of August, 1858, and arrived next day at Huddersfield, which I found to be a small, but clean and beautiful Yorkshire town, picturesquely situated in a hill-surrounded valley, which reached almost all the way to Manchester. The aspect of the town was an agreeable contrast to the dismal, smoky, manufacturing districts through which I had to pass on the way, *e.g.*, Wigan, Manchester, Stalybridge, etc. The railway station was a palatial structure, stand-

ing in a spacious square, and the buildings in the principal street seemed equal to anything I had seen in Edinburgh. But on a closer acquaintance I found the town petty by comparison with the large ways of the Scotch metropolis. The population at that time was a little over 20,000, who were governed by a Board of Improvement Commissioners.

There were two newspapers, *The Chronicle* and *The Examiner*, both weekly; the former the organ of the local Tory party, and the latter of the Liberals. It was by the latter I had been engaged, the editor of which I found to be a bland, agreeable, handsome English gentleman, with a lady quite suited to him in all respects. Their names were no index to their nature; their heads were not wooden. Both received me very cordially, but were a little taken aback at my extreme youth. They afterwards told me that they thought at first I would not be equal to the duties of the post, but that they changed their minds in a few days. They had just received a foreman in the case department from Scotland, a Mr. Watson, who, being a stranger and a Scotchman, took kindly to me, and proposed I should lodge at his house, which was very suitable under the circumstances.

I quickly settled into the routine of my work, and then began to look round and consider my circumstances with regard to the truth. There was no meeting in Huddersfield, nor a single soul that had any interest in the truth, or knowledge of it. I had learnt before leaving Edinburgh that there was a small company of brethren at Halifax, about seven miles from Huddersfield. To this place I accordingly paid my first visit on the Sunday following my arrival from Scotland. There was a railway, but I preferred the road, which I understood was through a pleasant country. I found this to be the case. The morning was fine, and allowed of my seeing it to the best advantage. The road skirted the side of a wooded ridge for the first two miles, gradually ascending till it emerged on a hill-crest over the splendid valley of Elland, of which I had not heard, and which burst upon my view with very impressive effect. Descending gradually to the

valley, the road passes through Elland, crosses a river, and then goes along by the side of a wood, and through one or two lovely bits of valley, till it ascends the elevated hill on which Halifax stands.

I found Halifax to be a town of the same general type as Huddersfield, except that it stood on the side of an abrupt hill, and was more thickly clustered together. It was not the town, however, that I was interested in. There is nothing particularly interesting in monotonous rows of small houses, interspersed with gigantic factories and towering chimneys. I came to see the brethren. I had an address which took me to the house of an old man who answered to the name I asked for, but when I told my business, he said, with a languid, disgusted smile, that it was his son I wanted—indicating that he had no sympathy with his vagaries. To him I was referred, and found him a diminutive cripple. I was not disappointed at this, as it was the truth that was my attraction, and this attraction found its full affinity in the feeble, but scripturally-enlightened young man, in whose company I was soon at home (from whom, in after years, I have to regret separation, through disagreement in important principles). I accompanied him to the meeting, which was held in a schoolroom rented at a few shillings a week.

The meeting was a very limited affair. The schoolroom was large enough to have held perhaps 200, but there were only about a dozen persons present when all were mustered. They gathered round a narrow table at one end, to which two benches were drawn up. The proceedings, however, were deeply interesting to me. This meeting was the beginning of a connection with Halifax which lasted some time. I walked to Halifax every Sunday morning, and back late in the evening, and sometimes on Monday morning. I found the society of the brethren very agreeable and profitable, more so than perhaps any community at any subsequent time. This would probably be due to my own youth and the freshness of the circumstances. The brethren, a feeble company in all natural senses, were in simple hearty love



with the truth on its own merits, which was a bond, and an attraction, and a benefit.

Among them was brother F. R. Shuttlesworth, who has ever since filled a foremost place in the work. I think I owe something to this feeble company for getting so quickly into harness myself. They enthusiastically responded to my suggestions about the duty of doing the best we could in the way of a public testimony for the truth, and entered most readily into practical co-operation in measures having this object. We got out a bill inviting the public to our Sunday evening meetings to hear lectures on the Kingdom of God and the nature of man, which to our raw spiritualities seemed the essence and sum total of the truth. It was not a regular lecture bill, such as afterwards came to be issued, but a general sweeping proclamation that the popular creeds were wrong, and that the Scriptures "of Moses, the prophets, Jesus, and the apostles," when properly understood, were capable of putting them right.

I do not remember the wording of the bill, but when a copy of it went to Edinburgh, the criticism came back (needless to say, it was not the criticism of my correspondent), that there was too much about immortality in it, and that, in fact, it was not quite an apostolic performance, as the apostles did not put out bills! This criticism was symptomatic of the spiritual divergence that afterwards led to rupture with what was called "Dowieism," for want of a better name. Very little came of our effort. A few came to the meetings at first, but gradually fell off, leaving us, I think, but one, as the result. We, however, continued the meetings with benefit to ourselves. I began to feel a decided improvement in the ability to lecture, and the conversational controversies that were generated by our activity increased our familiarity with the Scriptures, and our knowledge of the truth.

We availed ourselves of whatever promising opportunities in other directions presented themselves. There was open-air speaking at a bridge in the centre of the town, and once or twice, when our own meeting was over,

we repaired to this spot, and made an attempt to harangue the people. To do this, on one occasion, I got on to the top of a big barrel, but the rowdies commenced to push it about, and I had to descend. Our proceedings must have appeared very ridiculous, and our communications utterly unintelligible, as well as conceited. It was the only thing that weakness could do in chaos. One Sunday, one of the brethren got into tow with a Unitarian preacher on the street. After conversation the preacher was walking off. The brethren suggested that a debate would be a good thing for the truth, and recommended that I should go after him and challenge him. Most ludicrous, but I did it! The gentleman, good-naturedly turning on the stripling not yet twenty, quickly extinguished him by remarking that when he debated it would have to be with somebody of his own calibre.

Another time there was a public lecture by an anti-infidel lecturing doctor, who invited questions, or remarks. He was to prove the immortality of the soul from nature. The brethren thought it was too good an opportunity to lose. They put me forward to say as much as I could on behalf of the truth in the short space of time allowed. I did so, evidently with no other effect than of evoking the commiseration of the lecturer and his chairman (the "Rev." E. Mellor, who afterwards became a "great" man). It was foolish of me to come forward at an invitation only intended for infidels. But things are not seen in their relations and proportions by zealous inexperience.

## CHAPTER VII.

## WORKING WITH DR. THOMAS.

I OUGHT to have mentioned that before leaving Edinburgh, I tried to bring about a visit of Dr. Thomas to Britain, in conjunction with three others who felt as I did in the matter. He had not been in the country for eight years, and the work of which he laid the foundations in 1848-9 seemed to require a fostering hand. Our endeavour was a failure, through the apathy of those of whom it seemed natural to us to expect the same interest that we took in the matter. It was not, however, altogether without result. We had collected a small sum of money which we decided to send to the Doctor to strengthen his hand. It was left me to do this. I brought the money with me to Huddersfield and forwarded it to Dr. Thomas along with the following letter, which the Doctor published in the *Herald* at the time.

DEAR BROTHER THOMAS,—We send you £15 5s., to help you in the good work in which you are engaged. Would God it were £1,500; you should be heartily welcome to it: for we consider it an honour to spend and be spent in God's service in this degenerate age of Gentile domination. But, unfortunately (?) we are all poor—compelled to toil and sweat for "the meat which perisheth," and can only manage by a stretch to "provide things honest in the sight of all men;" so we have little to give "to him that needeth." Moreover, the late commercial distress of the country has materially reduced the means of many in whose hearts it is to give willingly: therefore our THANK OFFERING is small, but comprises many widow's mites. We give it heartily and of a willing mind: and hope it will be blessed to the strengthening of your arm in your noble strife for God and truth.

The sum is the aggregate ability of the willing-hearted in Britain, who, "though poor in this world" are "rich in faith," giving glory to God. A few months

ago, it occurred to one or two of the brethren in Edinburgh, Scotland, that something more than we were doing should be done for the promulgation of the Word of Life: and while giving due attention to personal effort, we thought it not amiss to "consecrate our gain also to the Lord." As the best way of doing this, it was proposed to write for the purpose of bringing you to this country to lecture. But numerous objections were started to this, and the idea was ultimately abandoned, chiefly because it was found that a sufficiency of funds could not be raised. As the best alternative, it was next recommended that we should collect what we could, and forward it to you, as our share, in one form of the general duty of "holding forth the Word of Life;" besides being an expression of our sympathy with you in the struggle in which you have spent the best part of your life.

With this view, four brethren formed themselves into a committee, and set to work. They commenced in their own circle: but, failing to meet that amount of encouragement which they had a right to expect, they extended their efforts to the churches throughout England and Scotland, most of whom responded warmly, and undertook by a certain time to have somewhat in readiness. The promise was kept. By the middle of August, each forwarded what they could, accompanied with the sincerest regrets that it was not more. . . . The sum is only small, but will doubtless be acceptable in these days of ignorance and unbelief. And we would hope that another season may find us better able to assist you yet further, or to bring you here, where we feel sure you would do much good.

The truth meets with small success here as elsewhere. The people's ears are dull of hearing, and possibly the voice of the teacher is low. The churches do not seem to possess that fervency and zeal which they ought; while error rears its head at every corner. The voice of wisdom to the simple ones is, alas, feeble and ineffectual; and much more so than it might be; for if the brethren would cease to hide their light under a bushel, men might be attracted by the glimmering, and drawn to the

blessed light of life. As it is, they sit with folded arms in complacent quietude ; and instead of " sounding forth the Word of the Lord " like the brethren of old, they are content to enjoy the truth in silence ; while multitudes—the good and honest-hearted too—are perishing for lack of knowledge !

Would you be so kind, dear brother, as to let us have the advantage of your enlarged scriptural knowledge on this matter. What is the *duty* of brethren in relation to the proclamation of the truth ? Those with whom the writer is now connected have no doubt on the matter. We hold most unanimously and sincerely, that all who have heard the Word of Life should, in some shape or form, say " Come ! " to the ignorant and unlearned ; and, because of this our conviction, we have issued the following handbill to the people of Halifax. It runs thus—

" TO THE PEOPLE OF HALIFAX.

" The teaching of the Bible is opposed to the popular doctrine of the ' Immortality of the Soul,' and its concomitant notions of sky-kingdom rewards and hell-fire punishment at death. The Bible sets forth God's purpose to set us a visible kingdom on earth, corporeal incorruptibility (therefore immortality) on those who now conform to certain Divine requisitions, which purpose being ' GLAD TIDINGS,' constitutes the ' Gospel ' which Jesus preached. The clergy do not preach this gospel, but teach what is opposed both to common sense and revelation.

" The people of Halifax are requested to attend the large schoolroom adjoining the Temperance Hall, Great Albion Street, on Sabbath nights, at half-past six o'clock, to hear discourses in proof of the above propositions, when open discussion is invited at the end of each discourse.

" N.B.—No collections—the object being to set the truth before the people ! ! "

But many enlightened brethren, overlooking the *duty*, question the usefulness of public discussion, and

discountenance, or at least, refrain from all effort in that, or in any other direction. We, therefore, request a word from your lucid pen on this subject . . . The brethren, generally, are anxiously awaiting the appearance of your Exposition of the Apocalypse, and hope it will not be much longer delayed. To those unacquainted with the sure prophetic Word, the Revelation is a book of impenetrable mystery : and even to those not altogether unskilled in the word of righteousness, it presents many difficulties. The former look upon it as the great authority for the unfathomable abyss with its hideous company of spirits and " goblins damned ; " and the latter sometimes are found fabricating theories therefrom strangely at variance with the written word. In these circumstances, your " exposition " will be looked for with eagerness, as judging from your own writings, it is likely to be, at least, coherent and logical. . . .

We have to thank you for much benefit derived from your writings. Some well-meaning brethren are afraid to confess their obligations in this respect from motives which can hardly be divined. But what is the use of mincing the matter ? There is the fact ; we have been shown the way of life through your straightforward and self-denying labours for the truth ; and why be ashamed to own it ? Why afraid to esteem the man by whose manly independence they have been redeemed from a worse than Egyptian slavery ? Something is to be heard now and then of " hard," " uncharitable writings," and we all think your writings would give less umbrage were they more free of irony and personalities ; but still, we also think that objections on this score savour of Gentilism. Why be so fastidious about mere style ? Who could be more harsh and ironical than Jesus or Paul ? And who more fierce in their denunciations than the prophets ? It may be objected, that they had an unction which does not pertain to the generality of mortals. Granted ; but if we *most surely believe* the things of the Kingdom of God, would it not be inconsistency to use other than boldness of speech ? Why pander to the vitiated tastes of modern infidelity by conforming to its

smooth and uncertain phraseology—that oily and deceitful way of beating about the bush, instead of honestly declaring the truth, whatever sectarian sanctity may say. Better far have the “harsh,” “uncharitable” truthfulness of Dr. Thomas, than the deceitful embellishments of pulpit oratory. Brethren judge wrongly when they charge us with “hero worship,” for esteeming a man highly for the truth’s sake. It is one of the exhortations of Paul; and it is a simple necessity so long as our mental constitutions remain as they are.

Before concluding, it is but becoming to notice the death of a brother who was much respected and beloved by all, and one whom you have looked in the face. John Forman, of Edinburgh, was one of the committee in the matter which forms the occasion of this letter, but fell asleep before he saw the completion of what he took so much interest in. He was a man such as one does not meet with every day. Even in his appearance he differed from the rest of his brethren. He was of delicate build, and of a highly nervous temperament, and his features, which were sharp and long, were of a classical mould, and did not bear a trace of their Scotch extraction. His character was a model of zeal and personal purity. His soul was absorbed in the things of the coming age, of which he spoke in public and private continually. He was instant in season and out of season, teaching the ignorant the way of righteousness, and exhorting his brethren to steadfastness and holiness at all times and all places, and could not tolerate the frivolous indifference of many.

He was sometimes thought too stern and devoted; but he would reply, “*Do brethren expect to get the Kingdom if they do nothing, and live like other men?*” He was esteemed and revered by all, and looked up to as a guide and father. And now he is gone, slain by the cursed law of sin and death that works in all of us. O, how one feels the bitterness of death, when noble and upright manliness is thus rudely torn from our embrace, and consigned to that cold grave wherein is nought but darkness and silence. Alas! alas! many noble hearts have ceased to

beat. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the good Kings of Judah; Jeremiah, Daniel, and the prophets who suffered so nobly for the truth’s sake; and those brave and manly apostles, who feared not the wrath and violence of man—these are all sleeping in the dust of the earth, while defiant Gentilism proudly holds its head in the world, despising righteousness, and contemning the God of Israel. Awake, why sleepest thou, O Jehovah? Arise, cast us not off for ever. Wherefore hidest thou Thy face? Arise for our help, and redeem us for Thy mercies’ sake. “We see not our signs; there is no more any prophet, neither is there among us any that knoweth how long.” Thanks be to God! His watchful eye slumbers not. He will yet lift up His holy arm in the eyes of all nations, and teach the world righteousness by His judgments. He will yet avenge the blood of His servants, and bring them again from the hand of death and will punish the arrogance of the mighty. He will yet rule the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath appointed, whereof He hath given all men assurance in that He hath raised Him from the dead. God speed the day! Even so! Come, Lord Jesus.

In behalf of the brethren who join me in the most fervent prayers for your continued health and usefulness,

I remain,

Yours affectionately in Israel’s Hope,

\* \* \* \*

Huddersfield, England, Sept. 1, 1858.

The Doctor responded in some characteristic remarks, published in the *Herald of the Kingdom*, from which the following extract will be interesting:

“A WORD OF GRATEFUL ACCEPTANCE”

“The contribution forwarded with the above is truly gratifying to us, and not to us only, but to all, doubtless, interested in the work in which we are engaged—in that namely, of opening the eyes of our contemporaries, turning them from darkness to light,

and from the power of Satan to God. It is gratifying because it is purely spontaneous—the result of a conviction that we are so engaged, and of an affectionate appreciation of our labours. Though the amount may be small, it is none the less acceptable on that account, seeing that it is the aggregate ability of the brethren of the Poor and Needy Man, who, though rich, became poor for our sakes. It reminds one of the ecclesias of Macedonia: ‘How that in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy and of their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality, by which also they proved the sincerity of their love.’ The amount is nothing: it is the willingness of mind to spend and be spent in the service of the truth for it is accepted of God according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not. If a poor man give a mite of his extreme poverty, it is more than a hundred pounds out of the abundance of riches.

“As to the duty of the brethren, in relation to the proclamation of the truth . . . though much may not be effected yet, as we do not know how much and when, it is our common duty ‘to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the Saints,’ and with as much energy as though we were going to hurl all the ecclesiastical potentates of Gentiledom from their crumbling and tottering thrones. We do not believe in any of Christ’s brethren purchasing exemption from this laborious duty. If they be rich, or flush of means, it is their privilege to give as well as to do, if they be poor, to do and to receive, which is less blessed than to give, that an equality may obtain.

“Brethren, whether rich or poor, should all remember that when they are redeemed from the sins of the past, in putting on the Christ-robe of righteousness, through the obedience of faith, they are ‘a purchased people;’ and that when so purchased, the purchaser bought all they possess; so that they are no longer their own, but the property of another. Now, when a man purchases a servant, he does not buy him to sit all his days with a bushel on his head in complacent quietude. A slave owns nothing, neither himself, nor anything

belonging to self before he became a slave. Such is the relation of brethren to Christ, their Lord and Master. A complacently quiescent Christian is one who will never inherit the kingdom, though his faith be ever so orthodox, or his baptism ever so valid. He is an unprofitable concealer of his Master’s property in a napkin. He is the napkin, and the property the truth he has received and concealed within himself. Woe be to the Christian brother who presents himself at the tribunal of Christ, with nothing else to offer than a hidden truth. Ill-starred will he be who can only say, ‘I received the truth, and was immersed, and *henceforth* enjoyed myself in silence!’ Quietude and silence are not the prerogatives of the Saints in this present evil world. Their duty is to ‘cry aloud and spare not; to lift up their voice like a trumpet and show the people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.’ They have nothing to do with results and consequences—let them make the truth known, and leave the rest to Him who gives the increase. Every one can do something for the extension of the truth; if it be only trying to extend it among his acquaintance, and as an element of ‘the Bride,’ through whom the Spirit operates, ‘say, Come.’

“The Bride is the community of the Saints, a community anointed with, and the pillar and support of, the truth. ‘The Spirit and the Bride say, Come!’ Is this done without means? Is it done by complacent quietude and silence? By each individual of the community exhausting his energies upon the secular affairs of life? Surely, if there is one thing more than another we have to guard against in this age, it is against being docketed as slothful, unprofitable, parsimonious do-nothings—lavish of time, labour and riches in the service of the flesh; but covetous of all in the extension of the truth. It is the duty of the Bride to sustain the truth by the press and oral proclamation, individually and collectively. Let her voice be heard in reverberating echoes amid the hills and mountains of the world till the isles break forth in song, and forests clap their hands. True this consummation will not obtain till the Grand

Master be apocalysed ; nevertheless, when He comes, let Him find us so doing. . . . In our experience of men and things, we have found, for the most part, that they make the most outcry about 'hard' and 'uncharitable writings' who have the most sympathy with error, or are least enlightened in the truth. Their faith and comprehension of the truth are so faint and feeble that they cannot discern the broad distinctive line of demarcation, or great gulf, rather, that divides Immanuel's ground from Satan's. When error is wounded they wince, and become hysterical at the sight of blood. We have not found such equally sensitive at the throes and agonisings of the truth ; and as far as their efforts are concerned, it might be consumed of its own anguish, so that their quietude and silence were not disturbed. But what do such outcries effect in this world ? What mark do they leave upon their generation for good ? Compare the results of our hard uncharitable course, with their soft and oily display. 'By the fruit the tree is known.' Many are now rejoicing in this truth by our means ; but who ever hears of them or theirs ? They are too soft and unctuous to hew the men of this perverse and wicked generation into a living image of the truth. The 'style' of popular religious writing is too insipid—the little salt in it has too completely lost its savour—to be received without disgust. We write with 'the spirit of faith' which endures no compromise with error in matter or style. 'I believed,' says David, 'and therefore have I spoken.' 'We also believe,' says Paul, 'and therefore speak.' To which, 'Amen' is heartily acclaimed by this Editor."

## CHAPTER VIII.

## DEWSBURY.

MY employer started a second paper at Dewsbury, a town of about 20,000 inhabitants, about eight miles distant from Huddersfield. The population of Dewsbury was mostly composed of factory people, employed in the lower kinds of woollen manufacture, including "shoddy." The place was like the business—rough and raw, and a newspaper of their own was a novelty among them. In the starting of this paper I had to lend considerable help, and so became acquainted with what little life there was in the place.

I found it a very nest of atheism. There was a particular temperance hotel where "freethinkers" congregated. This hotel had a hall connected with it, and in this hall the proprietor encouraged meetings every Sunday, at which papers were read, lectures given, or discussions held. These were mostly of an "infidel" complexion, but addresses on any subject were welcomed, debate usually following. It was suggested to me that I should give a lecture in the place. It was a poor place at which to present the Gospel of the Kingdom. Still, as there was no door of utterance anywhere, and I strongly recognised the obligation to make the truth known, I consented after a while, and wrote a lecture, which I delivered on a certain Sunday afternoon, in 1858, to this audience of unbelievers.

It was gloomy work in a gloomy place ; for the hall was not large, the seats were rough, and the hearers were of that heavy, lack-lustre aspect which seems to belong to atheism. One of the chief speakers had a coarse, nasal voice, that gurgled out of his throat in a repulsive manner. The repulsiveness to me, perhaps, lay more in the steady, self-confident scorn of religion in which he aped the style of candour, while discoursing on his "soobjaict." It was a horrible memory for a long time. The chairman was the hotel proprietor, a mild, good-natured man, who seemed to have a leaning in

favour of the Bible, but with a sort of patronising manner that seemed to say, "I wish I *could* believe. I am sorry it is all nonsense." If I recollect, it was at his request that I gave the lecture. He opened the meeting by reading the second chapter of Titus, which he pronounced as fine a piece of moral teaching as they could find anywhere. He then called upon their friend to let him hear what he had to say, which the chairman understood was something new. I have the lecture now which I had got ready for them—at least, I had it some time ago. The members of the Birmingham Christadelphian Young Men's Improvement Society, hearing of it some years ago, obtained possession of the manuscript, and I have not seen it since.

The criticisms passed upon it were not very definite. They mostly took the shape of expressing inability to know what the speaker had been driving at. That anything came of it I never heard. I had to be satisfied in having employed an opportunity which I never felt encouraged to use again.

On another occasion, in the same town, in another temperance hotel, by the importunity of an old man, who had become interested in the truth, I consented to hold debate with an Irishman on the immortality of the soul. The meeting took place in the public room of the hotel. The Irishman was brimming with the buffoonery that seems native to the principal portion of his race. He had nothing in the way of argument except appeals to the "fahther-rs," by which he by no means meant Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the prophets, but certain ecclesiastic drivellers, whose names at the time were more or less new to me—Origen, Tertullian, Justin Martyr, and the rest. He had nothing to say to the scriptural argument. At the same time he did not like it, and told the chairman (the old man before referred to, who was known to them all as the promoter of the meeting), that they were not particularly obliged to him. He (the old man) could not argue the question himself, but, like Balaam, had brought his ass to do the speaking for him—a sally that of course pleased the low auditory that crowded the room.

## CHAPTER IX.

## MARRIAGE.

TIME sped on, and I began to feel unwell. Looking back, I do not wonder at it. I had been carrying out vegetarian ideas, with a view to intellectual assistance, and while living on the most frugal diet, I worked hard all the week and Sunday into the bargain. It was no wonder, therefore, that my condition began to run down. Under the circumstances, my solitary stay at the poorly-appointed house of a hard Scotchman became hurtfully comfortless. The upshot was an understanding, by letter, between me and "her" that we should hasten arrangements for independent house-keeping. Accordingly, we got married on my next birthday (April 8th, 1859), a thing we have never regretted. Our married experience has been nothing but a pure blessing, spiritually, and in all other respects. It would have been lost time to have waited longer. I always felt that marriage was a something that lay in my path, as a wall that had to be climbed, or a bridge that had to be crossed, before I could enter upon the earnest work of life.

Thinking of John and Jesus, they were "eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake," as also Paul; but there is variety in the tools used as well as in the work of God. In my own case (if I have been a tool) I felt it was inevitable that I must, like Peter, "lead about a sister—a wife." And now, looking back, I can see how serviceable it has been in every way for the work that has been done (if any work has been done that will stand in the day of the Lord). I can see also how much God has favoured me in the wife He guided me to, though it is not permitted to a husband to say much in the praise of his wife. There are not many women who have a real and spontaneous taste for spiritual things. There are not many men either, but the proportion of women is smaller. It must be this that Solomon refers to, when he

says: "One man among a thousand have I found, but a woman among all these have I not found." I could never take any credit for selecting so good a wife. I was looking in another direction, because there was nowhere else for me to look. I recognised that marriage must be "in the Lord," and the number of those answering to this description was extremely small. Consequently, it was one or other, in a very limited circle, or nobody; but being guided to the right quarter, I soon dropped all other ideas

The marriage took place in Edinburgh, in the house of the bride's father (24, Brunswick Street), in the presence of a company of about twenty friends. Mr. George Dowie, an estimable private friend, officiated as the organ of the law in the case, and delivered an amusing address on the audacity of the youngster in aspiring to the hand of such a bride, and on his still more surprising success, where other suitors had shyly looked in vain. He also read an original poem in the style of Sir Walter Scott, in which the parties to the marriage were made to figure somewhat heroically and prophetically. A verse or two inserted here might have been interesting, but they are not accessible. It is thirty-two years ago (1890). Time makes wonderful havoc of human things. Each new generation treasures its own toys and mementoes. Old Time looks on imperturbably with a smile of compassion. The mighty wheel goes round, and, alas! for the perishing things. The universal rot takes all at last. Some things cannot be taken. Happy those who have these in possession.

I confess I was impatient of the marriage conventionalities. I endured them; that was all. Enjoy them I could not. The greetings and the socialities—I waited till they should all be past and I should be free to depart and live the life dictated by godliness and common sense. The atmosphere around me was stifling. It was put down to my pride. This was a great mistake. I can humble myself to anything, but I cannot hold communion with a mentality that acts only on man and social trivialities, and that has no affinity for the

stupendous facts connected with God and His revealed purpose. Of course we have to accommodate ourselves where we cannot commune, but accommodation is a different thing from true fellowship. Fellowship I found in my companion. I therefore desired to be free to enjoy the gift, and was glad at the prospect of this freedom when the time should arrive for our departure to England. There was first a fortnight of the amenities to be got through. In the course of these, there was a visit to be paid to Kincardine, a small sea-port on the Firth of Forth, about twelve miles or so up the river by steamboat.

At the end of the voyage I was called on to discharge my first marital responsibility. Double fare was demanded. For some reason or other, which I cannot now recall, I was unprepared. The situation was absurd. I could produce just 2½d. towards the bill. My companion was amused, and stood in the breach. We duly landed, and found ourselves in a quiet, pleasant, declining place (for some change in local affairs had led to the business going away to Stirling, some twenty miles further up). There were some relatives, on my companion's side. I had never seen them before, I have never seen them since. There was no point of connection. What is flesh? "A wind that passeth away." There is no form of kinship in it for those whose foundations are rooted in God. It is transient as a flower, and uninteresting as a weed in the ditch. It is only good as soil for the seed of the kingdom. Where this is absent it has no attractions. There is nothing noble in the flesh left to itself. It is petty, insignificant, narrow, cloudy. Only in the things of the Spirit is there that which is noble, sublime, far-reaching, broad, intelligent, interesting and everlasting. Every man who truly approximates to the spirit and standard of Christ realises for himself the verity of the rule of friendship laid down by Him: "He that doeth the will of my Father, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." Looking round on all of them He exclaimed to him that told Him, "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?"



There were none such answerable to this rule in the place where we were visiting. There was an uncle mildly interested in Bible things, but with none of the earnestness that leads to decisive action or even to fuller enlightenment. Jesus has signified to us, since His ascension, His estimate of lukewarmness. That estimate is a reasonable one. His greatness and His glory are insulted by the feeble appreciations of such as think they are conferring honour on the truth by their attentions, or who bestow on it a very uncertain fraction of the affection they feel for all worldly things. "Not worthy of me," is Christ's own verdict in advance in such cases. Won't people rub their eyes and wonder how they could be so foolish when they stand in Christ's actual presence, and behold with their eyes the actuality of His relation to the earth's affairs?

There was another uncle, a bluff and deep-voiced captain, who had done well as a shipowner. He was more energetic, but not so intelligent as his brother. He was zealous for the traditions of his "Covenanting" fathers, and hated the truth. Piety and whisky entered largely into his life. With loud prayer-saying he kept his house on their knees the best part of an hour every day; and kept himself jovial on the other parts of the day with copious draughts from the decanter. It was considered quite a feat of respectability to mix religion and the brandy-bottle thus. A man was not a man who could not carry a good quantity of liquor without quite losing his self-control. A boozy sort of hilarity was consequently chronic with some. The habit was fatal with others.

The captain had an only son who took the pledge under the influence of his cousins. It would have been well if his father had encouraged him in this. On the contrary, he went into a towering passion when he heard of it, declaring that a man was no man who did not know when to stop without being a teetotaller. On this plea he compelled his son to drink. His son at last went down to a drunkard's grave. The captain passed away in due course, and so did his finical wife, who kept a house of

spotless elegance without happiness. The scene looked at now, against the background of vacuity and night, appears in its true character of folly. Why can't people see the folly beforehand? Some do, and are voted bores. Destiny will justify wisdom yet. Our stay was short and uninteresting. I was principally a gazing-stock to vacuous gossips, as the schoolboy on whom a worthy Edinburgh lady of their acquaintance had thrown herself away.

Returning to Edinburgh, sundry visits here and there which decorum called for, but served no rational end, whiled away the time, and we gladly escaped by the Caledonian train that took us to England by way of Carlisle. A final conventional call in Manchester (on acquaintances supposed to have some love for the Bible, but who never came to anything in that line—and what other line is there that does not end in the dark?) brought our penances to an end, and landed us in Huddersfield, where the *Examiner* editor's lady had prepared a snug little cot in Hebble Row, Bradford Road. It was the spring of the year, with bright and joyful weather. The suburbs of Huddersfield were more pastoral than they are now. We had many a pleasant wander among the fields and woods. Often we had to separate in consequence of my newspaper duties.

I discovered the other day a scrap-book in which we made use of these separations for written communion. I would write a little bit, to which she, in my absence, would make a written response, and I, next time, to her, and she again, and so on. This extract or two, copied out (from what I had long forgotten), will illustrate the colour of our thoughts at this time.

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R. Beloved, thy blooming cheeks, thy sprightly mien and loving looks do speak of happy days. It is not so with many, and as my curious spirit is always on the search for what is rare and useful, tell me the secret of thy healthful gladness and thy calm content. Whither hast thou been?

J. Oh, thou knowest well. I have been with thee on the green hill-side. When all around was joy and gladness, say, how could I be sad? Nay, how could I but be joyous in thy loving company, and listening, 'mong the singing birds to the melody of thy loving voice, speaking to me words of cheer, and comfort, and instruction?

R. 'Tis pleasing to mine ear to listen to approval such as thine: but while thy flattering compliment my fancy tickles, I feel a sad-like consciousness of unworthiness that makes me almost sorrowful to hear thy words of approbation. My soul hangs heavy with regret, and would fain burst the bonds which seem to fetter it; and stand in all the worthiness which such an one as thou deservest to have. Say how I may succeed, my dearly loved.

J. Full well thou knowest. Would that thou should'st ever gird thee in thy might and act as thou knowest it is right to act. When thou deniest thyself of aught that panders to the fleshly taste, thou feelest thyself upright and reaching forth unto the stature of a perfect man. And when with purpose high thou deignest not to fret thyself on trivial matters, then thine own approves and loves thee in her heart of hearts.

R. Thou answerest well, and my heart doth practically know the truth of what thou sayest; but, alas! while I know the right, I often the wrong pursue; and, as a consequence, the clouds obscure my mind when heaven's bright sunshine might the mists dispel, and make me happy in the way. Yet, dream not that I hopelessly despair. I strive to press towards the mark which high is set; and though my failures oft-times many be, yet when I turn me back to bygone years and think of what is now, I conscious am of some small progress in the pathway of improvement. Pray tell me how it is with you, and how thou orderest thy steps amid so many drawbacks.

J. Truly a question hard to answer. I know the way I fain would go, and difficult indeed I find that pathway to pursue, if I look only at the task to be performed. But if I pause to calculate on the blessings to be gathered

in the path of plodding duty, then the bypaths, so enticing to the eye of sense, I most determinedly shun, and tho'll (bear) the bitter roughing in the way of right until the promised blessings in the same shine forth in truest satisfaction. Is it not thus that thou dost trace thy steps of progress?

R. 'Tis thus I *would*; but when I would do good, I find a tendency within me to do what I approve not, like a brother bold of ancient days with whom I oft exclaim, "Oh, wretched man that I am." Yet, anon, I courage take, and join with him in shouting: "Thanks be unto God who us the victory doth accord!" And yet again my heart grows sad and satisfaction flies my troubled brain. Why should this thing be? Methinks I hear thee answer what I have discovered by experience. This state is one of imperfection and of fleshly weakness, in which it is impossible to realise the fonder wishes of our souls: but yet 'tis also true that much is possible which we have never attained to. 'Tis also true that much of the dull dissatisfaction of which I am complaining is the direct result of misbehaviour, and doubtless we are disposed too often to attribute to the feelings of nature evils and faults which properly belong to us, and are produced by what we do and are, when we might have undone those foolish things, and be more noble and heroic in the moral strife. Since this is clearly so, I leave to thee, my dearest, the task of giving counsel where the aid is needed, and extending thine encouragement to a spirit struggling (to be free) from the meshes in which it is entangled.

J. Take courage! Good men through every age have felt the same soul-stirrings, and have longed to be the image of their Master. Yet even He was perfected through sufferings. Who can tell their depth and keenness? How prolonged the seasons of temptation? Hear His words of comfort to His followers: "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome." It does seem hard, from day to day to plod our way, and still pursue the course prescribed. 'Tis hard, indeed. Still let us strive. This be our steadfast aim—

to do the very thing we would do ; and be what we would really be. Shall we thus mark our course ?

R. Need I reply, my dearest one ? Thou knowest full well that these are just the purposes I have made. But ever and anon, even when success doth crown endeavour, and naught doth seem to mar the beauty of the path we tread, the cry comes welling from my heart : " Oh, that from Zion deliverance great were come to Israel ! " This moment do I wish most fervently that God would consummate His gracious purpose, and put an end to this long interregnum by sending forth our Lord once more to show His power in acts most unexpected by the world, but for which we hope most ardently. I mean that He should overturn existing forms of human power which are but usurpations : restore His people Israel from their wide dispersion ; redeem His waiting and His sleeping people from the bondage of corruption in which they now are held ; and establish most supremely over God's whole earth the kingdom which He has received from His Almighty Father.

J. 'Tis well, beloved, that such longings should thy soul possess, for then the sweeter will deliverance prove if now we feel the weighty load of sin's oppressive bondage. Labour still and patiently endure till, having run unto the very end of this race of daily stages, we reap the rich reward of life immortal.

## CHAPTER X.

## DIETETICS !

THE stilted sentimental dialogue, a portion of which has been reproduced, after sleeping forgotten for thirty-two years, was intended " to be continued," but it soon took its place among the thousand broken purposes that strew the path of human life. It dropped out of sight and memory, and was swept away in the onrush of the tide of other events. We proposed much ideal occupation for ourselves, as all newly-married people do. While the main and substantial ideal has been realised—the service of God and conjugal felicity—the ornamental parts were quickly taken out of our hands. On quiet evenings, we were going to read our love letters over again. The quiet evenings never came : there was always something on hand to be done : and the love letters remain in their tied bundles unopened to the present day, and will doubtless, in due time, disappear in the last devouring abyss that finally receives the last shreds and remnants of all human ways, generation after generation. We shall very likely give them a helping toss with our own hands one of these days : for what is the use of these raw privacies of a mere fledgling life, which often mistakes the elementary motions of common instinct for the stirrings of a sublime originality ? " Forgetting the things that are behind," is an excellent maxim in many things. People burden themselves with old letters and old memories that are dead—to no profit and worse ; such things obstruct the present. We need all our energy for the earnest purpose of every day. There is wisdom in the poet's advice to " Let the dead past bury its dead." Make short shrift of the trivial mementoes. Some people live in the past. Their life is a dream. They seem to carry round a collection of stuffed favourites—mangy, dusty, and melancholy. We want the apparatus of real life. Clear out the lumber ; turn your face to the rising sun ; " press forward ! "

Marrying in spring, we had summer before us for a start, which was a nice arrangement. We enjoyed our Sunday morning walks to the breaking of bread with the brethren at Halifax, seven miles distant. The meeting was at half-past ten, so we had to start early and walk briskly through the bracing morning air—up hill and down dale, through a picturesque hilly and wooded country. The road went through Elland, a manufacturing village, which has since grown to considerable importance. It was generally about half-past nine when we passed along its central thoroughfare. We did not dawdle on the way, and the loitering roughs seemed to think our pace phenomenal, and made way for us with mock deference, and remarks not respectful, which we put up with easily enough, regarding the place as a sort of barbarian village. Since that time the truth, which took us through Elland streets every Sunday, has taken root in the place, and there must be over a hundred persons making some sort of profession of it. How many will be found suitable for Divine use in the summing up of things, only the Judge of the living and dead can decide. There are general principles by which each man can diagnose his own case. They are such as must lead every earnest man to make a strong effort at conformity, judging himself rather than his neighbour; recollecting that in the final issue, God's view of matters will decide, not man's at all; and knowing, on Christ's authority, that "many" in that day will expect His recognition, on the score of human wonders performed, who are destined to find themselves sadly out of the calculation.

The threatening dishealth which had brought on our marriage sooner than it would otherwise have taken place, began, after a while, to show aggravated symptoms. I had been living on rice and bread for eighteen months, under mistaken ideas that abstemious habits would help intellectual development. I abstained from tea, butcher's meat, and other ordinary comforts of human life, "which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth" (1 Tim. 4:3). The consequence was, my con-

dition ran down. I began to have difficulty of breathing, and a breaking out all over head and face from impoverishment of blood. By and by, erysipelas began to show itself, and finally I was confined to bed. My poor distressed companion began to fear the worst. One or two round about us thought my end was at hand. I could not myself quite feel like that. Still, I thought it might be so, and we talked and arranged accordingly, mingling our tears with our counsels. The worst night coincided with the terrible storm in October that wrecked the *Royal Charter* on the coast of Wales, and laid the little garden-plot in front of our cot a bleached desolation in one night. The howling of the wind was terrible; the situation was a desolate one for us. It made a deep impression which was not without its after effects. It did not change the current of my life, for that had been strongly running for years previously in a spiritual direction. But it greatly strengthened that current.

I was made to feel what I had only intellectually recognised—that human life is but a flower: that heaven and earth have no permanence for man unless he is permanent in God; that, consequently, our relation to God is the really important concern of human life; and His *purposed* goodness, as declared in the Gospels, the only substantial interest for man upon earth. I saw all this with a clearness and intensity that made me resolve more than ever to give my life to the truth, if I should recover. One idea stood out with star-like brilliancy in connection with this resolution—and that is, that work in the truth could not be successful. I was fervently persuaded that the coming of Christ was near, and Christ's words rang in my ears: "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be when the Son of Man cometh: they were eating and drinking, building and planting, and marrying and giving in marriage, and knew not till the flood came and took them all away."

The conclusion to my mind was this: only a few can be saved out of this generation, and as it only lacked some eight years, or so, to the running out of the appointed period of Papal Supremacy, there did not seem

time for anything beyond what Dr. Thomas had accomplished in the calling of a saving attention to the truth. The idea, therefore, that anything really important could be done in the way of spreading the truth seemed out of the question. This might have acted as a deterrent of all attempts. It did not act on my mind in this way at all. I realised that Noah's efforts, as a preacher of righteousness, though unsuccessful as regards others, were continuous and faithful to the end, and secured for him, as Paul says, "this testimony, that he pleased God." Along with that certainty of failure, therefore, came the resolution to undertake the effort, as a matter of duty to God, without any reference to consequences at all.

At the end of six weeks, I was sufficiently recovered to resume my reporting duties—which were very distasteful to me, but to which I cheerfully devoted myself, "as to the Lord and not unto men," as Paul recommends servants in all positions to do. My illness effected a decided change in my habits. During its progress, and just after the turning point, I experienced a craving for animal food. The medical man in attendance gave orders that my desires in the matter should be complied with. Tea, also, twice a day, came in for use. From that day to this, I have had nothing to do with ultra-dietetic theories. The idea of meat-eating being inconsistent with intellectual vigour, or tea-drinking with physical health, I have found to be contrary to fact in my case. Of course, no man's experience can be an exact guide for another in such matters. But human beings are like one another in the main points; and my experience of vegetarianism is that it is a fad—a very respectable fad, for it shows some aspiration after high and noble things: but a fad that may be carried to a hurtful point. Where a man has nothing else to do than to take care of himself, it may be made to work out interesting and agreeable results. But where there is stress of much and earnest work to be done, the machinery must have the fuel of life supplied in an easily combustible and readily available form—in these northern latitudes at all events. And as for tea, taken in moderation and of the right sort,

it is a pure God's blessing: not only inflicting no physical harm, but conferring an actual help and benefit on mortal life, which, at the best, has to say "In this we groan." But, of course, if another man finds another way better, he would be a fool that would despise him or his ways. God's methods are infinitely varied, and the more a man knows, the less disposed he becomes to flout anything out of the beaten track. There is such a thing as evil and wickedness. This fine tolerant breadth can have no reference to these. "Abhor that which is evil," is one of the watchwords of righteous action.

In execution of the purpose above referred to, we began to consider whether it was possible to do anything in Huddersfield. It was very pleasant to come and go between Huddersfield and Halifax on Sundays—sometimes by train, but more often *via* Elland on foot; but the exercise did not seem to fill the full measure of the desire to be witnesses for the truth in our own neighbourhood. Slowly our ideas took shape. There was a meeting of the Campbellites in Huddersfield—a sort of far-off spiritual cousinship, which might ripen more readily to the relation of brotherhood than the quite uncircumcised frequenters of church and chapel. So we paid a visit to their meeting one Sunday, and I think once or twice afterwards. But nothing came of it. The members were at first very attentive to us—particularly one Caleb Wallis, a leading man among them and a tradesman in a good position in the town, who invited us to his house and made much of us. But there was a wonderful cooling off when our sympathy with the truth (which they called Thomasism) became known. We soon found there was no hearing to be had for the truth among them. Indeed, there did not seem to be any great affection for Scriptural things, according to even their own understanding of them.

There was a strong flavour of mere partizanship among them, rather than a grave and earnest humble faith towards God. They were expert in harping on one or two strings, but had no general knowledge of the Scriptures, such as necessarily characterises a true

disciple. They were most anxious to proselytise us, but their zeal had a cold, self-magnifying whiff about it, which we have found to characterise the body everywhere since. There was none of the rich warmth of the spirit of the Scriptures. There was an oppressive sense of the present in all their ways. Man was much with them—God little. the present a clearly-defined landscape with substantial interests: the future, a haze of uncertainty. The recognition of them as a sect, all-important; but the holding of any particular principles, immaterial. We came to the conclusion if anything was to be done in Huddersfield, it would have to be done on virgin ground.

## CHAPTER XI.

## INTRODUCING THE TRUTH (HUDDERSFIELD).

THE question was, what should be the shape of our special effort to call attention to the truth in Huddersfield? Privately, we had done a good deal from the very beginning. The editor of the *Examiner* and his lady—excellent people as this world goes—had been the object of many attentions. We loved them, and felt earnestly desirous that they should share the benefit that we ourselves had received in such an acquaintance with the Scriptures as enabled us to entertain a fervent faith and hope towards God, while discarding the stumbling superstitions and sentimental excesses of mere "religion" as expounded in church and chapel. But we found them inaccessible to our arguments. They were dearly attached to the traditions of nonconformity, both in politics and religion. They were enthusiastic admirers of English literature, and not sufficiently in loving touch with the Scriptures to feel the force of Scriptural things, and the merely human character and origin of the traditions they worshipped. They were noble people in all things appertaining to man, but in things pertaining to God, as revealed in Moses and the prophets and the apostolic writings, insubordination is the only term that accurately defined their attitude. Our divergence was fundamental, with every sentiment of mutual personal esteem.

Friendship thins off infallibly when fundamental principles are not mutually shared, especially when the element of duty to God comes in on one side or the other. They resented the suggestion that submission to the hope of Israel had anything to do with personal hopes, and were angry at the doctrine that, apart from this hope, men are aliens and strangers "having no hope and without God in the world" (Eph. 2. 12). They would not consent to intercourse on the basis of being tolerated as

"respectable heathens." They demanded silence on that topic, to which we could not consent. We were all to be pitied. We, who presented these things to them, had not invented the truth, and they did not know it, and could not see it; and so we were caught in one of the million twists which distort human life everywhere in the present evil time. There will be a straightening out of matters when the Lord shows His arm again, in the reappearing of Christ.

I had a try at another interesting man, who figured as an occasional contributor to the paper in serio-comic letters on local affairs over a *nom de plume*, and also took a leading part in local politics. He was a good specimen of vigorous, natural manhood—tall, well-formed, healthy, of fresh complexion, large but well-shaped mouth, beautiful teeth, and a round, open, jovial countenance. There was no affectation of any kind about him. He was out-spoken, rough and honest as a blustering day. He had a rare gift of the pen, but was a poor talker, at least in company: he was voluble and emphatic enough in private. He had an ample and vigorous understanding. It seemed as if he ought to fall in love with so beautiful and rational a thing as the truth. Alas! He was perfectly content with the present life. He enjoyed it thoroughly, and did not want to live again: at least, so he said. He had a good business, a nice little wife, a quiet home, an occasional day with guns and dogs, and scope for his best energies in politics and satirical writing. Religion he regarded as a fable of the priests, and as for any new version I might have to present, he did not feel it could be worth his notice.

Another of the *Examiner* editor's friends, to whom I introduced the truth, I had more hope of, but with as little real cause, as time showed. He was a contributor to the paper in a special department. He was a young man of a different type to P. P., of medium height, stoutish person, manly, open countenance, and in character he was genial, kind, and mirthful to a phenomenal degree. He was called a moral young man—took part in chapel affairs, interested himself in working men

in the way of getting up lectures and entertainments in the village in the outskirts where he lived, and from which he came in regularly to business. He once issued an earnest pointed appeal to the workpeople of his village on behalf of the earnestness of life. He seemed altogether a likely subject for scriptural enlightenment; but the fact did not turn out in harmony with the appearance. He listened and read: he was too friendly and good-humoured a man not to do that; but there it ended. He was too merry and too prosperous for the earnest attention which the truth requires. He praised me for my faithfulness to what I considered the teaching of the Bible, but could not follow my arguments. He pitied me for my enthusiasm, but could not be unfriendly.

Ten years after I had left Huddersfield, I was on a lecturing visit to a dismal Yorkshire town, and staying in a gloomy temperance hotel. The friend in question walked, in his usual jovial style, into the room where I was sitting. He said he had seen my name on the walls, and he made sure I would be in a temperance hotel, and he had come to see me. I had been writing and was wearied, and must have appeared very dismal to him, especially as he did not supply any ideas I could kindle up about. The tableau was illustrative of the nature of the times: a jovial, buxom, flourishing, portly Gentile, making good-humoured sport with a drooping son of Israel's Hope, whose steadfastness of purpose in the matter was set down to harmless craze.

Others I can think of, connected with the *Examiner* clique, to whom I presented the truth in vain: a florid, solid, prudent, reticent man of small stature, with some ability and considerable grit of character; a tall, slender, dark, contemplative, religious gentleman of prudence and ability; a burly, self-assertive, strong-built Yorkshire tradesman, who pushed a thriving business with much of Barnum's energy and originality; and, lastly, a grey-headed manufacturer of great local weight and standing, who was distressed with Colenso's criticisms, which had just recently seen the light.

These were all, more or less, superior men, as was to be expected in those who were in co-operative intimacy with the editor of a political paper. That the word in its divine simplicity should have no charms for them might also have been anticipated, from the mental state engendered by association in such a connection. Politics call into action personal ambitions, party emulations, and love of agitation and debate. There is a mild ingredient of philanthropy in the mixture, but the principal attraction lies in the zest of public conflict. Therefore the cultivation of politics is inconsistent with the tastes that find pleasure in the will of God and His purpose with men as revealed. The saying of Christ remains true: "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."

There was a similar circle in a neighbouring townlet, romantically situated in a glen among the hills, about eight miles off—a coterie of the same class, sympathising with the same political principles and sharing the same literary and social tastes, staunchly supporting the editor of the *Examiner*. Most of them are now in their graves. They were very interesting—as interesting as a colony of ancient Greeks, but the Bible was not to their taste, and where are now their pleasantnesses and their friendships? Perished like the flowers of a season. Not so the hopes and friendships of those who are in harmony with God as revealed in the Scriptures. For these, the present mortal state is but the disciplinary and proving preliminary to everlasting life and love.

Outside the newspaper circle, we tried to influence several others of a more likely kind. There was the square-shouldered, military-looking honest man, a town official, whom a child might draw, but a regiment could not drive. He was full of reverence for the Bible, but full also of a want of understanding, which made him and his wife confound the workings of their own electrical brains with the motions of the Spirit of God. They could not be argued out of the conviction that the Spirit was with them as with the apostles. Where this conviction exists feeling is mistaken for proof, and progress is

impossible. Our request for some token of the Spirit's presence, which men not having the Spirit could not furnish, only irritated them. It is dangerous when people imagine they have light within if the light should happen to be darkness; which it assuredly is when the teaching of the supposed light cannot be harmonised with the Scriptures. Then there was the lean-looking tailor (poor fellow! he could not help it), who had such a powerful conceit of superior illumination, that the strongest Bible declarations we could quote could make no impression upon him. He was ahead of ordinary church and chapel-goers, but sunk in sectarian darkness where, so far as I know, he remained till the sun of his little day went down. A religious postman, who seemed a likely subject, proved a very dancing Dervish of spiritual inebriation—shouting and reeling drunk with the Babylonian wine.

Thus, all private effort recoiled upon ourselves, and we resolved, in a spirit of despairing resignation, to make a public attempt as a matter of duty, not only leaving results with God, but scarcely daring to think it possible His purpose admitted of any.



## CHAPTER XII.

## PUBLIC EFFORT AT HUDDERSFIELD.

PERCEIVING that little was to be done by private efforts to interest even the most promising people in the truth, yet not hoping that anything effectual could be done in any other way, but in the simple determination to pursue the course of duty marked out by the truth itself, I began to look round to see if anything could be done for its public exhibition. The chief difficulty was the question of means. Halls could be got, but the hire was high, and the salary of the newly-married people low. There was, besides, the cost of printing and posting. I do not now remember whether the Halifax brethren contributed anything in aid. I should think it likely, considering the favour with which they regarded the enterprise. At the same time they were so utterly poor that it is possible they could spare nothing but good wishes. At all events, the chief burden, if not the whole, lay with us as we intended.

I succeeded in engaging a schoolroom in an obscure corner—"Senior's schoolroom," if I recollect rightly—the last building on the left at the bottom of a lane which had no thoroughfare forward. All this may be changed now, as Huddersfield has altered so much. The lectures were to be once a fortnight, on Sunday afternoons, and eight in number. In due course the bills appeared on the walls, and were sent round by hand, in addition to an advertisement in the papers.

It was our first attempt, and was naturally the subject of some anxiety, even to the palpitating point. It was the depth of winter, and a very severe season—the snow lying deeply on the ground. When the day for the opening lecture came, we walked to the lane where the schoolroom was, near to the hour of meeting. How many would be assembled? My companion thought the place would be at least half-full, considering the publicity that had been given. The state of the lane did not

give us much promise. It seemed to us the snow was untrodden. Forward we went and reached the door. My wife pushed it open to discover her half-filled room. There was not a solitary soul in the place! This would have been damper enough in summer weather; in deep winter it was chilling to the freezing point—so far as the reception of the truth had to do with the spiritual temperature. It had a little to do with it, but not much. We had come to do a duty, and not to receive pleasure. So we walked in and took our seats at a table at the other end of the room.

We sat talking in the resonant emptiness for a short time, then the door was pushed open, and one or two entered, knocking the snow off their boots, and sat down. The state of things was not very encouraging to them, and it would not have taken many minutes to lead them to get up and go out again. But presently a few others came, till at last we had the half room-full anticipated by my companion.

I had made rough notes of the lecture to be given on "The Bible: what it is, and how to interpret it." Shortly after the appointed time I rose and apologised for bringing them out in such inclement weather to listen to remarks on a subject which there were churches and chapels enough to deal with to their heart's content. But the fact was the churches and chapels were off the track, and if men were to get on to it, they must try to help themselves; not only without help, but in spite of opposition from the recognised teachers. The Bible was the track. Whatever of true religion there was in the earth at the present time was to be found there and there alone. It was a boast that the Bible alone was the religion of the Protestants, but this was not much more than a pretty saying. The Protestants perhaps intended the Bible to be their religion, but on examination it would be found that they were at variance with the Bible in its most fundamental principles. How this had come to be the case was not very difficult to see in view of New Testament prophecy and ecclesiastical history. Both of these points were elaborated a little. Then came

the question as to the origin of the Bible and the mode in which it was to be studied and understood. The amplification of these features filled up the lecture. There was quite a fair attention to an inarticulate reedy voice not calculated to command a hearing, and whose hoppings from verse to verse and theme to theme must have increased the listening difficulty of the audience.

I had announced in a footnote on the bills that questions would be answered at the close of each lecture ; I accordingly now gave out that any person so disposed was entitled to put questions. In response to this, a tallish, slim, wiry man rose, whom I had got to know during my reporting duties as the arch-infidels of the town and neighbourhood. In a drawling, mock-respectful tone (as it seemed to me), he put a number of questions. Regarding the man as I did, I fear I answered with some degree of abruptness and acerbity. We make mistakes sometimes—perhaps not infrequently. It was true that this man had been the leader of local atheism for twenty years past ; but it was also true (as I ascertained soon afterwards from his own lips) that he had begun to reconsider the question of religion, and had already made some progress in the direction not of a return to pulpit theology, but to the Bible, when the bills announcing the lectures appeared, and seemed on the face of them to promise just the help he wanted. This was a very encouraging beginning. In the sequel he became obedient to the faith, and walked as a worthy brother for about twenty years, when he died.

His history was a very sad one, apart from what may be in store for him in the great outcome of things upon the earth. His life was like one long, dull, wintry day. He was born in the workhouse, and struggled with difficulty all his life. With no education, but possessed of an active native interest in political and religious questions, he worked himself into a fair degree of acquaintance with men and things, and exercised a distinct local influence in the town and neighbourhood, through his ability as a public speaker and his uprightness of character. At the time he came into contact with the truth, he

had found out the hollowness of the popular movements of the time, and had begun to thirst for a higher than man as the explanation of the great universe. "Can it be that we have no father ?" This, he said, was the form in which the question pressed itself upon him. He was listening for an answer when the Bible was providentially opened to him in a way that he had not thought possible.

Before the lectures had got far through the course of their delivery, a change occurred which caused them to be hurried up, and led to our absence from Huddersfield for a time, and afterwards to our entrance upon a new and larger field of action. The American phrenologists, Fowler and Wells, visited Huddersfield, and lectured on phrenology for several weeks with the aid of a large platform array of pictorial and other illustrations. Their lectures excited great interest, and led to their being inundated with applications for private written delineations of character. They had three shorthand writers steadily at work taking down and writing these delineations ; but the work was greater than they could get through, and they applied to me as one of the local press reporters to help them. I gave them my help as a matter of course, with the result that they proposed to me that I should become one of their permanent staff at a salary which was just about double what I was receiving.

The proposal was associated with the idea that when their visit to Britain was at an end, I should go with them to America, and settle in their employment in New York. This had a powerful charm for me from the fact that Dr. Thomas was in New York, and lectured every Sunday in that city, or neighbourhood, when not engaged on his travels. There was also the pleasing prospect of making an extended acquaintance with England in the course of the visits of Fowler and Wells to various cities. It was impossible that I could refuse such an offer.

My acceptance of it was not at all acceptable to the small company of brethren at Halifax. One of them went so far as to say that "I had surrendered to the one great devil's temptation which every man had brought to

bear upon him at some time or other in his life." When I urged the plea that I should have extended opportunities of serving the truth opened out to me in the new sphere, a fraternal expletive made me acquainted with the pungent force and meaning of the word "Gammon!" I could not be diverted from my determination by the mere expression of disapproval, and accordingly gave notice to my employer that I should leave him in a month for the new line of life, of which he did not disapprove.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## A BRUSH WITH ATHEISM.

WE had to wait for a month before we could get away from Huddersfield. Meanwhile, Fowler and Wells had gone forward to Leeds, a large manufacturing town about 16 miles off, where in due time we joined them. Before doing so, we had to dispose of our furniture, which we could only do at a sacrifice.

Looking back, I can see what an indiscreet proceeding this breaking up of our first settlement was, and how much wiser, as this world goes, it would have been to have declined the specious attractions of the American firm, and remained rooted in a neighbourhood where, with all its limitations and drawbacks, a steady quiet development would have been more humanising on some points, and more contributive to the peace and well-being that all men naturally place before them as the aim of all their efforts. We should have been moored in a quiet creek, as it were, and where the tranquillities and sweetnesses of a composed life could have been enjoyed, instead of having to buffet with the winds and waves that were awaiting us down the river in the open sea.

However, as the Scriptures testify, "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps," for when he thinks he is grasping the helm in the most assiduous and clear-headed fashion, who knows but the brain-promptings that guide his arm are the secret volitions of Him "in whose hand our breath is, and whose are all our ways." Had we remained in Huddersfield our subsequent course must have been entirely different; for though we returned in no great length of time, influences were started into action by our first departure, that led to a second, and all that may have come of that.

Two things helped us to decide on the departure. We had lost a little daughter, who came to us at the cot in Hebble Row some 12 months after our assumption

of matrimonial bonds. (By the way, we have found the said bonds such as we would not throw off. We have met a few, in our time, whose experience has resembled our own in this respect; but where we have met one case of this sort, we have met a hundred of the other sort—whose marriage wreaths were all faded and withered within a few months, and whose golden links have turned to iron fetters. There must be some reason for the difference. There is. All depends upon the character of the wedded people. If the fear of God and regard for duty and the hope of futurity in Christ prevail on both sides, there will be lasting sweetness, because neither side leans too much on the other, and neither looks to the present for the realisation of life's meaning; yet both do their duty as partners in the pact, even if natural motive fail. But if there is nothing but natural ignorance of God on each side, and natural seeking for pleasure and ministration, there will come, with the inevitable failings of nature, little breaks under stress—acts of inconsiderateness, expressions of haste that will act as escapes of steam, which scald and destroy. Scald wounds will heal with time, but not with repetitions going on; and this is the danger, that when once this sort of thing sets in, it is liable to become chronic, and marriage degenerates to a mere lodging-house convenience, and sour at that, instead of being what it was designed to be, a partnership of sweet and helpful adjustment: a noble communion of life—a fountain of love and light in the arid desolation that belongs to the things of evil that must prevail during the hiding of God's face from the children of men.)

The loss of our blue-eyed life-blossom, whom we called Agnes, after an interesting and spiritually-minded sister of her mother's, who died two years before, was naturally a deep sorrow to young people, who generally feel they can never get over what may deeply grieve them. It would have been a grief to us, even if we could have believed our darling had gone to be an angel in heaven. It was doubly so in the view which truth compelled us to entertain. We had learnt that life was

life, and that death was death. We had not learnt the inherited and universal view, that there is no death, and that what we call death is the state of having passed to another life. In this enlightenment, there was great emancipation from the difficulties that beset the whole question of religion from the immortal-soul and present-state-of-the-human-race point of view. But there was also great aggravation to personal bereavement when death came before the hope of life had opportunity to begin with the belief and obedience of the gospel.

There was an advantage, perhaps, in such a test of personal conviction. I had been told that when I had children in the grave, I would change my mind about the state of the dead. I felt that it would not be so: that the accident of personal experience could make no difference to truth perceived on evidence. Still, sometimes we deceive ourselves in our theoretical constructions. It was as well to have the matter put to the proof. I keenly felt it would have been a most welcome salve to lacerated feeling if I could have believed the beautiful fable; but I cast it from me with a "Get thee behind me, Satan." I recognised that in the wisdom of God, "sin had reigned unto death"; that God had given and God had taken away, and that it was the part of created intelligence to bow in absolute submission. Still, it was hard work for weak human nature. A sense of desolation was left which, perhaps, predisposed us to fall in with a proposal which opened the prospect of travel.

The other thing that helped in the same direction was the prevalence of atheism in Huddersfield and neighbourhood. Bradlaugh was a frequent visitor, and drew crowded and enthusiastic audiences. A "Rev." Joseph Barker, who had gone over to infidelity, was also very popular, and received a wide and gleeful hearing. He was an able lecturer, with a fine, sonorous, though somewhat nasal voice—original in matter, free and voluble in style. He was also a good singer, and

used to finish his lectures with a platform solo on "The good time coming" or some such topic.

Nobody seemed able to answer these men, and the gullible public of unbelief was in high feather all through the district. I contrived to meet the latter gentleman at the house of a mutual friend—"Joe" somebody or other, beginning with an "S." This friend was somewhat interested in the things I had brought to his notice, but they could take no hold of him because of his lack of faith in the Bible. He said if the Bible was right, the things I said were true; but how could he believe in the Bible in the face of all that these able men advanced against it. I asked him to bring me face to face with them; and the result was a tea-table meeting with Barker. I was introduced as a friend who believed in the Bible. During tea, conversation soon came to be limited to me and Mr. Barker. My object was to show, by questions addressed to him, how shallow the grounds of unbelief were, for the benefit of the friend who was entertaining us. I kept to the case of Paul, the writer of most of the New Testament epistles.

Mr. Barker did not enjoy my tactics at all. After a while, he tried to evade the force of Paul's case by saying that Paul changed his mind when he was old. Asked for a proof of this, he quoted the remark in 1 Cor. 13 that "When I became a man, I threw away childish things." I asked if it was not after Paul became a man that he embraced the faith and service of Christ, and whether he did not die in them and whether it was not the things of literal childhood which every man threw away, that Paul was referring to in the verse quoted—At this point, Mr. Barker looked at his watch, and though tea was not finished, he rose and said he had an appointment to keep—and thereupon he vanished from the room without the usual courtesies. Unprincipled jugglers with facts, I have always found them to be. Whether friend "Joe" saw that in this case, I now remember not. He was amused, but I rather think it went no further.

In a manuscript magazine which I had tried to carry on during the first year of my Huddersfield residence (a single copy sent from friend to friend through the post, but which did not get beyond, perhaps, the fourth or fifth number), I had set myself out particularly for the answering of infidel objections, so that I had acquired a certain readiness in this direction, which enabled me to beard such a considerable lion as Mr. Barker had, at that time, grown to. In course of time, Mr. Barker apostatized from his apostasy and became a professed Christian again, and was received as a prodigal son into the Wesleyan ranks, which he had quitted. He died some years ago, and before his death, he called witnesses to his bedside and professed his faith in the things he had so influentially undermined during the prime of his manhood.—Mr. Bradlaugh's voice is also hushed under the turf. Their influence at the time was great in Yorkshire, and tended to create such a state of spiritual desolation—(of the arid type of the Great Sahara)—that I felt the prospect of a change rather acceptable from a spiritual point of view.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

LEEDS: FOWLER AND WELLS.

I AIMED to get away from Huddersfield before my month's notice was expired, because my new employers (Fowler and Wells) were under a great pressure of work, and desired my services as soon as possible. The editor of *The Huddersfield Examiner* therefore communicated with his Edinburgh acquaintance, on whose nomination I had come in the first instance; and, on his recommendation, a man came from Edinburgh to take my place. I could not go, however, until it was certain the new man was competent. Poor fellow! I never look back to him without feeling sorrow stirred. He was a sort of half-finished, harmless Scotchman, with a boundless admiration for literary capacity, but just one peg short of the level of ability to sustain himself in the sphere he admired. His enthusiastic appreciation of others, and his inability to see when others were making fun of him, made it difficult for people to be impatient with him.

When introduced to the editor of the paper on which he was to serve, he struck an attitude of admiration which would have been embarrassing to a less good-natured man than that gentleman. "Is this Mr. W——? Is this Mr. W——?" he twice exclaimed in dramatic style, but sincerely enough, eyeing the object of his enquiry as if he were an object in a museum, displayed under a glass. Then, turning to me, he continued, "Man, have you been sunnin' yourself in the eyes of this man all this time?" We had to get over the awkward situation with as pleasant a smile as possible. The eccentricity of our new friend would have suggested the proverbial loose slate, only that there was along with it a grit of Scotch sense in matters that made us at least hope all would turn out well. He was very free and original in his personal comments on everyone with whom he came closely in contact.

The proprietor of the hotel in which he temporarily lodged was not a fool, but he was not to be mistaken for a genius except by such as our friend, who discovered in his shaggy eye-brows and somnolent countenance the tokens of strength in repose! Our friend estimated the probable capacity of every one by one rule—whether or not he could "write a leader." "Man, he could write a leader," was the highest encomium he could bestow on some historic acquaintance, or the highest opinion he could express of some one to whom he might be introduced. The expression was so frequently and so ardently on his lips as to become a proverb in Israel: "Man, he could write a leader."

Poor fellow, when it came to the humdrum work of writing an ordinary report, his attainments were found of a very superficial order. Men smitten with the idea of reporting but of no ability as reporters, or smitten with the idea of writing leaders but unable to write passable paragraphs, are not unknown in the literary corners of the wide desert of human life as it now unhappily is. Our friend was of this class, but withal so good-natured, so earnest and so enthusiastic that it was really a painful matter to deal with his case as it required. Before it had been quite decided that he must go, the editor and a few of his political friends came to take a farewell private cup of tea with me and my companion in the hotel to which we had transferred ourselves after parting with our furniture. In this hotel was my intended successor, and he made one of the company during the evening. Our friend's presence saved the evening from what I fear would have been a dreadful flatness; for my visiting friends were interested in the present world thoroughly, and I not at all, except as a traveller may be interested in a road through which he must go to get to a country desired. In this respect, the Bible had spoiled me, as was alleged, and as I freely admitted. The incongruity of the situation lay in this, that my friends professed to believe the same Bible, and yet made submission to its teachings a matter of regret. However, our friend

saved us from all flatness on this head. The company had found out he was a character, and drew him on. They gravely plied him with the most absurd propositions in literature and politics, and roared like to split their sides at his answers, which were given in all simplicity.

A more hilarious evening I never spent. It was boisterous mirth without buffoonery except of a certain high sort; and it was all on nothing stronger than tea. It was a sort of intellectual treat in its way. I think our friend began at last to find out he was being fooled, and sadly retired into his shell. In the end, he had to leave the town and make way for another man. When I last heard of him, he was in London, doing some very poorly-paid literary hack work, or canvassing for some philanthropic society. His earnest simplicity haunts me to this day. I wish I could have the opportunity of doing him a good turn. Perhaps he is no longer in the land of the living. The painful tangled web of human life will one day be straightened out.

In a day or two after this peculiar farewell *seance*, we left Huddersfield and went to Leeds. The truth had a friend or two in that town, and apartments had been engaged for us in a part of the town called North Town End. The town impressed us as being a gloomy, dirty town after a neat clean place like Huddersfield. It seems much improved in this respect nowadays—perhaps owing to the enforcement of the law compelling the consumption of smoke. At that time, there were smoke-flecks in the air, and everything looked begrimed. Just then, too, the weather was intensely cold, for it was mid-winter (January, 1861), which would help the unfavourable impression made upon us. We were located in the neighbourhood of a remarkable friend who has long since found the rest that waits us all in the ordinary course, inside the quiet gates of the flower-ornamented City of the Dead. He was a character in quite a different way from our "write-a-leader" friend. To begin with, he was a professor of the truth and a great admirer of Dr. Thomas's works, but taken

up rather with the political than the spiritual side of the gospel. He was a butcher by trade, but as unlike his trade as possible. He was neat and clean, and trim as a lady's lap dog. Away from his business, you would have imagined him some town magnate, with his erect and dignified walk, and his scrupulously well-dressed appearance. He was not a fop, but he was nearer than far away from that line of things, with well-brushed and ringleted hair, and gold watch chain in due visibility. He was a friendly, loud-spoken man, with a certain amount of dry humour that attracted friends and customers to him.

But with this, there was a towering self-satisfaction and even self-importance that made him nearly harsh and domineering, and even quite so in the presence of the least opposition. His intellectual capacity was not very great, but he was a keen observer, and had a thorough capacity for enjoyment. He was a thoroughly interesting and enjoyable man, so long as you were in harmony with him. His very self-complacency was amusing without being offensive. I did not know at first it was so easy to get on his wrong side. I put my foot in the first hole by taking exception to an opinion he had expressed as to the meaning of a certain prophecy. I was quite unprepared for the ebullition of resentment which my remarks evoked. It seemed to me merely a matter of argument, but he treated it as an affair of personal insult which he could in no wise look over. It was my first disillusionment with regard to men professing the truth. I acted on the assumption that all who embraced the truth, understood it clearly and loved it disinterestedly without any mixture of self-love, which the nature of the case seemed to exclude (seeing that one of the effects of the truth rightly seen is to make us hate ourselves, and one of its first demands, that we humble ourselves). It was not my last, I am sorry to say, but it was more painful than the last because acting on a sensibility undecked as yet by the rude frictions of a rough world which at first seems fit and beautiful, but at last appears as it is.



My next offence was unpardonable. He had gathered round him some four or half-dozen simple-minded men who were thankful for his leadership up to a certain point, but at last they became weary of his domineering treatment, and rebelled in the case of a certain grievance. In this matter, they came over to me, and asked whether they had done rightly in complaining. It seemed to me reason was on their side (I utterly forget now what the affair was about), but the fact of my thinking they were in the right, was a capital offence in the eyes of our interesting friend, whom no friendly advance could afterwards appease. The last time I called upon him, at the close of one such unsuccessful effort, he bade me a final adieu in dramatic style. He was standing at one end of the room, and I with my hand on the door-knob at the other. I said I wished him to fare well, intending the primary meaning of those terms, but he took me up wrongly, and waving his hand, said "Farewell! farewell! (*with great emphasis*) Any time you are passing through Leeds, be sure and not call on me." I never saw him afterwards. This finish distressed me exceedingly, for having gleaned my social etiquette from the Bible alone, I could not help feeling there was something wrong in such a state of feeling, and until I had done my utmost to end it I could feel no rest. I have since come to realise that the world is one wide waste of spiritual desolation, and that we get through it acceptably in the sight of God if we faithfully do our own part, whatever may be the part performed by others.

On the first working night after our arrival in Leeds, I found myself as a doorkeeper in a large hall—(I forget the name now)—into which crowds of people were streaming by ticket to hear a lecture on some phase of phrenology by the world-famed American phrenologist, Mr. L. N. Fowler. It was a novel and not particularly congenial position, but it was a stepping stone to better things. One never knows the meaning of what he may be doing for the time. It may be a lane into a larger road that may lead you to a harbour that

may take you out into the ocean; or it may be a lane ending in a waste heap, though lanes don't generally end there, if a man have eyes. Whether waste heap or the ocean, you must take the step before you. If God be your guide, you may go ahead without fear: but He will not guide if you don't go. Do not lie down, for that is death. Do not go ahead with recklessness, for that is tempting God. In modesty commit your way to Him, exercising your best judgment in the steps you pick in the labyrinth; and if you don't get to the ocean, you will at all events get to some wholesome highway where life will be tolerable during the present evil.

This phrenological association was useful afterwards. It was not the beginning of my knowledge of such things, but it was an improvement and a consolidation of knowledge previously possessed. I made my first acquaintance with phrenology in *Elpis Israel*, and through the popular allusions that were flying about when I was between ten and twelve. After this I got a closer view when I was thirteen, through the reading of Dr. Thomas's *Herald of the Kingdom*, and through these, I was led at the age of fifteen to the perusal of *Combe's Constitution of Man*. When I removed to Edinburgh at eighteen, there was a good deal of talk about phrenology then, which helped to establish the knowledge I had acquired. My connection with Fowler and Wells was a finishing touch. I have often been thankful that I was so early put in possession of the key to human nature, which phrenology undoubtedly presents, jointly with the key to human history and futurity which the Bible contains, as distinguished from orthodox religion. The two blend together, and give much guidance in a world that is a distracted world from a merely intellectual point of view.

## CHAPTER XV.

## BIRMINGHAM: THE FOWLER AND WELLS COMPANY.

**A**FTER a stay of fourteen days or so, the next move of the travelling company, of which I had now become a member, was to Birmingham. The company was not a large one, consisting of only six members—Mr. Fowler, Mr. Wells, and their four shorthand-writers. It was as pleasant a company of natural men as one is ever likely to be associated with in this evil state of things. They were thoroughly American, exhibiting the two leading traits of the American people to perfection—humour and independence, tempered with kindness. There was none of the austere standoffness that is liable to be shown by British officialism: they were frank and ready to serve. At the same time, there were no deferences or reverences. They took every man at what he was in himself, without respect to the social caste-distinctions that weigh so much with English people.

They differed in their individual peculiarities, of course. The soul of the concern was Mr. Fowler,—a thick-set, silver-haired man of middle stature, who did nearly all the lecturing at night, and most of the private examining of heads during the day. He was a man of no great calibre, intellectually considered, but he had a thorough command of phrenology and physiology, and could read men off like a book. He was a good example of an average man developed to the best advantage, climbing to prominence by excelling in one thing. He was a humble, kindly, sensible, fatherly man, with just enough dry humour to make him agreeable; without this, he would have been tame. As a lecturer, he had a good voice, with a strong American nasalism which had a certain fascination with a British audience. His lecturing was interesting, but delivered without gesture and with some monotony of voice. It would probably not have been so interesting without the extensive display of life-size portraits and busts behind

him on the platform, and the free admixture of telling stories. His forte lay in delineating character. His examinations of heads chosen promiscuously from the audience at the close of the lecture were always successful. Though not a man of the highest finish, there was no charlatanism with him. He had a sound grasp of his subject on scientific principles, and did phrenology a great service in pointing out and always keeping to the front the connection between the body and brain in their mutual action. Privately, he was a thoroughly pleasant man—humane and true and blithesome, though never profound.

Mr. Wells was a different sort of man, but equally excellent in his way. He was tall, and dark, and spectacled, and would have been mistaken for an Englishman on a superficial acquaintance. He looked of the schoolmaster type. He was a man of business talent, and had the commercial department of the enterprise in charge. He had also a thorough knowledge of the science, and could both lecture and examine in case of need, but never with the acceptability of his partner. There was a little emulation between them on this score, which was sometimes amusingly manifested. He was a man of gentleness and worth, and partook of the sunny humour common to all superior Americans. He had a respect for the Scriptures, but no thorough acquaintance with them.

One day, he and Mr. Fowler were having a private tussle on the question of whether it was the duty of parents to provide for the children, or children for the parents. Mr. Fowler was contending for the latter view. Mr. Wells was sure the Bible was on his side, but could not quote. I referred him to 2 Cor. 12:14. On reading it, he perfectly crowed over his partner, and confessed they did not know the Scriptures as they ought to do. On a subsequent occasion, one evening, while the lecture was going on, and there was nothing to do, he and I had a long conversation in the ante-room, in which he expressed his unfeigned sorrow that they were so far away from spiritual things, and his

unqualified admiration of my application in that direction. He admitted that nothing else would matter at last. Poor fellow! He is now among the unnumbered dead.

Then there was the sub-manager, Mr. Wilson, the sharp, sandy-haired, blue-eyed, and eagle-nosed pioneer of the concern—a lithe, intelligent, bright, friendly young man, whose business it was to go before to the next town and make arrangements in advance, engaging halls, getting out bills, etc. He was the only one that I succeeded in interesting in the truth, though I tried with them all; but the interest was not of the fervid or abiding order. What became of him at last I do not know. I think he filled some military post in the Civil War that was fermenting in America at the time I joined them.

Burnham was the most unpromising, yet the most naturally capable of the company. He was sallow, taciturn, and heedless. He could not be stirred up to take an interest in anything. Yet he had a splendid forehead, and showed great capacity whenever he did or said anything. His shorthand writing and his calligraphy were like copperplate. He used to ask jocosely when the kingdom was coming, and said he could wait. I never heard how he turned out till on board the *Gallia* (I think), in one of my recent journeys to America. And then I did not "hear" but stumbled on the knowledge in quite a striking manner. I was looking over some books that were spread out on the saloon table of the vessel, and picked out a high-class, thick American monthly magazine, profusely illustrated. Turning over its pages, my eye caught a woodcut portrait of a man apparently between 40 and 50, whose features seemed familiar. Underneath the woodcut was the name "Burnham," etc. And the subject of the article "Burnham, the astronomer." "Burnham!" said I to myself, several times, "Burnham! Burnham! why surely this is never Burnham of the Fowler and Wells Company." I read the article; so it was. It appeared that while following the occupation of shorthand-writer to one of the American Law Courts, he had

turned his attention to astronomy, and risen to fame as a great astronomical discoverer. It gave an account of his discoveries, and of his correspondence with the various learned societies of the European capitals, with whom at last he ranked as an authority in a special department. His leading discoveries relate to previously unknown binary stars, or stars composed of two that revolve round each other. It was quite a pleasant surprise to find that our taciturn friend had so distinguished himself, even if on the march to the universal grave.

The other young man (Andem)—light complexion, regular, decidedly British intellectual face, rose to high place in the American naval service during the war. He was a pleasant, educated friendly young man, with all the wit, and harum-scarum dash that belong to the Americans. He used to amuse us by playing on an instrument and asking us what we would have next and always playing the same tune ("Yankee-Doodle," I think). He also displayed a mock enthusiasm over ruins and relics. There are no ruins in America, and intelligent Americans are always interested in this feature of British scenery, but this breezy young man would gravely call Mr. Fowler's attention (as we went along in the train) to railway gates and farm houses, and go into raptures at their supposed age and historical associations. It was the effervescence of a moment. It is all gone now.

This was our first visit to Birmingham. We were struck with its great, wide-spreading, glass case railway station—which has since been doubled and improved in many ways. The town itself seemed a dreary waste of brick streets with uncomfortable pebble footways. It also has wonderfully altered within the last 30 years. We were complete strangers in the town, and could therefore look at it without bias. We (that is my companion and I) had to walk through a good many streets before we selected apartments. (The arrangements made by the pioneer aforesaid did not include provision for us, which was entirely to our mind, as we should not have found ourselves at home in close association.)

## CHAPTER XVI.

BIRMINGHAM, LEICESTER, NOTTINGHAM, DERBY.

WE stayed in Birmingham five weeks. Large audiences attended the phrenological lectures in the Music Hall, Broad Street (since converted into the Prince of Wales theatre), and during the day, a great number of well-to-do persons came to the consultation rooms for phrenological examinations. My duty consisted of attending the consultation rooms, and taking my turn at taking down these examinations and afterwards writing them out. This was day work: in the evening, I took part as a doorkeeper. This was the routine of our first five weeks of Birmingham life, ending with a tea meeting, at which Fowler and Wells were lionised and phrenology glorified as the grand reformer of the ills of mankind. There was a vote of thanks also to the shorthand writers and doorkeepers, to which I was put up to respond. I elicited some applause by suggesting that when the old heads had finished their day, the young ones might step into their shoes and continue their work. Man proposes, but God disposes. This programme would have led to different results in many ways. My plans of life were exceedingly vague at that time, and, indeed, they have never had any definiteness as regards the present state. The view before me and my companion at that time was mainly this, that there were but a few years to run before the Lord's coming, and that our business was to get through faithfully on all points till then. There has never been any alteration on this point, though things took definite shape by and by. The service of phrenology would have been a beggarly calling, which was prevented by and by.

The principal feature of interest to us during our Birmingham stay was our Sunday intercourse with a handful of people who had been interested in Dr. Thomas's visit and lectures in 1849, and of whose

existence we learnt from occasional hints in the *Herald of the Kingdom*, and otherwise. They were not organised as a "church," or even as an ecclesia, but met together in a very informal way on Sunday evenings in the upper room (bathroom) of a barber's shop in Summer Lane, to read Dr. Thomas's writings. There might be getting on for a dozen of them when they were all there. The room just held them. The soul of the coterie was Mr. Thomas Davis, a water-works official, who had not himself obeyed the truth, but felt a keen interest in everything socially pertaining to it. He was treasurer and general manager of affairs. There was another man who stood much in the background, and rarely attended, and yet who was much more pronouncedly of the fraternal type than any of them. This was Mr. Bailey, a working jeweller, whose wife kept a grocer's shop in New John Street West. He was a fatherly and devout man, short and full-bodied, with round, anxious face and fully developed head. He was the quiet, tender-hearted father of a large family. He was full of devotional feeling, which almost invariably found vent in tears when he prayed. He was for this reason known among some of us as "the weeping brother." He and his Emily have long since gone to rest.

On the report of our presence, he came to the little meeting. The state of things was immediately the subject of conversation. I pointed out the unscripturalness of the chaos that prevailed, and recommended the proper incorporation of all immersed friends of the truth, and them only, as an ecclesia for the regular breaking of bread, and the proclamation of the truth. With these ideas Mr. Bailey most readily agreed, and something like immediate steps were taken for carrying them into effect. Friend Davis took a back seat, as the Americans say, and an ecclesia was regularly organised, and lectures commenced. At their request, I lectured every Sunday evening to a suffocatingly crowded audience in the barber's bathroom that would not comfortably seat perhaps over 16. It was a small

affair, to the verge of contemptibility, but it was a beginning, and long experience has taught the wisdom of not despising the day of small things. Small things may be precious things. Everything depends upon the germ at work. My companion and I met with them seven successive Sundays. We were only five of these Sundays in Birmingham, but as our next town of call was Wolverhampton, only some 13 miles off, we came to Birmingham on the two Sundays we were located there. These seven Sundays afterwards led to a movement which brought us back to Birmingham. In Birmingham we have ever since remained—never, however, with a settled feeling, but always with a sense of the *pro tem.* sort, like a steamship at a port of call, or a bird of passage that has lighted on a promontory for a brief rest, and that presently will resume flight.

A fortnight at gloomy Wolverhampton was succeeded by a visit of similar duration to Leicester. We were struck with the brightness and beauty of Leicester after Wolverhampton; and with the animation and apparent intelligence of the people. The remark mutually exchanged was that Leicester would be a good field for the truth if by any means it could once be introduced. There were no brethren in the place in those days. There is now a considerable and interesting ecclesia, the result of rootlets struck out from Birmingham. A brother in the latter town had a cousin in the former. The brother introduced the truth to the cousin, and the cousin, an energetic young man who ran well for a time, did not rest till he got lectures delivered in the place. One thing led to another. There have been ups and downs, as there have been everywhere. Affliction, outside and in, has been severe enough to kill it, but the truth has proved a hardy plant that nothing can destroy. The young man who introduced it afterwards attempted to uproot it, but he found he had started a force that cannot be controlled.

From Leicester we went to Nottingham, another clean and interesting and thriving town. Here there was an ecclesia, which made our visit much more

interesting to ourselves. We were made welcome guests at the hospitable house of brother John Turney, who had a large and promising family of sons and daughters. Since then there have been storms and gales and wrecks: but some safely ride at their anchors still. The phrenological lectures were a feature of interest in the town, but the brethren were the great attraction to us. They did not prove the thoroughly spiritual community that we imagined them to be. This was not to be wondered at in view of their quite recent emergence from Campbellism. There were some fine men among them, but their hold on the Scriptures proved to be but feeble. One highly promising young man, indeed, fell away quite soon to open infidelity—a son of a very fervent father and grandfather, who both fell asleep in the faith. His apostasy was preceded by a course of theatre-going and pleasure, following in which, greatly to my distress, he was encouraged by a brother in another part of the county, who also made shipwreck at the last.

Others were but partly enlightened, and only partly in love with spiritual things: lively, nice, interesting people, but much more interested in each other and in their houses than in the great things of God, which claim the supreme affection. This is not peculiar to Nottingham, nor to any spot on the earth's surface. It is part of the disease common at a time when God has temporarily suspended visible participation in the affairs of men, leaving His written word alone to represent Him (a visible monument for which we are not thankful enough). The effect of the mixed state of things was soon seen in frictions and fermentations, which at last ended in disruption. Disruption has continued more or less the order of the day ever since; and, indeed, must necessarily be the history of the truth everywhere in the absence of its great centre and head, for this simple reason: some love the truth and some do not, mistaking the love of the social circumstances generated by the truth for the love of the truth itself. (No discerning person will deny the truthfulness

of this proposition.) Now when two classes of persons in this condition associate together, sooner or later the divergence of their affections becomes manifest to each other. When this arises, antagonism, passive at first, becomes more and more distinct as circumstances afford scope for it, till at last it assumes the complexion of animosity, especially on the part of those who are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. Men of God have no animus, however much they may have to dissent from those whose eyes and heart are shut towards Him. Of course, it is possible there may be much division where there is little or no godliness, and all the more because of the absence of godliness on either side. Still, the presence of godliness does operate as an irritant. Godliness has no pleasure in irritations of any kind, but loves peace and seeks it; and is therefore hable to flee from the presence of strife and seek in solitude that communion with God which is obstructed by the disunions of men. There is a possibility of erring in this direction; for it is one of the appointments of God in the present evil state that godliness should fight the evil and earn the crown that waits a faithful course at the end.

Our stay in Nottingham ended with a phrenological tea-meeting, in which we had no heart. The tea-meeting took place in the open air at the Arboretum, and would have been a very pleasant affair had it been on the basis of enlightenment towards God and submission to His appointment; but as a mere festival of the flesh, it was not far from being nauseous—glorifying man who is not worthy of it, and deifying a science that merely shows us man's dark interior (for the high-sounding names of his organs, conscientiousness, veneration, benevolence, etc., are, when rightly understood, but names of capacity, not of endowment: the mere description of potentialities depending upon divine education for development, apart from which, man is a barbarian).

Our next move was to Derby, but whether we stayed there or not I cannot at this distance of time

be certain. If I had not been there many times since in another capacity, I would have remembered. My companion thinks we stayed, and it seems very likely on the face of it, but the memory of it has clean gone—except a dim impression to the effect that the visit was a failure on account of the religious opposition felt by the Derby people towards phrenology. Such an opposition would be logical if immortal soul religion were the truth: for, certainly, phrenology takes the bottom out of immortal soulism by showing that human mentality is an affair of corruptible organisation, and not of incorruptible and detachable essence. Some were sharp enough to see this, but the majority comforted themselves with a kind of intellectual juggle to the effect that the brain was but the musical instrument on which the soul performed, and that, of course, when the strings were short or loose, the performer was not responsible for the abortive sound. The fallacy pleased shallow minds that preferred to be both phrenological and orthodox, especially such as were not much in earnest on the latter point, who constitute the overwhelming majority. But higher minds resented the absurdity, and scouted phrenology as the invention of the devil. That this was the highly respectable and unenlightened state of mind among the Derby people, I should greatly doubt from subsequent experience.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## RETURNS TO NEWSPAPER AT HUDDERSFIELD.

FROM Derby we went to Sheffield, a large town, well known throughout the world for its cutlery manufacture. It struck us as being a gloomy place of belching chimney stacks, grimy houses, and smoke-laden atmosphere; but it has since improved greatly, like all other English places. The population seemed worse than the place—all gone after a low-form sectarianism or the most vulgar and rabid atheism. "Iconoclast," as Bradlaugh used to be called in those days, had a large and enthusiastic following; so had Fidler Joss, or some such hell-fire mountebank. There was, of course, a middle class of the better sort, the frequenters and supporters of religious "causes" and educational movements, but having no Scriptural knowledge of any moment, and no understanding of the hope of Israel, or the wonderful purpose and work of Israel's God as declared by the prophets and the apostles. It was a doleful place for pilgrims of Zion. However, in this respect also, a great change for the better has taken place. There is now an intelligent and thriving ecclesia in Sheffield, so that, spiritually, the place presents the same contrast of tidiness to its former state that it does in the state of its atmosphere and the aspect of its streets.

How delighted we should have been in 1861 to have found such an ecclesia as exists in 1891. The time had not come. It was phrenology then, which is poor stuff to feed on. A melancholy spectacle is a human being in the state of maudlin self-contemplation induced by the exclusive study of the cranial science. However, it is better than the absolute self-ignorance that is usual; and there is a time for it, which the intelligent will survive, coming out at last into the clear light of intellectual equilibrium, in which the mind is a sort of mirror of the universe—reflecting all truth in just proportion.

A little phrenological knowledge would do the world's "lights" a deal of good sometimes. It would save Mrs. Besant, for example, from finding in the mental diversities of the human species an evidence of previous existence. (By the way, Mrs. Besant, why should the blacks, as a mass, be so far below the Europeans as a mass, if your ideal of a previous existence is needful to account for the diversities of individual "souls"? But we will leave that.)

The phrenological lectures and examinations took very well in Sheffield—the lecturers being careful, with pole-balancing agility, to offend neither the infidels nor the sectarians. To the one, they spoke of the brain being the instrument of the soul, and to the other—well (with a wink), no one knew much about it, and it was as well not to burst the boilers in getting to heaven. The only distinct impression we took away from Sheffield was that the world, with its energy and clever wrong-headedness, was a much more difficult problem than we had any idea of; also that its sorrows were deep and incurable. We lodged with a widow whose type was new to us in those days, but which we have since found is not scarce: glib, shallow, effusive, highly retrospective and responsive to sympathy, but having no affinity for thoughts or ways or questions relating to wisdom. They can entertain you by the hour with recitals that are of no moment to a human being under the sun. Yet what can you say? There they are, with their scanty natures, their empty purses, and their harrowed feelings. It is part of the nightmare of the world. You can only drop a word of sympathy, do some little act of help, and pass on with a groan. Portionless widows ought to be taken charge of by the State—occupation afforded, maintenance allowed. Dear me! how many "oughts" there are. Well, nightmares only last for the night. The day will break and the shadows flee. Our widow wept when we said good-bye: we have not seen her since. She has probably passed off the scene.

Our next place of call was York. When I arrived at the hall that had been engaged, a letter was placed in

my hands, imploring me not to stay at York, as an evil person known to the writer had designs on my wife, and would not scruple to make short work with me if I stood in his way, or something to that effect. I had had a note of similar purport concerning York before leaving Sheffield. I knew there could be no truth in the allegations, but that some one must be trying to play a practical joke. The note I had at York was specially handed to me by Burnham—afterwards the astronomer—the others looking gleefully on. It bore all the marks of having come through the post; but on closely scanning it, I found the stamp and post marks were all clever imitations, so that I was at no loss in finding the culprit among those merry Americans. They were sorry to see the joke explode so quickly. They had at least hoped to see me apprehensive, casting quick glances at the opening doors, etc.

In the evening, Mr. Wells opened the ceremony. "We have come," said he, "all the way from *New York* to have a look at you in *old York*. We consider ourselves missionaries: we bring you knowledge of a special kind which it will be good for you to know," etc. There were wicked winks among the subordinates at this way of putting the phrenological enterprise, seeing that nothing but the imperious necessities of business would have brought busts and skulls and pictures to a York platform. There was a certain amount of truth in the statement, but it was sadly diluted and watered down with grosser facts. The great aim was to please men that they might be induced to part with a little of the circulating gold into phrenological pockets (in a perfectly legitimate way, of course; but still, there it was).

I asked Mr. Fowler at a quiet moment in the examination room, while at this place, why he did not delineate inferior characters in language that could be understood by them. (He would say, for example, to a man villainously deficient in conscientiousness: "You are characterised for a moderate degree of circumspection; it would be well for you to cultivate this quality for the

sake of a proper balance of your powers." The initiated understood the meaning of the hint, but the man himself went away with a gratified sense of moral proficiency.) Mr. Fowler said it would not do to tell just the naked truth; that people would resent it, and it would do them no good, whereas by suggesting that they were good and only required to be a little better, they were kept on good terms with themselves, and stood a better chance of any improvement their case was susceptible of—to all of which, of course, no exception could be taken from the phrenologist's point of view. But it made me feel that phrenology could be no fitting calling for one who desired to be led and guided alone by the issues of truth, and above all, who wished to be identified with the work of God among men.

This feeling, combined with new family prospects, and the unsatisfactory nature of our irregular ways, led me to reconsider our course. Was it wise or otherwise for us to remain connected with a travelling phrenological firm? The problem grew so strongly on me as to unfit me for meals. At York, we were nearer Huddersfield than we should be again for a long time to come. What would it be to run through and see how my former employer was situated? Resolved. We had now been about five months on the wing. Phrenological business was not very brisk in a cathedral town. I easily obtained permission to pay a visit to Huddersfield. The editor of *The Examiner* was glad to see me. I found he was badly suited with the man that had come in my place. When I ventilated the idea of my returning, he readily fell in with it, and it was arranged that he would give notice to his reporter, and that I should give notice to Fowler and Wells. On my return to York I told Mr. Wells what I was thinking of. He took it very kindly, and I think the proposal to leave them was not altogether unwelcome, as the throng of business had begun to ease off considerably, and the stoppage of my salary would be a welcome retrenchment. Perhaps also my strong Bible preferences interfered with my perfect suitability for their service on all points. At all events, it was easily arranged that at



the expiry of a month's notice I should be at liberty to leave them. From York we went to Durham, then to Newcastle-on-Tyne, then to Sunderland, and from Sunderland we returned to Huddersfield, to resume the jog-trot life of a provincial weekly newspaper reportership.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## ORIGIN OF "TWELVE LECTURES."

WE returned to Huddersfield on the 15th of July, 1861. My secular avocation I always regarded as a mere accessory to what the Bible had brought me to look upon as the main business of life—that of preparing for the Lord's use in the higher existence to which he would introduce the accepted at his coming. I had no ambitions, and no purposes to serve beyond getting through faithfully in this line. The idea of saving money, or aiming at a competency, or even at getting up or on in my profession, was the furthest from my thoughts. I regarded such a policy as out of reach, and out of question in those seeking to be faithful servants of the Lord in this day of darkness and small things, when we are called upon to lay ourselves upon the altar, in the maintenance of a testimony for the truth, and the assistance of the needy.

Therefore, the first thing we did on returning to Huddersfield was to arrange for a resumption of the Sunday operations connected with this object ; that is, after we were re-settled. This re-settlement was a very simple affair. We had not saved enough to take up house again at once, so we took apartments in a private temperance hotel in Queen Street, kept by a Campbellite of the name of Butler, a round-headed, energetic Yorkshireman. This hotel was a very quiet affair—scarcely more than a private lodging-house. But there were only two of us, and the two rooms placed at our disposal were ample enough, so that we were nicely suited, and for a while greatly enjoyed the change from our wandering life. The landlord had a little knowledge of Dr. Thomas from Campbellite writings and felt a kindly, cousin-like interest in our devotedness to him ; and the landlady, without much intelligence in the matter, one way or other, was a kindly, motherly person, of somewhat portly

dimensions, and a general style that did not savour of over-fastidiousness in person or otherwise.

She had a son John who proved an item in the evolution of things. He was in a draper's shop (if I recollect right), and did not like his occupation. I suggested to him that he should learn shorthand and get into newspaper work by taking part of my duties in an informal way. He was delighted with the idea, which was favoured by both father and mother. I mentioned the matter to my employer, and he was well pleased that the young man should acquire experience in the way proposed by working without salary. I had no idea at the time what use this arrangement would be to me. I doubt if *Twelve Lectures* would have been written apart from it, for I could not have commanded the necessary leisure if I had not had an assistant to take the police-court drudgery, which my young friend was soon ready for.

I have laid my hand upon an ecclesial minute book, commenced a fortnight after our return. From this I discover what I had forgotten, that when I came through on a visit to Huddersfield from York, as recorded in the last chapter, I found two men and the wife of one of them ready for immersion as the result of the Senior school-room effort, and baptised them in Lockwood baths, which was the commencement of the Huddersfield ecclesia. The following entry occurs in said minute book under the heading of "Origin of meeting":—

"In the month of October and following months of the year 1860, ——— delivered a course of eight public lectures in Senior's schoolroom, East Parade, Huddersfield, to which attention had been attracted by previous outdoor labours. The subjects related to 'the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ.' The lectures aroused the attention of several individuals, who were afterwards supplied with copies of *Elpis Israel*, by John Thomas, M.D., of America. The perusal of this work led to conviction, and on Sunday, the 11th day of May, 1861, Mr. Josiah Rhodes and Mr. John William Kaye and his wife were

baptised at Lockwood baths by ——— at their own request. These individuals were joined by brother Clissett, from Heckmondwike, who had up to that time been meeting with the church assembling at Halifax, which is more distant from Heckmondwike than Huddersfield. On July 15th, brother and sister ——— returned from a six months' absence from Huddersfield, and the ecclesia in Huddersfield was thus increased in numbers to six.

"Spring Street Academy having been vacated by the Campbellites, it was resolved to engage that place for first day meetings, and for the proclamation of the truth. . . . Steps were then taken to arrange for a public opening of the Academy, with the view of making known our existence in Huddersfield, and of proclaiming the truth to the public.—On Sunday, the 21st day of July, 1861, the brethren assembled at the house of brother Rhodes, and after completing such arrangements, they proceeded to organise themselves for the purpose of more fully and effectively carrying out the objects of the meetings. Brother I. Clissett was appointed *presiding elder*; brother R. Roberts, *general and corresponding secretary*; brother J. W. Kaye, *treasurer*; and brother J. Rhodes, *deacon*. During the following week, placards were posted on the walls and an advertisement inserted in the Huddersfield *Examiner*, worded as follows:—

"'OPENING SERVICES—The inhabitants of Huddersfield and the surrounding district are respectfully informed that the Spring Street Academy will be opened on Sunday next, July 28th, for Christian proceedings based upon the Scriptures of Moses, the prophets, and the apostles. Addresses will be delivered on the occasion as follows:—Morning, at half-past ten, by Mr. David Briggs, of Leeds, and others; afternoon, at half-past two; evening, at six, by Mr. Robert Roberts, of Huddersfield. Subjects: Afternoon, "Paul's prediction fulfilled in the state of modern orthodoxy"; evening, "The faith once delivered to the saints in contradistinction to the faith of the religious systems of the present day."

The afternoon meeting will be held in St. George's Square, weather permitting, otherwise to be held in the Academy. Searchers after truth are earnestly invited to attend, Bible in hand. N.B.—In future, addresses will be delivered in the Academy on Sunday evenings at six o'clock, explanatory of the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ."

From the minutes, it appears that the advertised speaker for the morning did not come, and that the whole company present only amounted to four. In the afternoon, the meeting being held in the open air in St. George's Square, an attendance of street stragglers to the number of 70 was realised. At the evening meeting, indoors, only 12 persons attended. After that, meetings were held in the Academy regularly morning and evening, the afternoons being devoted to out-of-door addresses, either in St. George's Square or the Market Place, when the weather was favourable. Our out-of-door audiences were of course the best. The indoor audiences varied from thirteen to zero. I find one entry as follows :—

"Sunday, Nov. 10—Brother Rhodes was absent from severe illness. Brother Clissett was spending the day at Heckmondwike, according to previous notice. Brother Kaye was detained by another engagement. Sister Kaye not so well—remained at home, and sister Roberts was kept at home with baby, in consequence of the wetness of the weather, having no umbrella. Brother Roberts was therefore the only person in attendance. He spent a pleasant and profitable afternoon by himself. Evening : Present, two strangers. Messrs. Townsend and Drake. There were no formal proceedings. The evening was spent in pleasant conversation on religious topics in general around the fire." On Nov. 17, is the following entry :—"Present, brother Roberts and Mr. Townsend. After 20 minutes' conversation, the meeting was closed."

As the year drew towards its close, it was resolved that we should make a more systematic effort and that I should give a complete course of lectures in exhibition of the whole system of the truth. I accordingly drew out a programme of twelve lectures, to be delivered on twelve

successive Sunday afternoons. Of this, I had a thousand copies printed as handbills and a hundred posters, and arranged for their distribution. It then occurred to me that it would be better to write and read the lectures than to attempt the extempore delivery from skeleton notes, as I was in the habit of doing. This idea I was enabled to carry out through having the reporting assistance before spoken of. Many a police court day, I sat in the reporter's room in *The Examiner* office, getting ready the next Sunday's lecture, while my assistant was busy taking notes of the drunk and disorderly and petty assault and larceny cases heard before the magistrates.

The first lecture was delivered December 1st, 1861 ; about a hundred persons attended. At the second (December 8th), the attendance was between 50 and 60. At the third (December 15th), the attendance again rose to 100. At the fourth (December 22nd), it again fell. At the fifth, it went up again ; at the sixth, it was 70, and so on up and down till the last, which was delivered February 16th, 1862. There was close attention throughout, and some afternoons, questions were put at the close. There was not the same life in a read lecture as in one extemporised fresh from the heart. At the same time, there was this advantage : when the lectures were over, I had them in my possession in a written form.

I did not know what was to grow out of this. I supposed their work was done when read before the fluctuating audience of Huddersfield people, who heard them in Huddersfield in the winter of 1861. When the lectures were over, we had a tea-meeting of interested hearers at our lodgings. My companion wrote out the tickets of admission. One of these she showed me the other day. It was not a large party, numbering, perhaps, fifteen people. At this meeting, the suggestion was thrown out that the lectures should be published. I said I had no objections, but how was it to be done ? It would take more money than it was in the power of our feeble company to raise. An old stager, having some experience in such matters, suggested that the experiment might be

tried with one lecture. "Find out," said he, "what it would cost to print a thousand copies of the first lecture : then see how many copies friends would take here and there at 1d. ; and perhaps you will get them all out in that way." The suggestion seemed highly feasible ; but had the lectures not been in actual writing, it could not have borne fruit. As it was, it was not long in leading to something. My companion wrote letters to all the friends we knew in sundry parts, apprising them of the proposal, and asking how many copies they would take. It was a time before the response was complete. It did not come up to the number necessary for the payment of the printer, but it was sufficiently near (something over two-thirds) to justify the venture, relying on future sales. So the first lecture was placed in the hands of the printer (G. and J. Brooke, of Westgate, Huddersfield), and in due course, it came out, a neatly printed crown octavo in leaded brevier, extending to sixteen pages. On being supplied to the various friends who had ordered, they almost without exception expressed their satisfaction, and ordered the succeeding lectures to be sent.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## DR. THOMAS'S VISIT IN 1862.

ONCE a fortnight, the succeeding lectures came out in penny numbers. They were nearly all disposed of, and the printer's bill duly liquidated, and so far as my impression was concerned, the publishing episode was closed. It did not seem to me possible there could be anything more in that line. Many who had purchased the penny numbers had taken more than they required, for the sake of floating the thing. The circle of those who would care to have anything to do with lectures advocating such views was extremely limited. Consequently, any further demand was not to be looked for, and without further demand, there could be no further printing and no further supply.

This view might have proved correct but for the circumstance of a Capt. Brown, of the Indian service, arriving in the country, and hearing of the lectures and applying to me for a set, which I was unable to supply. He enquired if there was to be no re-publication. I explained the position, which he quickly discerned. He enquired the sum that would be needed to bring out a second edition. I told him. He then said he had about such a sum of money lying idle which he would hand over to me to have a second edition of *Twelve Lectures* brought out. If the sale brought back the money, I was to return it to him ; if not, he would not consider it a debt.

With this understanding, I set the printer to work, and a second edition of 1,000 copies was in due time produced (this time stitched together as one volume in pink glazed paper covers). Gradually, this edition was disposed of, and I was able to return the money without very long delay, and without any balance over from the sale of the books. The idea of making a profit never entered into my head. Years after, it was put upon me in spite of myself in a very peculiar way by the force of circumstances, and as well as earnestly enjoined by

prudent friends who saw that the whole of my time was required for the work, and that I never could give myself wholly to it unless my printing work was placed on a commercial basis.

About this time the American Civil War was getting into full swing, and a notice appeared on the back of the *Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come* to the effect that as the outbreak of war had cut off the bulk of the subscribers of that periodical from postal communication, Dr. Thomas would be under the necessity of suspending publication, and would be open to an invitation to visit Britain. This was exciting and joyful news. A number of us instantly got into communication on the subject, with a view to arranging the question of means. Meanwhile, I posted the following letter :—

“DEAR BROTHER THOMAS,—I have just heard that you contemplate paying a visit to this country, and I write this hasty line to urge you by all means to come. The prospect has filled us with great joy. We can conceive of no event in this mortal life of ours that would give us so much real, unmingled delight. On the other hand it is our strong conviction that you would be able to do a great deal of good in this country, much more than you can have the chance of doing in America in its present unsettled condition. Huddersfield, at any rate, is a field prepared in which your labours would be almost certain of great success.

“I think I informed you in my last that the truth, recommended in the first instance by my own humble efforts, and afterwards more effectually ministered by your invaluable *Elpis Israel*, had made a favourable impression. I am now happy to tell you that we have now a little church in Huddersfield as the consequence of those labours—very little. Still, it is a lightstand from which precious light is constantly irradiating. I ought to say, however, that the prospect is favourable for several additions. Since our return to Huddersfield, I have lectured twice every Sunday, once in the Market Place, and once indoors in the room in which we hold our meetings. They have on the whole been well attended,

and considerable interest has been aroused. Your visit here would, therefore, I am sure, be highly calculated to have a favourable result. I may also say that it, along with Halifax, would naturally be first on the list of places to be visited, as it is nearer to Liverpool (your place of landing) by a hundred miles than any other place where there is an ecclesia.

“Dear Brother Thomas, our hearts yearn most fervently towards you, and the more so because you have detractors. One thing is to be said, however, that among the really hearty and intelligent believers of the glorious gospel you are held in reputation. Come then to England. Let nothing hinder you. Your visit will dissipate much of the existing aversion, and will galvanize the British brotherhood as a whole, of which they have much need. O brother, be assured of our strongest and holiest affection; and be persuaded to come and visit us at this favourable opportunity!

“Meanwhile, believe us to be your most devoted brother and sister, longing for the Lord, and longing to see your face.

Huddersfield, England,

Oct. 8, 1861.”

Arrangements having been made, a collective invitation was in due time forwarded to Dr. Thomas to come and spend the best part of a year in lecturing in various places in Britain. The invitation was accepted, and we joyfully expected the event. About this time, or just before, a newspaper report was sent to us that “Dr. Thomas, of New York,” who favoured the Southern cause in the Civil War, which had just broken out, had been murdered by Northern sympathisers. Knowing that the Doctor’s leanings were with the South, and that his domicile was in the neighbourhood of New York, we could not but conclude that it was the author of *Elpis Israel* who had fallen by mob violence, especially as the paper had evidently been sent to us under that impression. We mourned sorely over the event. There was no

inroad made on the larder that day ; but the cloud soon passed. We discovered our sorrow had no foundation. A letter from Dr. Thomas himself told us to heed no reports of his death unless they came from his family.

The time drew on for him to land. I was greatly exercised at the prospect of seeing him. It entered into my dreams, and my dreams were always disappointing : the Doctor was always black. A photograph sent on in advance did not much reassure me ; for whereas I only knew the Doctor's personal aspect from the steel engraving appearing in *Elpis Israel*, which showed him with a black beard and a full head of hair, this showed his head bald and white, and in an inclination that gave a very poor idea of its noble contour. However, all our fears fled when he arrived.

I forget the name of the steamer he came by. I could have told easily within, say, ten years of the event : for it was burnt into my brain at the time. The Doctor sent us no sailing letter, or indication of the time of his arrival. We were consequently kept on the watch. I eagerly scanned the papers from day to day. At last the arrival of the steamer was telegraphed, and in *The Manchester Guardian* appeared a list of passengers, in which far down appeared the simple name of " John Thomas." To my ardent mind, this name stood out in letters of fire. What was the cause of my intense interest ? Nothing but the ideas I had drunk in from the Scriptures by his aid. Like causes produce like effects. I have always found that wherever the Bible is clearly understood and fervently appreciated, as such themes are to be appreciated both by the nature of things and the express injunction of scripture, that there Dr. Thomas is loved and esteemed. This result is quite apart from the personal peculiarities of the man. What mortal is without blemish ? But what covers blemish like intelligent attachment to divine things ? Who could surpass Dr. Thomas in his towering reverence for the oracles of God and his uncompromising loyalty to their authority as opposed to all tradition ? Some had become haters of him through his brusque treatment of crotchets. I had myself, by and by, an

opportunity of feeling the weight and sharpness of that steely executive mind which qualified him for the part he performed in tearing aside the webs of error woven by merely human sympathy ; but that I could be separated from him was impossible with the discernment I had of his mastery of divine truth and his faithfulness to Christ in all its bearings.

*Eureka*, Vol. I., after long anticipation, had issued from the press a few months previously ; and the reading of this had greatly intensified the zest of our anticipations of his coming. Having noticed the arrival of the steamer, the next question was, when would he turn up in Huddersfield ? In the ardour and inexperience of youth, I had proposed to him before his sailing that I should await him at the place of landing at Liverpool, but he had written to me advising me to save this expense and to leave him to find his own way to Huddersfield. He sent us no further word ; consequently, we could only wait and watch. I watched every train from Liverpool for a certain length of time.

At last, a quiet, firmly-set, square-shouldered, literary looking gentleman, in frock coat and chimney-pot hat, with ruddy countenance and white beard, emerged from one of the carriages, and began to pick his way in the crowd, with one valise in his hand. I was quite timid about saluting him, because it might not be Dr. Thomas after all. After following him a little, I said to him with a palpitating heart, " Mr. Thomas ? " He said " Yes." We then exchanged greetings, and I led him out of the station to a cab, and conveyed him to our apartments (by that time changed to 25, Albion Street, the house of brother Rhodes), where my sister companion awaited him in a state of excitement, which soon changed to comfort and joy, in the presence of the cordial and social dignity of a mature and venerable man whom we found so much more interested, if possible, than ourselves in the sublime matters that had engaged our efforts and attention for some years.

## CHAPTER XX.

## DR. THOMAS AT WORK.

IT is impossible to exaggerate the charm of Dr. Thomas's company under our own roof (though it was but a lodging house roof). He was a totally different man from what his writings prepared us to expect. These writings were so pungent, so vigorous, so satirical, and had such a sledge-hammer force of argument and denunciation that we looked for a regular Boanerges—a thunder-dealer, a man not only of robust intellect, but of a combative, energetic, self-assertive turn, whose converse would be largely spiced with explosive vocables.

Instead of this, he was quiet, gentle, courteous, well-mannered, modest, absolutely devoid of affectation or trace of self-importance. His calm, lofty, cordial reverence for the Scriptures was very edifying to us, after several weary years of contact with drivellers and blasphemers; and his interest in all circumstances pertaining to the fortunes of the truth of which we had to tell him was very refreshing after a toilsome course of solitary labour in a cause that all our neighbours pitied us as fools for taking up. It was so gratifying and so strengthening, too, to have his fireside answers to the various scriptural questions we had to propound. "Let me see," he would say, "where is that passage?" and would turn it up, and then proceed in his dignified and incisive way to "open to us the Scriptures." Household matters and business shrank into their proper smallness in his company. It was truly a "little heaven below," the like of which we have rarely since experienced in the rugged journey of probation.

He had not been long in the house before there was one little matter of business that I brought up for consideration. I had become treasurer of the various contributions that had been raised to defray the Doctor's travelling expenses. I made the fact known to him with

an intimation that it would be such a pleasure to me to hand over the amount. The Doctor proceeded to state particulars, with note-book and pencil in hand. There was this and there was that and the other, car fare, cup of coffee, porter dues, etc., etc. He had not gone far in the list when I stopped him. "Oh, brother Thomas," I exclaimed, "I cannot possibly humble you to go through these particulars. I had no intention of asking them. Here is the money that has been contributed. It is all yours. If there is anything over so much the better." And I passed over a handful of gold.

The Doctor was evidently gratified to have the matter settled in that way. It is the right way. To make the service of the truth an affair of cheeseparing niceties is to do a handsome thing very unhandsomely. There is such a thing as "sowing sparingly," as Paul intimates. "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth." Liberal arrangements foster liberality. Parsimony in the service of God tends to paralysis and death. Men are never parsimonious where the heart is engaged. Let it be politics, business, courtship or pleasure, the purse opens easily when zeal is at work. Extreme thrift in arrangements for the glory of God or the comfort of His people is evidence of extreme moderation of spiritual affection. We have once or twice been frost-bitten in this matter. Frigid question: How much was the railway fare? Answer: 2s. 9½d., paid literally on the spot with a chill, without a consideration of many undefinable expenses besides railway fare incurred. Well, the heroism of the truth can endure all things, and even be sorry that the truth's friends, in the general blight of poverty, should have to pay so much as 2s. 9½d. But it is pleasant to see the liberal devising liberal things. Love and good works are "provoked" by such a manifestation. The other is liable to make the mercury fall.

It was not long before we made many enquiries concerning the Doctor's past life. It is natural to be interested in a man's history when you are interested in his work, especially when, as in this case, the history of the man was the history of the work, and *that* the most important

work under the sun, the history of the recovery of the knowledge of God's own truth in this dark and evil priest-ridden and atheism-desolated age. Our questions elicited so much interesting information that the idea occurred to me to take it all down in shorthand. I asked the Doctor to go back again and repeat the story from the beginning, which he willingly did—I putting the questions to him. I took his answers down as he spoke them. This process extended over a good many sittings until I had in my possession a tolerably complete story of his life. This afterwards enabled me, in sorrowful days to come, to write a life of Dr. Thomas, which I could not otherwise have done. I, indeed, began the publication in a certain form before the Doctor's death. I published a transcript of my shorthand notes in a series of articles in the *Ambassador*, somewhat to the Doctor's annoyance I fear. He said I should have waited till he was dead; but that what could not be cured must be endured.

The Doctor arrived about the middle of the week. Our first meeting was on the following Sunday. I had engaged the Philosophical Hall (as it was then called), the principal public hall of the town, for the Sunday evening, and one or two evenings during the succeeding week, and again on the following Sunday; and I now recall with chagrin the extraordinary bill with which I had caused the walls to be placarded, due to the exaggerated estimate I had formed of the Doctor's lecturing polemics. I had drawn it so as to include every form of error, and to interest all classes of the community, with the result of drawing next to none. I do not remember its wording, but the general purport was to the effect that Dr. Thomas, the author of *Elpis Israel*, would visit Huddersfield and deliver a course of lectures, in which he would confute atheism, expose spiritualism, overthrow popular theology, confound pretensions of the State Church, and make manifest the unscriptural character of every form of dissent. It was a real young man's bill. I could see the Doctor winced under it. No wonder, as I now see things. Even then,

when I came to understand the Doctor's style of lecturing, I felt a mistake had been made; but there was nothing for it but to go through with it, notwithstanding the character of burlesque that more or less attached to the performance under such an announcement. The Doctor modestly and composedly did his part.

But before the public effort, came the breaking of bread in the morning. This was the first time we were to hear the Doctor open his lips in a set address, and we looked forward to it with great expectations. We had given up our effort in the Spring Street schoolroom, and had not got another meeting place, and were holding our meetings in brother Rhodes' bakehouse by the side of his dwelling-house. This was a somewhat grimy room, in which there was a roomy baker's oven at one side, a darkened window on the other, a long table under the window, a baker's batch-trough in the middle of the floor with a lid over it, and four walls blackened with smoke.

In this room Dr. Thomas delivered his first address in England to an audience of six or seven persons seated round the batch-trough, overspread with a white tablecloth, on which were displayed the emblems of the Lord's death. Never have I listened with such greedy attention to human utterances as I did when Dr. Thomas rose, in compliance with invitation, to address the feeble company assembled. He first of all read the beginning of the 17th chapter of Genesis. The reading was of itself a treat unutterable. It was not merely that the enunciation was melodious and clear, but there was an inflection and emphasis which of itself seemed to convey the whole sense of the word without comment. To hear Dr. Thomas read a chapter was of itself as good as a lecture. What the Doctor said after the reading has now passed from my mind, but I felt entranced. This was not due to rhetoric, for, strictly speaking, the Doctor had none. His style of discourse was plain and earnest, and by current standards would be considered common-place. It was the matter that was powerful. I was in complete sympathy with all



that was written in the Scriptures, and to hear these Scriptures read and made to speak in such a capable and confident way, made me feel almost in the presence of the sublime realities themselves.

But the public lecture in the evening was the great attraction. We were wondering what sort of an audience there would be. We had put out 100 posters on the walls, 1,000 handbills, and advertisements in the paper. We thought it possible we might have a crowded house. Alas! It is not the intrinsic quality of things that draws, but the surroundings, the extraneous, the adventitious—that which has to do with social affinities and temporal interests. Get hold of the men that work on the social and the temporal; the public will cross the entrance-hurdle like a flock of sheep. But if you have nothing to show but those things that are of eternal moment—things truly intellectual and moral—things spiritual and noble—things high and lofty and lasting—you spread your feast in vain.

It was not altogether in vain on this occasion. Still, the audience was a poor one. The hall was not half filled, and those who were present were scattered all over the place in a sparse and chilling way. Brother Rhodes occupied the chair, and having been well known in the town for 20 years as the leading atheist in the district, his presidency did not modify the chills of the occasion. He told the audience he had been privileged to discover a way of believing the Bible without doing violence to his reason, and that others might enjoy the same privilege; the lecturer had been sent for and would now address them—or something to that effect. The Doctor then rose and read the 1st chapter of Hebrews, making expository comments as he proceeded. We expected a rousing lecture. We did not get it. We did not get at all what is currently understood as a lecture. There was no formal elucidation of any proposition or proving of anything in particular. It was a process of "reasoning out of the scriptures." He digressed from the topics of Heb. 1 to other parts of the scriptures to which that led him. It was all rich and good, and to

those who knew the truth, splendid; but as regards the public, we felt it was all over their heads, and made them wonder what all the stir was about and "what the fellow was driving at." We returned home with somewhat subdued feelings.

My employer (the editor of the *Examiner*) and his lady were present. I had made glowing representations as to what might be expected, and I felt considerably taken down. There was no real cause for disappointment, because the genuine thing was all there. Only in its bearing on the public, I felt there was failure. Subsequent experience did not alter this feeling. Occasionally, by a spurt, the Doctor made a good rousing effort in his public lectures, but on the whole, there was an absence of that orderly method that is essential to secure the attention of the unenlightened to divine verities in an age like this. The fact is, the Doctor had no enthusiasm towards the public. Experience had cooled it down. He went through his work as a matter of duty, and did not care to come out of Bible methods in presenting Bible things to a public audience.

The week-night meetings were not much better attended. At these, there were some questions, and a new mortification came to us in the Doctor's apparent want of readiness in dealing with these on the spur of the moment. This was due to the quality manifest in his lectures. He could not readily or quickly marshal his forces. He was choke full of matter in its correctest form, but he required time (and no trammels) to bring it out to its full advantage.

## CHAPTER XXI.

## STRAINED RELATIONS WITH DR. THOMAS.

THE Doctor left us in due course to keep appointments at various places in England and Scotland. I have bitten my tongue several times since at the recollection of the hard work laid out for him by youthful inexperience. Having no particular sense of fatigue in those days myself, I laid out the programme on the time principle merely, without allowing for the recuperative needs of a man verging towards elderly life. Most of the nights were arranged for and all day on Sundays. "Poor Dr. Thomas," I have said many times since. It was too bad. People of robust health and strong intellectual interest are so liable to look upon a lecturer as a machine that can go of course. They forget he is human, and that his energy can be pumped out, and must have time to brew again before he is fit for work without harm. Hearers feel only the pleasure of his words, and do not feel the fatigue caused to him by the consumption of brain fuel. They feel refreshed by his lecture, and cannot help imagining that he feels so too.

I distinctly recollect supposing, in the days of boyhood, that there was a good deal of affectation in the allusions I used to see in the papers about speakers being exhausted by their efforts. It was part of my ignorance. We are all ignorant to start with. We think we know when we don't. Experience is the only thorough and accurate teacher: and it teaches by a quiet and slow and extensive process of tuition that cannot easily be formulated in words afterwards. It is made up of a thousand mental accretions that can only come with the varied experiences and reflections of years. Hence the scriptural exaltation of age over youth.

I see it all now: but in my young days I felt a hot-spur impulsiveness of wisdom, of which I am now

ashamed. At the same time, I was unfortunate in having no teachers that gave me the curb of reason. There was dumb opposition or passive dogmatism which I could not distinguish from stupidity. Had I been privileged with access to enlightened and benevolent and communicative experience, I think I could have listened and would have been swayed; for I had always a strong relish for reason. However, it is all past now, and the Doctor has got through his wearisome labours, and rests with Daniel, ready to "stand in his lot at the end of the days" now nearly finished.

During his tour, his mind was poisoned against me by envious seniors, who were more alive to their personal consequence than to the great and glorious work of which the Doctor was the humble instrument, and which I was striving with all my might to abet. I saw and felt the change when he returned from his journey: but I knew it would only be temporary when the Doctor came to know the men he was dealing with. It turned out as I anticipated, but it took time, and, meanwhile, his manifestly unfriendly bias was a trial to me—quite a bitter one for a time. Had I not been a daily reader and a fervent lover of the oracles of God for myself, I should have turned away in disgust. As it was, it made me turn round, as it were, and look at the Bible again, and see if Dr. Thomas was really right. There was only one answer; and, therefore, I swallowed my bitters and made up my mind to wait.

The sharpest rap was the imputation of a mercenary motive in the list of names which I had appended to the second edition of the *Twelve Lectures*. This list included some in Scotland who did not take a thorough-going attitude on behalf of the truth, although connected with the meetings there that were based upon a professed acceptance of the truth. I did not know at that time how partial was their allegiance and how limited was their apprehension of scriptural things, and how uncertain was their repudiation of the established fables of the day which so thoroughly make void the Word of God. They were professing brethren, and I

felt called on to give them the benefit of all doubts. I was indeed much afraid of doing them a wrong in apparently proscribing them. I had before my eyes the fear of the words of Christ about offending one of the little ones believing on him, which has, in fact, been one of the chiefest sources of my distress in all the wranglings and divisions that have since arisen in connection with the truth, and I had not attained that liberty that comes from clearer sight and a greater breadth of view in all matters affecting the relations of God and man.

Therefore, in the said list of names of referees for the guidance of interested strangers, I gave a place to men from whom afterwards I was compelled to separate. I did not do it without a mental struggle. It was said I had put them to help the sale of the lectures. Oh, how much was this contrary to the truth! I had no object in selling the lectures, for they yielded no profit; and all the sale that I ever expected had already taken place. Finally, it was distinctly as a concession to the fear of doing wrong that I inserted the names at all. It was a sharp lesson in the art of patient suffering for well-doing and making no reprisals.

I wrote to the Doctor in explanation of my action, and in defence of the men impugned. I received no answer. Time went on and I came to see that duty required my separation from a doubtful fellowship. I wrote again to the Doctor, telling him of the correction of my perceptions. In five months afterwards, I received the following letter:—

“ West Hoboken, Hudson Co., N.J.,

“ October 28th, 1864.

“ DEAR BROTHER ROBERTS,—I have received from you two letters—one dated February 11th, and the other May 30th—to neither of which have I been able to find time to reply. In relation to the former one, I consider the delay has been an advantage to us both; and in regard to the last, I do not think the procrastina-

tion will have resulted in any harm. Had I replied to the former, I should have had to do battle with you to bring you into the position you now occupy with regard to those blind leaders of the blind—Duncan, Dowie, Fordyce and Co. When the truth is in question, the benefit of all doubts should be given to it, not to those whose influence with respect to it is only evil and that continually. You erred in giving them any benefit of doubt in the premises; but I rejoice that you have seen the error, and will no more send inquirers after the truth to inquire at such Gospel nullifiers as they.

“I have a copy of your letter to Dowie. It is straightforward and to the point. We can have no fellowship with men holding such trashy stuff as the April number of the falsely-styled *Messenger of the Churches* exhibits. A man who believes in the Devil of the religious world and that he has the powers of disease and death, etc., is ignorant of ‘the things of the Name of Jesus Christ.’ If what are styled ‘the churches’ are not delivered from the influence of the above firm of pretentious ignorance, our endeavours to revive apostolic faith and practice in Britain will be a miserable failure. No one should be recognised as one of Christ’s brethren who is not sound in the first principles of the Gospel before immersion. The Kingdom and the Name are the great central topics of the Testimony of Deity. These are the things to be elaborated; and he that is not well and deeply versed in these only shows his folly and presumption in plunging head over ears into prophetic and apocalyptic symbols and mysteries.

“I am truly glad you are ‘located’ in Birmingham at last. I hope you may be instrumental in effecting much good, that is, in bringing many to a comprehensive and uncompromising faith and obedience. No parleying with the adversary, no neutrality: Christ or nothing. I hope you will be able to shoulder my friend Davis off the fence. He understands, I believe, and can defend the theory of the truth; but from the obedience to the faith he looks askance. There is brother Bailey,

too; he is a kind-hearted and sober-minded brother; but I think rather too diffident of himself. Just put the point of the Spirit's sword into him, so as to stir him up to what he can do, without hurting him. I spent much pleasant time with him in Birmingham. Tell brother Wallis that we had an eccentric colonel in this country, killed in this war I believe, David Crocket by name, who used to say, 'Be sure you're right, and *then* go ahead.' The Public Prosecutor, I fear, is too well-to-do and too pious to be converted to the obedience of faith. It is the greatest difficulty we have to contend with in the case of outsiders—that of converting 'Christians' to Christianity. When you see his excellency, please give my respectful compliments to his pious sinnership, in such set form as you may deem best.

"Will you please write to Mr. Robertson and request him, if he have funds enough of mine in hand, to send me, through Wiley of New York, and his agent in Trafalgar Square, Charing Cross, a volume entitled 'Vigilantius and his Times,' by Dr. Gilly. I suppose it may be obtained of Sealey and Co., Fleet Street, London. Said Vigilantius flourished in the fourth century, and occupied very much the position to his contemporaries that I do to mine, and was about as popular. I wish, therefore, to form his acquaintance. It will doubtless be refreshing.

"I have sent an epistolary pamphlet of 36 pp., size of this, to care of brother Tait. It will reach you on its travels in due course. If you like to publish it in *The Ambassador*, without mutilation, you may. The perusal of it will supersede the necessity of my repeating its contents here.

"You are right. Your 'mistake' evoked the testimony of Antipas. It was designed to draw the line between faithful witnesses and pretenders in Britain; and to define our position here in relation to war, so that if any of us were drafted by the Devil, we might be able to prove that we are a denomination conscientiously opposed to bearing arms in his service.

"Half-a-dozen copies of each number of *The Ambassador* have come to hand. Our currency here will prevent any circulation in this country. A paper dollar with us (and paper is all we have) is only worth 40 cents in Canada. You did not wait to learn if I thought it expedient for my biography to appear. It is too late now to say anything against it. What can't be cured must be endured. I hope the paper will be self-supporting, and pioneer a strait and narrow way for the truth through the dense, dark forest and swamps on every side.

"In future, it would be well not to herald my death until hearing from me direct. Not mixing myself up with politicians, I am not likely to die by their hand. Some pious Methodist or Presbyterian would be more likely to put me out of the way. A late pupil of sister Nisbet's, when she was Miss Gardner, and lived in Berwick, now the wife of a physician in Toronto, who is interested in the truth, greatly to her annoyance and chagrin, said recently, 'I wish it were right to poison him!'—a very pious wish for one who calls herself 'a Christian of the Presbyterian order.' When I die my family will certify the fact. But Paul says 'We shall not all sleep.' I and you and others may be of these. Change without death will happen to some. I trust we may be among such. My father died last spring, aged 82. He died at Washington City, D.C., without the least sickness. Remember me kindly to sister R. and to all the faithful, and believe me sincerely yours in the faith and hope of the Gospel, in which all true Christadelphians rejoice.

"JOHN THOMAS."

## CHAPTER XXII.

DR. THOMAS AND THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR—  
ADVISES BIRMINGHAM.

IN the letter from Dr. Thomas appearing at the close of the last chapter, mention is made of our having removed to Birmingham. This rather anticipates the course of the story. At the time that letter was written, the removal to Birmingham had taken place; but not until a considerable time had elapsed after the circumstances that led the Doctor to write after much delay. The insertion of the Doctor's letter overruns the narrative by nearly a year. We must go back again.

On the Doctor's completion of his tour in England, he paid us a second visit. The war between the Northern and the Southern States was in full swing, and was running mainly in favour of the South, greatly to the Doctor's gratification. As we read him the morning telegrams, announcing Federal reverses and Confederate successes, he would say with emphasis: "That's right; that's right." His sympathies were with the South on several grounds. His friends were mainly in the South, and comprised several planters, who though owning slaves, were men of an open generous hand, under whom the coloured people were better provided for than in a state of freedom. Then he had an idea that the institution was not of the unscriptural character contended for by extreme abolitionists, but conformable in some respects to the state of society existing in the days of Abraham, and 1,500 years later in the days of Paul. Finally, he had a partiality for the state of society existing in the South, which he considered more refined than the North, owing to the considerable presence of an English aristocratic element derived from the early settlers.

We differed from the Doctor somewhat in these views, but our agreement on scriptural things was so

fervent that our divergencies on American politics made no sensible ripple. He earnestly hoped the South would roll back the Northern invasion, while our wishes were for Northern success. But we all felt it a matter of indifference by the side of Israel's hope. Let Christ come and take the government, and all would be well on all questions. Therefore we could leave personal views on an ephemeral question in abeyance.

Still, it was just a little bit of a difficulty. The reading of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* when a boy had powerfully influenced me against the Legrees of the South; and I had as yet had none of that personal contact with the blacks and whites of the American continent that tends to modify the ardent impressions derived from the story, so that my own natural bias in favour of human freedom thus strengthened, and the strong pro-Northern paper politics of *The Huddersfield Examiner*, with which I was connected, made me feel I had something to regret in the Doctor's Confederate sympathies.

If the truth had not been as mutually powerful as it was, the difference would have cooled off our sympathies. As it was, it absolutely made no difference. The whole world was to us an evil world, lying in wickedness, which the Lord would shortly break up and re-fashion in His own way. Therefore a surface difference as to two sections of it, for the moment locked in deadly strife, was absolutely without appreciable influence.

Before leaving us, Dr. Thomas advised me to go to Birmingham if I could arrange it. He said there was a wide field for the truth there. There was not only a large population, but circumstances specially favouring religious independence. The people were mostly radical in politics, and were not priest-ridden as in other parts. An interest had been aroused in the truth by his lectures, but there was no one to follow it up. If I went, he thought something might come of it. The place was central for the whole country, and it would be a good radiating point of operations. I admitted the force of

all his suggestions, but considered the difficulties in the way were insuperable. First of all, I felt that the little ecclesia developed in Huddersfield, now numbering 12 or 13, had a claim on my presence. (As to this, the Doctor thought the claim of a larger place would be greater.) Then, I was in actual employment in Huddersfield with none inviting in Birmingham, which appeared to me in the language of Providence to say "stay in Huddersfield." (As to that, the Doctor considered the claims of the truth an equal indication of Providence, and in the matter of employment, there was employment to be had in Birmingham as well as Huddersfield: it was an affair of looking out.) My next objection was not so easily dealt with, and the Doctor had no more to say. I told him that there were no weekly papers in Birmingham, but all daily; and that the experience I had had of daily paper work in Edinburgh convinced me it would be impossible to serve the truth on a daily paper, on account of the entire devotion of time and strength that it called for. I had, in fact, as good as resolved never to accept an appointment on a daily paper, but to confine myself to weekly work all my life. Here the matter stopped, and was left over for the decision of circumstances, which often break into the nicest programme.

The Doctor attended several meetings with us before his departure. We had exhausted our financial abilities in the first effort, and therefore had to confine ourselves to our own meeting place, instead of going into a public hall, with its attendant cost of rent and advertising. This meeting place was probably the most extraordinary scene of spiritual effort in England at the time. We had made several unsuccessful attempts to get a place during the Doctor's absence, and at last resigned ourselves to take a little unoccupied shop in The Shambles, as the place was called at the time. The Shambles was the name given to a kind of concealed square, consisting of several long rows of very small one-storey low-roofed shops. The square was built round by streets of houses. It was a very quiet and

melancholy spot, but little frequented by the meat-buying public. It was probably more used for killing than for selling. The rows of shops have since been pulled down to make way for a proper market. On the lower side of this enclosure we had engaged and fitted up one of the shops as a meeting place. Many a pleasant breaking of bread and lecture meeting we held in it. It was probably half the size of any ordinary kitchen, so that when we had a table in, there was no great accommodation for an audience. We had a crowded house when thirteen were present. In this place Dr. Thomas addressed several meetings. At the first of them (on a Sunday evening), the Doctor having earnestly and effectively spoken for perhaps an hour-and-a-half, I said if anyone present had any questions to ask, the Doctor would be happy to answer them. I had not been authorised by him to say so. I went by the impression derived from the reading of his accounts of his tours in the States, and my reason for acting on the impression was that there were several present whom we had succeeded in privately interesting in the truth, but who still had difficulties which both they and I had looked forward to the Doctor's visit as affording a supreme opportunity of having solved. I had not reckoned with the Doctor's sense of fatigue after patiently discoursing for so long a time, in such a small meeting; neither had I as yet learnt to enter into his unsanguine views of human nature. I was therefore taken aback when the Doctor sharply declined, and said the best thing enquirers could do was to go home and think about what they had heard. I was deeply disappointed at the time, but afterwards I could make full allowance; and indeed on many other points, it was afterwards a matter of chagrin with me that I had the Doctor in my power (as it were) at a time when I was so little qualified by experience to know the needs of a hard-worked old man. Such is life in its present imperfect state.

Nothing strikes me of a memorable kind during the year or more we remained in Huddersfield after

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Dr. Thomas's return to America. Some time previously, we had lost a second daughter at four months, (Lydia Jane) my wife's literary and real names combined. Afterwards we nearly lost a third child in the same way, this time a son—(Edward Augustus)—who, however, when apparently at the last point, gladdened us by a demand for some food that was being partaken of at the other side of the table. This child would have been called John Thomas if clouds (soon dispelled) had not arisen. In the temporary estrangement, we went afield and selected a name euphously blending English and Roman history—in which, however, there is nothing divine. The bearer of the name grew safely up to manhood, and is now in the Metropolis, following the profession of his intended namesake.

Before we left Huddersfield, my wife's sister and her husband came to live in the place; also my own sister, with her children. Her submission to the truth at this time was a great joy. The only other thing of any interest that I remember at this time was the advent to the town of a mesmeric lecturer of the name of Smalley, since dead. His power over people was extraordinary. Being connected with a public paper, I naturally came in contact with him, and had occasion to become aware of the reality of the power he possessed. I was in the same house one evening, taking tea with some friends of his; and on passing behind my chair, without any previous notice, he passed his hand down my back, with the effect of imparting a shock that made me cry out. It was exactly like the shock of a galvanic battery. He had a power of drawing people from the audience by clutching the air with his hand towards them. Some thought it was collusion; or at least willingness on the part of the subjects. I determined to test this; and being with him alone in a large room in New Street, I went to the other end of the room and defied him to produce any effect on me. He accepted the challenge and went to work. I resisted him with all my might. I felt his influence from the

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first wave of his hand, but kept it off for a time. At every stroke, the power of the influence increased, until finally, it was irresistible, and I was drawn to him with a power as great as if he had pulled me by a rope tied round my middle.



## CHAPTER XXIII.

## REMOVAL TO BIRMINGHAM.

DR. THOMAS having taken his departure for America, after spending the best part of a year in Britain, the few brethren in Birmingham began to press me on the subject of removing to that place. They represented that many, having heard Dr. Thomas, were interested in the truth, and would be sure to attend the meetings if there was anyone able to present it to them, but that there was no one among them able to do so, and that if nothing were done, the interest would die away, and nothing come of it. Dr. Thomas had suggested to them the desirability of my settling among them, and therefore they felt the more bold in the matter. I replied in the way I had replied to Dr. Thomas—that I doubted if I could get suitable employment in Birmingham, seeing the Birmingham papers were daily papers, and that I must limit myself to weekly work if I was to be of service to the truth. They answered that there were two weekly papers in Birmingham, which was true, but not in the sense of my requirements. The two weekly papers were connected with the two daily papers, and were a mere abridgment of the matter appearing in the dailies—an abridgment effected by the same staff. I could not get employment on the weeklies except by being on the dailies, which would be worse.

Well, they said they would try their best to get me in somewhere, and they truly and diligently did so, but of course without result, except in a very indirect way. A sister among them, housekeeper to a single retired and very retiring gentleman, who lived in the better part of Birmingham, took a very prominent part in this work of trying to open my way. She called at the newspaper offices and got all the information she could, and recommended me to their attention when a vacancy should occur, and kept sending me papers with likely advertisements through the post. Her

diligence and pertinacity were great, with this effect—(being backed up by the importunities of the others with whom she was in association)—that I made up my mind, if an opening should occur, to try the experiment of a situation on a daily paper.

Having arrived at this decision, the sister in question—(with whom I was sorry afterwards to part on Dowieite issues: how many heart-griefs of this kind there have been!)—suggested that I should come through to Birmingham and see the persons in authority at the newspaper offices. I acted on the suggestion, with the result that I had a promise of a situation on *The Gazette* on the occurrence of a vacancy which they expected in eight weeks' time (at the Christmas of 1863). On my return to Huddersfield, I informed my employer, and my employer, without any definite understanding on my part, took the information as notice, and made arrangements with a gentleman to fill my place at Christmas. This I did not know till the time drew near. I supposed that if the Birmingham prospect should fall through, I would be at liberty to stay on in my Huddersfield place as a matter of course: otherwise, I would have kept my own counsel. In that case, things would in all probability have gone differently with me afterwards, and I might to this day have been in Yorkshire. However, it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. He may think he is directing his own steps at the very moment that God has His hand on the helm, influencing the thoughts on which his steps depend, and of this influence he would not of course be aware. He would only feel that the thoughts were his own.

My employer's action was perfectly reasonable, especially as my heart was not sufficiently in newspaper work to give me that zeal which makes a servant valuable to an employer, and as he had his eye on an excellent man after his own heart. But though reasonable, it was a little upsetting when I was informed from Birmingham that the prospective vacancy would not



occur and that I would not be wanted. It then became a pressing question, What was to be done? It became known that I was leaving *The Examiner*, and that a prospect on which I was relying had vanished. Following on this, I had four offers: I forget now from where. One I think was from Bradford, one from Leeds, one from Oldham—the other I don't remember. Here was an embarrassing situation for me and my partner to consider leaving Huddersfield for the sake of the truth in Birmingham: the Birmingham door closed and four others open. We pondered the matter for some time. On the face of it, it seemed as if the indications of Providence were all against Birmingham. But the truth had been for years our first consideration; and we could not help feeling that, by this rule, the four open doors were not open doors. They seemed, as things were at that time, to lead away from the field of operations. And besides, there were four of them. If there had been only one, it might have been easier to think the indication decisive. But there being four, choice was called for, and therefore we felt at liberty to look at Birmingham as well. There was no situation there, but there might be a livelihood in another way. Would there not be in so large a town a field for shorthand writing and general reporting? In Huddersfield I had been appointed Huddersfield correspondent for *The Leeds Mercury*, *The Halifax Courier*, *The Manchester Examiner*, and several other papers; and some of them were willing to take important news from me from Birmingham at a penny a line if I chose to go there.

This would not mean much in the way of income; still, it would be foundation upon which I might build a general local reporting business. After full consideration, we decided upon the experiment; and declining the four offers, began to arrange for a transfer to Birmingham to a house friends had engaged for us in Great Colmore Street. The transfer was not a delightful process. My sister and her family were living with us, and she was only just recovering from an illness, and had to go in blankets. But necessity knows no law.

We were obliged to clear out on a certain date, and clear out we did, after packing and forwarding furniture by rail, and making up a confusing assortment of bundles to go with us. We were a melancholy company on the platform of the Huddersfield railway station while we waited in the midst of our nondescript packages for the Manchester train from Leeds. However, the agony was soon over; but not without distracted hurrying to find seats in a usually well-filled train for a somewhat broken-down company of four adults and four children whom nobody wanted beside them, with their household bundles. Said bundles contained utensils most inconvenient to travel with, yet necessary on this occasion as we were going to an empty house—the furniture not having had time to arrive. I remember at the last moment, while hurrying with the last bundle from the platform, under the excited commands of the guard to be expeditious, a huge wash basin fell out of its wrappings, and smashed in a hundred pieces, to the merriment of the people in the train, who are generally keen observers at that particular moment. Why mention it? Well, it was one of those trivial incidents that for no assignable reason stick out in a man's memory, and it was a dramatic illustration of the fate in store for the kingdoms of men under the figure which alleges that they will be broken to pieces "like a potter's vessel." I had of course to leave the annihilated ruined potter's vessel, and hurry in with the remains of the bundle. It was the dead of winter, and the coldest season known for years. The journey was, therefore, a taste of misery without much weakening in. But it was accomplished, and we found ourselves all at last in the empty house aforesaid, in which we made shakedown, and made ourselves fairly comfortable for the night. My sister, in her weak state, had an unhappy time. Poor dear, her sorrows are all over long since—as it will be with all our sorrows in due course. In a day or two, the furniture arrived, and we gradually got into shape and settled in our new position, which we had now time to look fairly in the

face, when the excitement and the confusion were all over.

We had burnt our boats, and there was nothing for it but to go forward. We arrived in Birmingham with all expenses paid, but with nothing in hand. A tea meeting of the few friends of the truth was convened to welcome us to Birmingham. At the close of the tea drinking, I was called upon for my contribution to the expenses, and had to part with my last eighteen-pence for the honour of being present with my wife. This was the first of a series of pangs, which the hardness of the way inflicted during the first few months we spent in Birmingham.

To carry out the plan I had formed, it was necessary to engage an office; for we were a mile away from the centre of the town where the work was to be done. I looked round, and got one in Cannon Street (35, I think), a gloomy back room, which has often figured in my dreams since. There were plenty of fine offices to be had, but the rents put them quite out of a poor man's reach. I had to put up with what I could afford, like thousands of unhappy mortals in this unhappy age, the root of whose unhappiness lies in the mismanagement of human affairs, which is inevitable with the human management of the present dispensation: the sure and certain hope of the abolition of which enabled me to be reconciled to the misery. After getting an office, the next thing was to get business, which is by no means so easy an affair. I got circulars printed and sent round, along with testimonials of fitness from various people, including John Bright, who headed the list.

The circulars announced the opening of a general reporting and advertising agency, at the address given, and the preparedness of the issuer thereof to do any kind of reporting or to procure the insertion of advertisements in any paper, but the lines thus cast were unbaited, and the fish simply looked and passed on. I do not think I got a single advertisement, and as for

reporting, one job I think was the only result—some case in a local court having an interest for a small neighbouring town, the editor of the paper of which, having got one of my circulars, wrote to me to report for him. I tried to cultivate the penny-a-line business for distant papers; but the news was rarely interesting enough to be used and brought nothing. Once there was a murder, and this lugubrious item took me down into a grimy neighbourhood, which I have never since forgotten. I do not remember whether it brought any grist to the mill or not. I rather think I was forestalled by local men who had been in the habit of corresponding with other papers before I came. The man's name was Hall, I think. He had shot his sweetheart under provocation. He was sentenced to death, but had his sentence commuted to imprisonment for life, in compliance with a numerously-signed petition. The other day, I noticed he had got out, and had an ovation among a certain sort on his arrival at the railway station. The penny-a-lining was proving a very meagre affair; and things were getting straitened at home. So I tried giving lessons in shorthand. I offered, in a newspaper advertisement, to teach shorthand in thirteen lessons for twenty-one shillings. I got a few pupils, which kept us going a few weeks, but gradually this died off, and our situation began to grow gloomy.

The Sunday business, which was the business we had come for, was prosperous enough, and cast its balm over the harrowing anxieties of the other days. Every Sunday morning we repaired to Ann Street School-room (since pulled down and the name of the street changed to Colmore Row), and met a company of from 15 to 20 men and women to break bread, whom it became my duty to address regularly. At night I lectured to an audience of perhaps 50 to 75 on the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. This seemed the real and the congenial business of life. The provision of livelihood stared in upon us as an urgent necessity, which I attended to not without qualms. With a heavy heart I walked daily

to the scantily-furnished office, often to do nothing, after which I dined on one bun and returned to dose the afternoon away. My partner's affliction at home added to mine: for in marriage, if joy is increased, so is sorrow, if sorrow is the portion. But light was at hand.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

## "THE BIRMINGHAM DAILY POST."

JUST before leaving Huddersfield, while attending a political meeting in my capacity as reporter, a young gentleman from Leeds, with whom I had no acquaintance, and whose name I have now forgotten, addressed himself to me with the remark that he had heard I was leaving Huddersfield and going to Birmingham; and if I liked he would give me a note of introduction to a friend he had there—Jack Lovell, of *The Birmingham Daily Post*. I thanked him, and accepted it, and put it in my pocket, not realising that it could be of any service to me. When I got to Birmingham, I carried it about in my pocket for some weeks, never thinking anything about it. At last one day, after walking about with a feeling that I was absolutely outside of everything, though in the midst of a great and busy town, I was passing the *Daily Post* office, and suddenly I remembered my note of introduction. I thought it could be of no use to me, as I had nothing to be introduced for. It would be foolish to present a note of introduction, and then have no request to make or proposal to submit. Then I thought again, "It will do no harm; it may lead to something." I finally made up my mind to go in and ask for Mr. Lovell.

I found he was the manager of the reporting staff, consisting of six members. He was a curly-headed, dark, rather boyish-looking young man, of exceedingly pleasant manners. He took my note and read it, and then asked me into his own room, and chatted freely with me about reporting and the particular prospects of my enterprise. He thought there was room for a general reporting agency, and if I was the man for the post no doubt I would succeed. He was particularly interested in the fact of my principal object in coming to Birmingham being connected with Sunday work.

I discovered afterwards that he was an Irvingite, and had had some ideas of becoming an Irvingite preacher. He looked at my testimonials, with which he was pleased, especially with the brief note from Mr. John Bright, who was member for Birmingham. He concluded by telling me that he had on hand a large reporting job, outside of his work on the *Daily Post*, and that I might help him in it, as he was finding it rather more than he could do with his own work.

It was an investigation that was going on into the working of the Birmingham General Hospital. A committee sat once a week and took the evidence of professional gentlemen, which had to be taken down and written out, question and answer. Several meetings had taken place; but there was a greater number yet to come, and if I felt myself equal to it, he would get me to do the remaining meetings, on which he would be content with a royalty, leaving to me the bulk of the remuneration that would be paid. I was, of course, only too glad to fall in with such a handsome proposal, and expressed confidence in my ability to give satisfaction as regarded the execution of the work. His employer, the proprietor of the *Daily Post*, was a member of the committee, and it would be necessary to obtain his sanction before he could make any final arrangement: but if I would call again, he would let me know.

I called again and was informed that Mr. Lovell's employer was willing that I should do one sitting of the Investigation Committee by way of trial. I duly attended said sitting, which was held in the board room of the General Hospital, Summer Lane, on a Wednesday afternoon (I think). Mr. Lovell's employer was present at the meeting. Without loss of time, I transcribed my notes, and delivered my manuscript to Mr. Lovell, who submitted the same to his employer, by whom they were inspected and declared to be satisfactory. Mr. Lovell informed me that I might go on with the rest of the meetings—which proved a very important event

for us. It placed us above all anxiety for months to come: it introduced me to a certain far-off acquaintance with the leading men of the town, who were members of the committee, and who were examined as witnesses, and it ended with an offer from Mr. Lovell's employer of a place on the reporting staff of *The Birmingham Daily Post*, which I accepted.

Poor Mr. Lovell! I saw his death reported some time ago. He had risen to a position of public influence in Liverpool, where he was editor of the *Daily Mercury*, before which he had been successively manager of Cassell's Publishing firm and of the London Press Agency. He was a genial and capable young man of the sort that was sure to rise: but there was a slight rot in the apple. He had a hankering after spiritual things, but was not strong enough to follow them in a decided way. I had a long conversation with him one night, in the days when I was one of his colleagues on the *Daily Post*. It was after midnight when work was done (for daily newspaper work is late work). He told me of his desires, and of prognostications that had been made at his birth, and of his indecisions and vacillations with regard to whether the pulpit or the press was the best sphere for the exercise of spiritual influence. I told him I thought neither one nor the other was the place where Christ could be served in any effectual way; and that as the world was in our day, the only way was to come out and operate individually and independently of both. He said things concerning my own course which it would sound egotistical in me to repeat; but said he hoped he might be able, without going so far as I went, to serve God acceptably in his day and generation. His own friends were pressing him to remain on the press, and he was inclined to take their advice. At the same time, it was manifest he was full of misgiving.

He tried to foster a close personal intimacy, and I was willing to encourage it: but the conditions for it did not exist, and it was a failure. He knew very little of the Bible and very much of Shakespeare, and

he was full of pretty quotations from that epigrammatic writer and of humorous airy nothings in general. My preference for treating life rationally, and giving the Bible the serious place which his own admission of its character entitled it to, was distasteful to him. Consequently, we quietly dropped apart and went our several ways.

Getting the *Daily Post* appointment in the way I did led to one convenient arrangement which was highly favourable to the objects with which I had come to Birmingham. In ordinary circumstances, a reporter of the *Daily Post* would have had to attend the office regularly and consort with the other reporters in the reporting room, which would have been highly distasteful and would have interfered with work in other directions. But having an office of my own—which, as it happened, was close to the *Daily Post* office—and the proprietor of the paper being aware of that circumstance and of the quasi-independent footing on which I had accepted staff employment, I was at liberty to use that office, and thus to promote spiritual enterprises during the intervals when I was not wanted for police court or public meeting work.

This proved of the utmost value to me; for the publication of the penny numbers of the *Twelve Lectures* had put me into communication with many correspondents, and developed the existence of various matters in connection with the truth requiring attention. Among other things, the idea of starting a monthly magazine began to be agitated. Dr. Thomas had suspended the *Herald of the Kingdom* some two years previously; and there was nothing in the field in the way of an adequate periodical representation of the truth. There were two magazines, but they lacked vigour or certainty in the sound they gave out, and received but a very feeble attention. Dr. Thomas advised me to start a magazine, but said it was better there should be no magazine at all if there was to be nothing better than the twaddling incoherencies and

feeble uncertainties that some professors of the truth were prepared to be content with. I shared the Doctor's feelings on this head, but doubted my own ability to provide what was needful after the clear-eyed and trenchant vigour to which Dr. Thomas's *Herald* had accustomed us all. In the presence of this, I felt bloodless and tongue-tied in a literary sense. At the same time, I felt sure I would be able to improve upon the weak and adulterated article with which some were disposed to be content; so after a period of indecision, I decided to make a plunge, with this consolation ahead that if, as I verily believed, I should be pumped out at the end of twelve months, I could stop, seeing that nothing would depend on the continuance of a publication which I should supply to readers at the price charged by the printer.

After turning the matter over, I decided to call the new magazine *The Ambassador of the Coming Age*, which I now see was an absurdity; for an age cannot have an ambassador, still less an age not yet come. The idea was to have a name that was new and at the same time expressive of the character of the publication, and the strength of the desire somewhat blunted the discernment that might have detected the unfitness of the title. The next thing was to find a motto. One with the word "Ambassador" in it was a *sine qua non*. Proverbs supplied "A faithful ambassador is health." The very thing, thought I, and adopted the verse in which the words occurred, without noticing the first part of it, which declared that "a wicked messenger falleth into mischief." Now, the "messenger" was the name of one of the aforesaid weak and uncertain publications. The new motto was, therefore, an impeachment of the work already in the field, as well as an assertion of the character it was desirable to attain; but I did not observe this till the magazine actually appeared. The friends of the *Messenger* were of course quick to pounce down upon the motto. Some even declared their belief that I had adopted the name *Ambassador* because it fitted a verse in which the

*Messenger* was condemned. This was as far from the truth as possible. My eye was wholly filled with "faithful ambassador." The "wicked messenger" was invisible to me till the magazine was in the hands of readers.

CHAPTER XXV.

"THE AMBASSADOR."—1864.

WHEN my reporting engagement at the General Hospital was completed, I received something over £50 as my share of the remuneration ; and having meanwhile obtained an appointment on the staff of *The Birmingham Daily Post*, I was at liberty to deal with this sum in the special way suggested by circumstances.

My wife had gone on a three months' visit to her native town (Edinburgh) to recover from the hurtful effects of the hardships endured during our few months of Birmingham life ; and in her absence, I planned a pleasant surprise for her when she should return. We had been living in a gloomy house next door to a tavern in Great Colmore Street, which had been taken for us by the friends anxious to get us to Birmingham. My attention was now called by one of them to some new houses which were being put up in Belgrave Road, a road in the suburbs which at that time lay through fields. They were nearly finished and not all let. I went to see them. They were a larger class of house than the house we were in, and more capacious than our meagre effects could furnish. But the money in hand would enable me to make good the deficiency. Everything was so new and fresh and clean and bright, with open fields before and behind, that I felt sure it would be a pleasure to my companion to come home to such a place.

It was the year '64, and I decided to take No. 64, in which we have ever since spent the rough days of our pilgrimage, with sundry alterations and enlargements as required from time to time to make it unnecessary that we should shift to another place, for, with the coming of the Lord always in view, we had resolved to consider our house a mere tent and convenience to be used for the purposes of probation. "Strangers and pilgrims" the

friends of God are in the present order. Men passing through a country do not surround themselves with permanent appointments.

My sister, who (with her family of four) was living with us, superintended the furnishing and removal arrangements, and in due time, in the midst of bright summer weather, we made the change. In the midst of the operation, my father and mother arrived upon us from Canada, which brought our domestic garrison to a considerable point of strength. My father and mother had emigrated to Canada on the invitation of my brother John, who was settled at Ottawa, but did not find themselves at home; and so after a year or two had decided upon giving Birmingham a trial. They were unable to provide themselves independently, so we gave them accommodation in the new house. My generous companion found them in occupation on her return, making with my sister and her four children a full and lively house.

I had brought out the first number of *The Ambassador* during my wife's absence in Scotland. The principal part of the original prospectus will be found in *The Christadelphian* for June, 1871, page 198, as an article headed "Glad Tidings of Great Joy to all people."

This prospectus was sent to all who had subscribed for the penny numbers of *Twelve Lectures*. The response was just about sufficient to cover the printer's monthly charge; and, as I had never set my mind on anything beyond this, I resolved to go ahead. A brother in Halifax, Yorkshire, undertook the printing of the magazine and, I think, attended to the despatch through the post of the first few numbers. This arrangement continued for about two years, and was on the whole satisfactory. The only inconvenience was the tendency on the part of the said brother to edit as well as print the magazine, which compelled me to request him to set up the type exactly according to copy. This undeservedly earned for me the character of being "the most pepperish customer on the books." The arrangement continued

till the request of a Birmingham printer to have the work coincided with the occurrence of an accident to the Halifax printer, from the effects of which he died.

The publication of *The Ambassador* was a great means of keeping alive and extending the results produced by the labour of Dr. Thomas. Those results at that time were limited to a very few points in the country, and were in a very feeble form. David King, Dr. Thomas's Campbellite opponent in England, took pleasure in parading in his magazine the meagreness of the work as reported in the intelligence department of *The Messenger*; and seemed justified in his allegation that it was "everywhere dying out." Slowly, however, the circulation of *Twelve Lectures*, the publication of *The Ambassador*, and the holding of regular meetings for the exhibition of the truth began to tell. Here and there the truth began to take root. In Birmingham, the impression was made that naturally results from steady work. My occupation kept me in Birmingham; and on every Sunday evening I lectured, and also addressed the brethren in the morning, besides conducting a Bible Class during the week. From about a dozen, the meeting slowly crept up by additions, till it became a comparatively numerous body.

Our growth compelled several unpremeditated developments. A hymn book was one of them. The few who met together before we came to Birmingham had fallen into the use of a dozen or so hymns collected and stitched together by a worthy old man named Truman, who has since gone to his grave. These were millennial and fairly scriptural in character, but were so spoiled with the current theological taint as to be quite unfit for the use of enlightened believers of the Scriptures, as well as being too limited for regular use. The necessity for a larger and more scriptural compilation pressed itself upon us, and our interest in this direction was stimulated by the advent among us of a musical family who led us in our singing with a flute, violin, and basso. We had had no difficulty on the question of hymns in Scotland. There the versified psalms of David are bound up with



the Bible at the end, and are in universal use alike among those who hold the popular theology and those who desire to sing with the understanding. But the Scotch version of the Psalms is almost unknown in England, and even the English version is a book by itself and not in general use. I set to work and made a collection from various sources (including the Scotch Psalms). The collection amounted in all perhaps to a hundred hymns, and was published under the title of *The Golden Harp*—a pretentious name for a very poor production, but which most comfortably supplied our needs in that line for a few years.

The second matter in which growth forced our hands was the matter of what is known as "church order." At first we had no rules. Our numbers were so few and our proceedings so simple that it would have been pedantic to have employed them. I felt very averse to their introduction; but we were compelled to consider the question. The brethren proposed to give me an official status among them as "ministering brother," but I objected. Such an arrangement would have artificially separated me from the others, which I felt would be contrary to the spirit of the truth. The bulk of the speaking fell to me as a matter of necessity, because there was no one else to do it profitably; and to this I was willing to submit, but not to have any title or honorary status connected with it. There is a difference between doing the work and having an ornamental label. I have always felt an invincible repugnance to the latter, and an equal resolution with regard to the former. I have met many men with feelings just reversed on those points; and some of my difficulties have arisen from this cause; when spiritual incompetence has come forward in the ornamental spirit.

There was a brush on this subject quite early, while we were yet in Ann Street Schoolroom. A certain brother—most interesting on some points and even lovable and amusing, but of very light weight in all respects—wanted to divide the lecturing with me. Nothing would have been more to my mind had he

possessed the capacity to exercise a scriptural influence, and the ability to enlighten or even to interest an audience; but to have personal vanity performing behind a desk to the spoiling of a work which had been done by hard scriptural labour was an idea which I could not brook, and which I felt I must on every ground resist. I therefore informed him that if he persisted in his proposal, I should be under the necessity of leaving the lecturing wholly to him, and going elsewhere in promotion of the work of the truth on independent ground. No more was heard of the idea after this, but ambition received a wound from which it never recovered. It is so difficult to get on with men when they are in love with themselves, and so easy to get on with men when they are in love with God.

Instead of accepting a position of personal authority, I drew up a set of rules for consideration which would have the effect of putting the body in complete charge of its own affairs. These were adopted, and were afterwards modified from time to time in accordance with the lessons of experience. They substantially remain the basis of ecclesial operation to the present day. They enable the ecclesia to make a periodical election of presiding and arranging brethren who are subject to its direction once in three months in the quarterly meeting at which they have to report their proceedings for confirmation.

Time has not increased my admiration for such a democratic system. It was not admiration that led me to propose it at the beginning, but a perception of the necessity for it in the peculiar circumstances of our century, when there is no basis for the exercise of Divine authority. The aim was to combine liberty with order, and law with the absence of authority, and above all to preserve the fraternal character required by the law of Christ. In this respect, it was a compromise, and therefore like all compromises a little unsatisfactory in some directions. Nothing else seemed practicable in an age that lacked Divine direction. Some thought there was direction enough in the Apostolic precepts relating to



the choosing of bishops and deacons : some asked why not appoint elders as these ? The answer lies in the great difference between our own age and the Apostolic age in respect of the presence and guidance of the Spirit of God. There is not in our day that open guidance that would give sanction and authority to ruling brethren. There may be brethren having the qualifications for the exercise of authority ; but how can they exercise authority in the absence of that Divine appointment that confers it ? The brotherhood are comparable in this respect to the servants in a nobleman's house who have been left to themselves for a time. There may be those among them capable of taking the headship, but because the nobleman has omitted to name and appoint them, they cannot take the place.

Dr. Thomas had some time previously promulgated an order less democratic and more in harmony with the apostolic institution, but it did not seem quite suitable to our circumstances, and there was no attempt to apply it. Some years later, Nottingham adopted it, but it was soon found unworkable on some points and was changed. There are some things in it that are superior to the arrangements we adopted in 1864 ; by several alterations, we have come nearer to it in spirit as opportunities for revision have arisen. But the whole spirit of the present age is too intolerant to government ; and the materials for trusty and benevolent authority too poor and scanty to admit of any close approximation to the apostolic original. We can but do the best we can in our evil day, in hope that the Lord will overlook our blunders, and give us a place in that perfectly well-ordered house of authority that will be established in all the earth when the absent nobleman returns.

Between my daily newspaper duties, the getting up of *The Ambassador*, and the work connected with a growing ecclesia, my time was fully occupied. One of the drawbacks connected with my reporting life was the encroachment it made on Sunday time. This was made as light as possible by the newspaper people in consideration of the purpose for which I had come to

Birmingham, but I had to take my turn in routine duty, and had to make frequent calls at the hospitals and police stations for news of the latest accidents and misdeeds. These calls having to be made after delivering the Sunday evening lecture, were very disagreeable. The transition from the congenial contemplation of the beautiful things of the Spirit to the handling of the dark and ugly ways of man in this sinful era caused something like the experience of a man who might be ejected into the darkness and the rain from the brightness and joy and warmth of a nuptial feast.

My companion took off the disagreeableness as much as she could. She would bring me some supper before I started, and would then accompany me on my rounds and come and wait for me in the newspaper office while I wrote out my paragraphs for the printer, after which we walked home together. These dreary performances were often in bad weather, which made them drearier still, but all things human have an end, and the time came when we had to do this no more.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

## POLEMICS : DAVID KING.

I REMAINED on *The Birmingham Daily Post* for about 15 or 18 months—from the middle of 1864 to well on in 1865. During this time I brought out the first two volumes of *The Ambassador*—in monthly numbers of 16 pages each—mixing up the writing and proof reading often with my newspaper work. It was a poor affair, looking back upon it ; but it was the germ of what came after. This that came after has never been anything to think of with particular satisfaction ; but such it has been, it came out of the lean, bald, and ungarnished ; crude, raw, and impulsive monthly effort of 16 pages of heavy articles in long primer, brevier, and nonpareil, put forth at a time when no one seemed to care for Zion, but everyone put forth what talent they had with secular and personal objects. To everything there must be a beginning, and a great deal is done when a start is made, provided there is any power of continuance behind—which I greatly doubted in this matter.

I relied chiefly on the progressive exposition of the first principles of the truth for keeping up a supply of editorial matter from month to month. As a foundation for this, I drew up and published in the first number a series of over 20 propositions under the heading "The things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ," undertaking in future numbers to "systematically expound the elements of truth comprised in this important phrase." My first decided snub arose out of this proposal. I was formally charged with presumption in undertaking to "systematically expound" Bible truth. What right had I to "systematically expound" anything ?

The challenge was from a professor of Bible truth for whom, in my juvenility, I had nothing but feelings of profoundest respect, and for countenancing whom in the list of names appearing at the close of the first edition of

*Twelve Lectures*, I had received such a smart rap from Dr. Thomas—as stated in a previous chapter. I felt the challenge was quite unreasonable. I had embraced the truth of God, which was free to all, and it seemed to me the merest matter of course that I should do the utmost I could for its diffusion, as I expected every one else to do in a similar position, and which I felt nobody could do me a better turn than by doing. This rude growl was therefore unintelligible to me.

But I lived to understand matters a little better afterwards. The emitter of the said growl became an enemy of Dr. Thomas and the inventor and purveyor of various half-fledged crotchets, which acted as an obstacle to the currency of the delightful unsophisticated truth. His chief bane lay in a turgid intellect, of some vigour, combined with an active sense of self-importance, which is fatal to all true spiritual life. I have suffered much in my time from this type. When men are "lovers of their own selves," everything they handle catches the ignoble bias. The best work shines with a yellow light in their hand. Or is it green ? They suspect other men of their own infirmity. They cannot understand disinterested service. They cannot see things except through the diffracting and discolouring atmosphere of their own jaundiced state of mind. It may be a while before the disease is declared. They may run well to all appearance for a while. But sooner or later the break comes, and lo, there is a frowning and intractable *diabolos* where imagination had pictured the features of an angel. The *diabolos* in the case of the growl referred to has vanished into the invisible—the hades where all diabolism will at last disappear. Some lovers of God are left in the land of the living : but of the other sort there is still an abundant supply, which will continue to be the case till the grand holocaust that awaits the devil and his angels. I used to think Dr. Thomas too severe and too suspicious. It is the mistake of all children till bitter experience makes them finally aware of the sort of world they are living in.

My first editorial polemic saw light with the fourth number of *The Ambassador*. It arose out of an incident

that occurred some months previously. In the house of a Campbellite, who was looking into the truth, I met a member of David King's congregation, with whom I had a long argumentative conversation on the Kingdom of God, said member maintaining that it was set up on the day of Pentecost. This friend was unable to deal with my questions, but expressed his confidence that David King could do so. I said I should have no objection to meet David King on the subject. He said he was sure Mr. King would be ready to do so, and it was agreed that he should convey the proposal to him, and if possible bring about a debate. Afterwards, I wrote Mr. King, formally making this proposal and explaining how it had arisen.

Mr. King sent a curt refusal. One or two other letters passed; and thinking the incident might serve to draw attention to the truth a little, I published the correspondence, and had it distributed among his friends. This led Mr. King to write an article, headed "Thomasism," in *The British Millennial Harbinger*, the organ of Campbellism, at that time published at Nottingham. Some one sending me the number containing the article, I made it the occasion of a counterblast in *The Ambassador*, such as I would not write now had I to do the work over again—not that there is anything wrong with the matter or the argument, but the style is altogether too highly spiced. I had inevitably taken my style from Dr. Thomas, and his style was not suited to my thinner mentality. There was too much personal stingo; too much denunciation; too much high horse and swashbuckler flourish to go suitably with the mild discernments of a stripling of 25. An extract or two from the article will illustrate:—

"Mr. David King, editor of the periodical, and agent of the party in Birmingham, takes occasion to relieve his envenomed soul by attacking a faith which, notwithstanding the numerical feebleness of its adherents, and the constitutional decline which Mr. King loudly professes to believe is everywhere preying upon its vitals, seems strangely, thorn-like, to prick his sides, and

disturb the equanimity of his spirit. We could have afforded to let the unholy lucubration—unrelieved as it is by a single gleam of Christian courtesy or a single touch of that dignity and moral earnestness which pertain to the vocation to which Mr. King professes to belong—find its way unnoticed and unknown to the literary abyss where piles of previous tidingless *Harbingers* have found their merited oblivion: but as silence is justly interpreted to mean consent, we cannot allow its mis-statements and cunning misrepresentations to pass unnoticed and uncorrected.

"We do not quarrel with Mr. King for speaking of the truth as 'Thomasism.' We take it that he honestly supposes in his ignorance that the truth of God is the unauthorised and self-evolved sentiments of a man who happens to be called Dr. Thomas. We make allowance for his conscience, on the supposition that he believes Campbellism to be the truth, and the truth to be Thomasism; but the allowance we make for his conscience is fatal to our estimate of his judgment. We pity the spiritual incapacity exhibited in such a lamentable confusion of ideas. The man who sets himself up as a guide of the blind and a teacher of the ignorant ought himself to be sure that he possesses the enlightenment necessary for the one, and the competence necessary for the other.

"Jesus has warned us of the consequences of blind leading. No amount of sincerity will save the blind from the ditch: both the imperious high-looking leader and the humble deluded lambs of the flock will fall together. Mr. King may think he has settled this point; but the evidence before us conclusively proves the contrary, showing him to be a wandering star, a vapid cloud, a man in the deepest ignorance wherein he thinks himself wise; scouting the teachings of the word of God, under the derisive designation of 'Thomasism.'

"No doubt, in this he sins ignorantly, seeing he has not the remotest conception of the truth he reviles, and did he confine himself to his spiritual blasphemy, we could let him alone, remembering the caution which

Jesus has given with reference to the porcine class of which he shows himself to be the representative ; but when he misrepresents contemporary facts, we feel called upon even at the risk of being rent, to step out of the usual *incog.* which we observe with reference to personal questions, and call him to order. . . .

" Mr. King seems to find special delight in dilating upon the smallness of Antipas's number. True, the Antipas relatively are not numerous, but in this they only resemble the Antipas of all recorded times. No doubt there were many bold fronted defiant scoffers to twit Noah as he hammered away in single and unpopular faith, for 120 years, at the end of which Antipas only numbered eight persons out of a world's population ; but though the time was long, the scoffers were at last destroyed by the flood they derided, and the Antipas were justified and saved. Even so, the break up of the existing order of things with judgment, and the subsequent establishment of David's throne in Jerusalem, will ere long justify the Antipas and put to silence the ignorance of wicked men, who speak evil of the things they know not.

" The way of life has always been ' narrow ' and unpopular, and only a few—courageous enough, and conscientious enough, to take the position of Antipas, have been found treading its rugged path. The other ' way ' can always rejoice in plenty of company. Its attractions are palatable to the carnal mind. A wide door facilitates access to the enticing display within, and the solicitations of a thousand plausible gate-keepers—some in lawn and surplice, others with holy neckerchief and differing name, and others still in the plainer evangelistic garb—make the temptation irresistible, and once in, it is very difficult to get out again. The people are crowding in, and the man who once passes the seductive portals is apt to be carried with the throng which streams down the picturesque promenade with song and triumph to death, and to find himself at last in the gulf in which the flowery incline terminates.

" We can afford to let Mr. King have all the joy of numbers, and can bear, with good grace, the numerical

inferiority in which he jibes the ' Antipas.' It is an easy thing to make Campbellites. They are ready made to hand. They are manufactured in teeming thousands in the spiritual factories of the old mother and her daughters, which abound in all the cities of Britain. They only require the Campbellite trade mark. Let them say they believe in Jesus Christ as the Saviour (and who is there in the legion denominations that would not make this confession ?) they may believe anything else they like ; they may expect to go to heaven when they die, or they may expect to lie in the grave till the resurrection ; they may believe man has an immortal soul, or they may believe man has no pre-eminence above a beast ; they may believe Christ will come to sit on the throne of David in Palestine, and enforce the Abrahamic covenant of blessing for all nations, or they may expect him to come and plunge the globe in annihilating judgment fires and take his redeemed to celestial glory ; all they require is an aqueous dip, and they come forth in all the distinctive glory of full-fledged Campbellism, duly qualified to sit down and participate in the felicities of brotherly unity in the one faith, the one hope, and the one baptism. . . .

" He thinks we lack the opportunity of submitting our convictions to the public except in a collision with his influential self. If this were not too small to deserve notice, we might invite him to Ann Street, Birmingham, any Sunday evening, to behold the fallacy of his arrogant suppositions. The truth is not popular enough to draw a large ' house,' nor will it ever be, seeing its ecclesiastical accessories afford no scope for the display of purple and fine linen, and no opportunity for the gratification of the flesh in the thousand fashionable ways that make a chapel attractive to even the giddy tastes of frivolity and youth. But, thank God, there are some who relish the plain truth as prophetically and apostolically delivered ; and among these, we assure Mr. King, we find as much scope for labour as our secular avocations will permit us to avail ourselves of, without having recourse to the adventitious excitement of a discussion. But we do not shrink

from discussion where the enemy is audacious and self-confident, and flings his boasted strength, as in the case referred to above, into the arena in default of argument. We are willing in such cases to take up the sword, even against a King who has defied the hosts of clergydom, and to fight for the unpopular interests of the truth, against the assaults of a system which with much pretension of Reformation is as vapid and powerless as the apostate faith of which it pretends to be an emendation, but of which it is really a sister growth. Mr. King, however, refused the encounter provoked by one of his own admirers, and skulked behind his entrenchments under pretence that we were too insignificant a foe for his steel. We commend the prudence of his tactics, but cannot admire the principle displayed. He can revile 'Thomasism' while secure behind his editorial breastworks, and make large boast of his powers among his household, who are so credulous of his valour; but when challenged to an open canvass of the faith he so sedulously vilifies in private, he refuses the opportunity on the inconsistent plea that we are not numerous enough—not numerous enough to be worth his while trying to save us by showing us our error. Considering the ecclesiastical nature of his aims, we do not wonder at this; only we would have it known that the challenge he refused was a challenge originated in the boastful confidence of his own party, and not from the paltry motive to which he naturally imputes it."

## CHAPTER XXVII.

## "EUREKA," VOL. II.

MR. KING responded to my remarks in a tone of extreme asperity and bitterness, which was not to be wondered at considering his high development of personal dignity. A man of the Nazarene type would have discerned the sincerity underlying our literary eccentricities, and have made some effort to demolish the arguments associated with them. Instead of this, he railed on personal questions. I replied in a series of scripturally-fortified propositions respecting Campbellism, inviting him to deal with these and leave alone the personalities. This invitation he ignored, but it was not without effect.

A letter from the north of Scotland informed me that one of King's co-religionists in the granite city "disapproved of King's conduct in the affair," and was prepared himself to take up the challenge on the propositions that had been advanced, and to conduct a regular written discussion in *The Ambassador*, and not only so, but to pay the cost of the extra pages that might be required.

This was too good a proposal to be declined, and accordingly in *The Ambassador* for March, 1865, as the result of correspondence, the following announcement by Mr. Dougall (the gentleman's name), appeared:—"An arrangement having been come to between the editor and myself, whereby four pages of *The Ambassador* shall be specially devoted to the discussion of Christadelphian principles, I propose (D.V.) to open in the April number by an article on some of the more glaring sophisms which Christadelphians palm upon themselves and others as scriptural truths, with a view to the refutation of the errors upon which the principles of their community are built." An additional statement was made to the effect that "The discussion would be

simultaneous in each number as long as it continues, an article on each side appearing in the same number."

The written discussion did not extend beyond three numbers; it was in fact only just beginning to deal with the real question when it was suddenly snuffed out by some sort of legal proceedings against Mr. Dougall, which eclipsed him from view as completely as if he had fallen down dead in the street. What the proceedings were I never knew exactly or have forgotten. A newspaper was sent to me some time afterwards with particulars of some sort of trial, but the whole thing is now in a haze. I have never heard anything of him since (27 years ago). He was my first formal antagonist. I never saw him, and have no idea of what sort of a looking man he was, but the impression made by his polemical essay during those three months was far from favourable.

There was a spirit of pepperish emphasis and vituperative satire that are inconsistent with the candour of mind that seeks either to find or to set forth truth. A man may have a positive and forcible way of setting forth what he knows or believes to be the truth, but this is not incompatible with the childlike sincerity that looks at all the facts, while insisting upon the conclusion to which they lead. Mr. Dougall seemed to lack capacity in this direction. He was dogmatic enough, but either he did not see all the facts or did not possess the power to deal with them, or else lacked the candour to acknowledge them. From whatever cause, his efforts were shallow while smart, and weak while declamatory in the forcible-feeble style. They promised nothing satisfactory in the way of a logical tourney; so perhaps it was as well it was nipped in the bud.

An episode of a very different description was introduced by the receipt from Dr. Thomas of the prospectus for the publication of the second volume of *Eureka* (his exposition of the Apocalypse). The first volume had appeared four years previously, and had imparted one of those zestful gratifications which one can only experience once or twice in a lifetime. The Apocalypse was at once so important and so difficult to under-

stand, and the Doctor's first volume of explanation at once so lucid as an exposition and so brilliant as a literary performance that no words can exaggerate the sweet invigoration of intellect and cordial comfort of heart imparted by the reading of it at the time of its appearance, and continued more or less all the time since its first perusal.

The first volume only came down to the end of the third chapter. It may be imagined with what satisfaction the statement was now received that the second volume (bringing the exposition down to the end of the eleventh chapter) was all written and ready for the printer, and awaited only the subscription of a sufficient number of copies to secure publication. The only drawback was the fact that publication would depend upon the provision of the needful funds by subscription. The first volume extended to between 400 and 500 pages; the second volume would be as much as 800 pages, with price correspondingly enhanced. 500 copies would have to be subscribed for at 14s. 6d. per copy before the sum required by the printer would be provided. With the very limited and very poor circle of those who had received and appreciated the first volume, there was but a poor prospect of getting 500 subscribers at 14s. 6d.

Still, there was no feeling of despair. We hoped and felt that somehow the means would be provided. There was nothing for it, at all events, but to go to work and do the best we could. While we were looking and considering how this was to be done, a letter was received from the Doctor in which, referring to the unfavourable state of things created by the war which was then raging in America, he said:—

"About the success of the attempt to publish Vol. II. under existing circumstances, I am not sanguine. . . . I doubt very much if there will be time to write the third volume before the Lord comes. I earnestly hope there will not. But if I cannot publish the second, it will be no use writing the third. So I shall wait and see before I begin. I cannot say certainly just now what I shall determine on. I think, however, that the crisis requires

me if possible to publish in Britain. . . . Before I could come over to Britain, I must visit Baltimore, Richmond, Kentucky, Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Canada to stir up their faith and co-operation. . . . I cannot get through this in less than four months from current date. This will bring me to the end of August. You will in that time have done all that is possible in my absence. If I come over, it will likely be in that month or the next."

The prospect of a possible visit from the Doctor, over and above the publication of the second volume, was inexpressibly gratifying, and imparted much zest to our endeavours to swell the subscription list. I appealed through *The Ambassador* to every friend of the truth to do his utmost. In the end, over 200 copies were subscribed for in Britain. Would the friends in America make up the other 300? We almost hoped not from a fear that in that case the Doctor would judge it unnecessary to come over to Britain. Our fears on this head were realised in an unexpected way. A letter arrived from the Doctor, who had set out on his journey to the various neighbourhoods enumerated above. He had got as far as Ogle, Co. Illinois, when the whole means for the accomplishment of the work were unexpectedly placed in his hands in the way detailed in the following extract:

"I had not been long in the house before Samuel W. Coffman desired to know the prospects of *Eureka*. I told him I had received 262 subscriptions, which I thought was about as many as I could calculate upon in this country (the States). As to Britain, I had received no definite information at the time of leaving home, but I did not calculate on more than 75 copies being required, considering the efforts there as here to put me theologically to death. On the assumption that 75 copies would be taken there, a deficit would still be left of eleven hundred and fifteen dollars to make up the amount necessary to pay the printer his demand of 2,800 dollars for printing the work. On learning the facts, brother Coffman enquired if he raised 1,115 dollars, would I return to New York and proceed at

once with the publication of the work there? I told him that nothing would afford me greater satisfaction in the premises, for that it would relieve me of much labour, anxiety and personal inconvenience that must be met in the event of going to Britain to raise the deficiency by lecturing, and to publish there. 'Well, then,' said he, 'the money shall be raised if I have to give it all myself.' And these were not vain words. He had sent me an order for 30 copies for subscribers in Ogle, which are included in the 262. He therefore undertook to furnish me with a 'time, times and a half time' of dollars, or 1,260 dollars in subscriptions and extra donations.

"Accordingly, on the Sunday following, after the meeting for breaking bread was concluded, he detained the brethren, and made the statement I had given him, and told them the work must be published for their benefit, and that they must enable it to be done according to their ability. In this they readily acquiesced, and requested him to say how much he thought each of them ought to give; and whatever he said they would do. Thus authorised, he proceeded to apportion to himself the sum of 545 dollars, to another 220, to another 125, to another 90, to two others 80 each, to another 55, to another 25, and to two others 5 each—in all 1,260 dollars. He submitted whether that were a just apportionment according to their circumstances: they said it was. And the night before I left, the amount was handed over to me in trust for the printer, and with the earnest request that I would publish the second volume as soon as possible after my return to New York, and proceed forthwith with the writing of the third.

"So you see," said the Doctor, "when the Divine Inventor and the Proprietor of the Apocalypse requires its exposition, He has the means at hand. The heaven-sent document is His. He sent it for a purpose, no mean element in which is the warning of His servants of the generation concurrent with His appearing and His kingdom. But these servants do not understand it. How then can they use it according to His purpose? The work therefore of making it intelligible must be His. . . .



The truth develops its own instrumentality. It has opened the hearts of a few to print what it has enlightened the head of another to write. The circumstances which the advocacy of the truth has created, are the providence of the truth. This providence has pitched upon the most obnoxious man of his age, and on a few obscure ones in a remote part of the earth, to do what the 'wise and prudent,' the rich and noble, and all of that genus, with all the appliances at their command, could in no wise accomplish. When I consider my own weakness, and the weakness of the brethren, I cannot but accept our success in this whole matter as of God."

In accordance with these arrangements, the Doctor returned to New York, and occupied himself for the next three or four months in getting *Eureka* II. through the press. On December 11th, 1865, he wrote a long letter to me, in which he said: "I am happy to inform you that *Eureka* II. is all in type and the paper obtained. It will now consume two weeks in printing, and two weeks more in binding. When bound, 250 copies will be shipped to you, and I think a few of volume I., which you can supply to those who want them, if they subscribe for volume II." In the same letter he said:—

"You have entered upon a very arduous enterprise. If I understand you right, you are where I was some twenty-five or thirty years ago. You are now more intelligent in the faith than I was then. I was seeking for it with no one to help me to find it; but many ready to mislead or misdirect me. You have found it, with many ready and rejoiced to help you to walk in the way of the kingdom; and therefore you have more power for immediate usefulness than I had. Yet, in some sort, our situation is similar. I was one and nearly alone against the world, and the world against me, as soon as it discovered that I was for the truth whatever that may be, and, wherever found, on Christian or on heathen ground; and that too without regard to the dogmata of sects, Romish or Protestant, or mere human authority. This discovery brought down their anathemas upon me thick and heavy. Power was upon the side of the

oppressor, and they would have swallowed me up if God had permitted them to triumph.

"Now, if you are courageous, faithful, and valiant for the truth; if you are really a good and useful man in your day and generation, you may lay your account with being misrepresented, slandered and abused in various ways; but if you turn traitor in faith or practice, or in both, you will become popular, and obtain the applause of the ignorant and hypocrites. This is my experience, and it will certainly be yours. . . . We have a great many speculators in the faith on this side the Atlantic—mere theorists who are a sort of amalgam, made up of a little Storrism, a little Adventism, a little Campbellism, and a hodge-podge of traditions of which water, pork, alcohol, tobacco, salt, raisins, and 'the everlasting nigger' are the prolific head centres. But of believers, intelligent in 'the unadulterated milk of the word' by which they have grown into young men and fathers in Christ, we have very, very few. There are very few in whom 'the Word of Christ dwells richly in all wisdom,' and in whom this Word rules so as to induce them 'to deny themselves of all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, and righteously, and godly in the present world.'

"These are the exceptions to the rule: the generality do not seem to allow what they call 'their faith' to stand in the way of trade, money making, convenience, or enjoyment. Conscious of their own hypocrisy or worldly-mindedness, they zealously assail those whose opposite course is a standing though silent rebuke to them. . . . He that can see a Pope in everyone at all useful to his generation is most ready to become the biggest and grandest of Popes; and pines in envy and vexation if no one will come to worship him. I fear the Greeks bringing presents. They are mere Greeks, and their presents the horse on which they propose to ride themselves into notoriety. They would rather be notorious for abomination than not notorious at all. Not to be noticed or talked about nor worshipped is death to these ignoble creatures. They cannot exalt



themselves by any service they have done to any others than their own selfishness. What then are these envious sinners to do? They are mere insignificant nobodies; and they are dying to be considered somebodies. How shall they become somebodies in their own conceit at least? The rule of the hypocritical knave is 'Deprecate the excellent, and you thereby exalt the worthless.' This is their invariable practice, but oftentimes so bunglingly executed that the cloven foot is revealed and they defeat themselves to the righteous justification of the victim they designed to immolate upon the altar of their unhallowed and mean ambition."

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

## "A TOWN HALL EFFORT."

IN accordance with the intimation contained in Dr. Thomas's letter, from which extracts have been given, a box containing 250 copies of *Eureka* II. and some copies of *Eureka* I. was delivered at my office, 35, Cannon Street. The books were to have gone to another for distribution to subscribers; but it so happened that I had sojourning with me at the time, and helping me in the office, an unfortunate brother in the faith, who had been a bookseller. He suggested that he might be of use in packing up and despatching the volumes. The suggestion was communicated to the originally intended agent in Scotland, and he at once concurred in the books coming from New York to us instead of going to him. This was the providential commencement of my book connection with Dr. Thomas, which ended in his placing his whole affairs in my hand.

The beginning was certainly very small; the office itself was a single dark back room, sub-let at £10 per annum. There was nothing in it except a table in the centre, and some chairs round the empty walls, and in the window corner a solitary clothes cupboard, sent us on the death of Sister Roberts's mother. This cupboard was the beginning of book accommodation, now requiring several large rooms from floor to ceiling. Over the bare mantelpiece was a framed picture of Christ weeping over Jerusalem. Mr. Lovell, the press acquaintance previously referred to, cheerily remarked that "Rome was not built in a day."

Having despatched the books, I inserted the following notification in *The Ambassador*:—"Since our last appearance, *Eureka* vol. II. has been placed in the hands of those who subscribed for the work in this country, and in the hands of some who did not subscribe at the time the prospectuses were issued, but

that have been tempted to buy now that the work is actually within reach. So far as we have learnt, the appearance of the book has been hailed with genuine satisfaction and even delight on the part of those who have got possession of it, and well it might, for such a book has never been published on the subject of the Apocalypse, involving as it does not only the elucidation of Apocalyptic mysteries, but the collateral exposition of nearly all Scriptural truth and the harmonization of the Holy Oracles 'from Genesis to Revelation.'

"The readers were prepared for a treat. They would not have paid 14s. 6d. in these days of cheap literature, if they had not been sure that in the volume they were subscribing for they would have the worth of their money, and they have not been disappointed. They knew their author. They had read *Eureka*, vol. I., and *Elpis Israel*, and many of them had perused the *Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come*, in which the same intellect outpoured itself from month to month, for eleven years, in luminous and convincing exposition. They knew from valuable experience that the sparkling life water of uncorrupted truth up-bubbled from the fountain which had played unremittingly for so long a period in this dry and deadly wilderness, and they preferred to be guided by facts rather than listen either to the cynical suggestions of envious shallow-brains and scandal-hunters, or to the mild and insinuating disparagements of spiritual superficiality and incompetence. They knew that *Eureka* would be worth having, and subscribed for it, and have accordingly been rewarded with the possession of the most instructive and readable book ever written on the much argued and much misunderstood book of 'The Revelation.'

"We will not attempt a review, or even pretend to write what is technically understood as a notice. Such a book is beyond the province of either. It is not the production of an author scraping for popularity, or canvassing the verdict of his readers. It is not a piece of suggestive theoretical writing composed to beguile leisure or agitate speculation. It is a testimony, a

manifesto, in some sense an ultimatum, from a sternly faithful man, who, mastering by slow degrees the Verities of the Holy Oracles, has spent a lifetime in protesting against the universal foolishness by which the word of God is made of none effect. As such, we commend it to all and sundry, but more particularly to those professing to have been delivered from the vain traditions in which they were held. It is a book that will enlighten their eyes to deeper perception and strengthen their hearts to a more courageous testimony for the truth which is now trodden under foot on the right hand and on the left."

About this time, there was a great stir in Birmingham, caused by an Irvingite propagandist effort in the Town Hall, a large building capable of containing several thousands of people. The placard convening the meeting "warned the Christian men of Birmingham" to prepare for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, which caused an alarmist sort of interest and brought together an immense assembly, half of which could not obtain entrance into the hall. Among those excluded were the brethren and sisters who had wished to hear how a stranger would attempt to demonstrate a proposition in which they were so deeply interested. The night was fine, and the crowd hanging about outside was large, and it was suggested the opportunity might be turned to account by holding an out-of-door meeting.

A chair was fetched and placed in the square behind the hall, and one or two brethren went round among the crowd to tell them an overflow meeting would be held out there. The people accordingly repaired thither, and I mounted the chair and harangued them for the best part of an hour on the subject that was being spoken of inside. I received a fairly attentive hearing till I came to speak of the Pope, when the Roman Catholic element of the crowd became uncontrollably turbulent, and made a rush towards the speaker which was resisted for a time by the peaceably disposed of the people, but at last carried all before it

and compelled me to dismount. There might have been serious work but for two policemen who marched me off between them to the protection of a neighbouring hotel, followed by a large crowd. The crowd stayed in front of the hotel and I escaped behind, and got quickly home. The hotel has since been pulled down to make way for the new Birmingham General Post Office which now stands on its site.

The incident did not quite close for a week or two. The promoters of the Irvingite meeting, in view of the number unable to obtain admission, announced another meeting to which admission would be by ticket. To this second meeting, the brethren went. The overcrowding of the previous occasion was absent. An orderly and comfortable audience, filling the hall in all its parts, was ready at the hour of lecture to receive the lecturer, who appeared on the platform at the hour appointed, attended by the dignitaries of the church in whose interest he appeared, which blends the meretricious pomp of Romish ceremonial with the fanatical fire of the little sectary.

The lecture was the reverse of a treat. The speaker had a good voice, but pounded away in a mechanical manner at themes which, while of boundless interest when rationally treated, are only productive of disgust to intelligence, and scorn on the part of the blasphemer when dogmatised on in the lifeless indiscriminate and yet extravagant style of the lecturer. He went into the most absurd rhapsodies. There was no backbone to his discourse. He floundered in an ocean of what primitive people call "stuff" and rubbish. He asserted things without proving them; and what he asserted was a mere jingle of New Testament words without a proper association of meaning. Apart from the simple idea of Christ's personal return, the lecture was a tissue of fallacy from beginning to end, and calculated to bring the whole subject into utter contempt, especially as the words spoken were claimed by the chairman as the utterance of the Spirit of God. It was exceedingly painful to hear the true doctrine of Christ's approaching

advent publicly disgraced by association with such blatant rhodomontade and unmitigated rubbish. The pain of it generated a strong impulse to wipe out the disgrace by a right exposition of the matter as public as the nonsense had been.

It was a capital opportunity of getting the public ear on a subject for which usually there is no relish. But how to use it was the difficulty. The cost of a Town Hall lecture would be at least £20, which was too heavy a burden for our slender community at the time. Revolving the matter in my own mind, I felt so strongly exercised, that I resolved at my own risk to take the Town Hall, give a reply lecture, and rely on a small admission ticket charge for providing the means. The brethren endorsed the project, and heartily co-operated. The affair was not an entire success, but was saved from utter failure by individual enterprise at the last moment. A visit to the ticket depôts two days before the meeting, showed there was no likelihood of an audience. It was, therefore, resolved to distribute the tickets gratuitously, and let the expenses take care of themselves. Brethren and friends each undertook the disposal of as many as they thought they could distribute. One sister whose name it is scarcely for a husband to mention, particularly distinguished herself in the matter. In this way, 1,600 tickets were given away, an audience of from 1,500 to 1,800 people got together. All felt their arduous efforts rewarded in the dimensions of the house. As for the expenses, they were finally met by the contributions of various friends. The whole episode afforded such an opportunity of giving a testimony for the truth in Birmingham as had never before been possible, and of advertising our routine operations in Ann Street Schoolroom, by means of printed notices scattered on the seats before the people assembled at the reply lecture.

The result was seen in crammed meetings in Ann Street Schoolroom for some time afterwards. A special course of a dozen lectures or so had been in progress for some time. Many of those in attendance had

attended the meetings for about two years. At this time, it was considered wise to address to them a circular, which was accordingly issued to this effect, that the faith originally delivered by the apostles having been steadily expounded in Ann Street Schoolroom for the last two years, it was proposed to hold an open tea meeting on Sunday, April 1st, 1866, at 2.30 p.m., for the purpose of giving an opportunity to all who believed the things that had been set forth, of declaring whether or not they were prepared to make that open confession of their faith which God required at their hands in baptism as the basis of the remission of their sins. Those who lacked the confidence to express themselves publicly could communicate their mind through others. The meeting duly came off and was largely attended. The addresses came first; tea followed about 4.30, after which I gave a lecture on "The Spiritual Dangers of the Nineteenth Century." As the result of the meeting, 23 persons signified their desire for immersion. They were all interviewed and baptised during the ensuing fortnight. On the occasion of their reception on Sunday, April 15th, the meeting was protracted an hour beyond the usual time, and addresses of encouragement were delivered by several of the brethren, new and old. Our numbers were now brought to 68.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

THE BANKRUPTCY COURT—THE NAME  
"CHRISTADELPHIAN."

IN the month of July, 1865, a change occurred in my occupation which tended greatly to enlarge my liberty in the service of the truth. Up to that time I was on the reporting staff of *The Birmingham Daily Post*, a position in which it was with difficulty that I carried on the monthly publication of *The Ambassador*, as *The Christadelphian* was then called; and as for lecturing anywhere out of Birmingham, that was out of the question. That I should ever be liberated from the drudgery of newspaper work seemed most unlikely, but it came about in a most unlikely way.

My duties on the paper made me acquainted with a post that I discerned would be "just the thing"—combining the double advantage of a liberal livelihood, easily earned, and ample leisure for literary and traveling work in connection with the truth, but the said post was out of my reach in two ways: the position itself was only a possibility, and I totally lacked the social influence needful to obtain it, even if it became developed.

I am referring to the shorthand writing work required by the Birmingham Bankruptcy Court. This was not a regular thing. It was only in cases "few and far between" that the evidence required to be taken down question and answer. But when such cases occurred the quantity of work involved was considerable, and the rate of remuneration was fixed by Act of Parliament according to the number of words. Though the cases in which the work was required were not many, they were sufficient in number to yield a good livelihood, if all the work were in the hands of one man. But the work was divided. It was given to whatever eligible newspaper reporter might happen to

be present, who would sometimes be one man and sometimes another.

Suppose, thought I, the work could all be given to one and I should be that one, I should be free for the work of the truth, and at the same time earn my own living. But it was apparently an idle supposition, for the court had no power under the Act to appoint a standing official, in whose hands all the shorthand writing should be concentrated: it could only employ a man in any given case requiring it. However, the apparently idle thought became a pleasant reality presently.

The usher of the court one day told me seriously that the Judge (who was known as "The Commissioner") had resolved to appoint a shorthand writer to the court, and he advised me to send in an application. It was a practical joke on his part, but I did not know this till afterwards. Supposing his statement to be true, I sent in an application, accompanied with testimonials which I obtained for the purpose. In a few days the Commissioner sent for me, and asked what my letter meant. I told him I had been informed he had made up his mind to appoint an official shorthand writer. He said he had no power: he could only appoint in individual cases. I said I was aware of this, but supposed he had decided, for the convenience of the court, to appoint one person to do the work in all cases. I said if he chose to give me such an appointment, I would place myself entirely at the service of the court, which would ensure the prompt supply of transcripts. The court had often to wait for the transcripts of notes under the present arrangement, owing to the reporters being busy with other work; I also said that I would without fee take notes of everything that passed in court, so that the court could at any time refer back to what had passed in case of dispute arising, and I should expect payment only in those cases in which transcripts might be required. The Commissioner said it was a very nice proposal but he did not feel at liberty to make such an arrangement, by which the

gentlemen of the press who attended his court might feel themselves deprived of a vested interest. And he bowed me out politely.

I thought the affair was over: but in three weeks afterwards, one of the minor judges sent for me: (there were three judges in all—the two minor ones being known as "Registrars.") The Registrar said the Commissioner and the two Registrars had been talking over what I had proposed, and they had come to the conclusion that if I would sever my connection with the newspapers, they would appoint me to do all the shorthand writing required. This I at once expressed my willingness to do; and in a day or two, the Commissioner at a public sitting of the court, announced my appointment, which was duly reported in the papers.

Thus I found myself through the effect of a *canard*, in the very position I had for some time discerned and desired as the position suitable to the work I had in hand in connection with the truth. The court only sat two days in the week; and twice a year had long vacations which allowed of my accepting lecturing appointments in other parts of the country. This was a great contrast to the daily duties of a newspaper. None was more surprised than the usher to see the practical effect of his joke.

I had, of course, to give a month's notice to the editor of the *Daily Post*. While this month was running, I had to perform the duties of my new position in addition to my duties as a newspaper reporter, in consequence of which I was unable to get *The Ambassador* ready. I made up for this by issuing a double number in the month following, containing the following apology: "It (the delay) was imposed upon us by the extra labour attending a change in circumstance, which we need not trouble our readers by describing in particular; and to this delay we were induced to submit without impatience by the prospect that in the new position which we shall have assumed

before this meets the eye of the reader, we shall be more at freedom than heretofore to serve the cause which we have espoused as the only cause among mortal men deserving whole-souled and exclusive consecration. That cause is the cause of life against death; knowledge against ignorance; wisdom against folly; holiness against impurity; the honour of God against the impiety of men; the glorious future against the dead past and the corrupt and dying present—which, gathered into more concrete phrases, may be described as the Bible against unbelief; the true teaching thereof against the false and absurd and monstrous tenets of modern orthodoxy, consolidated in the popular religious systems of the time; the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ against the unscriptural and unsaving Gospel preached in churches, chapels, and meeting-houses."

The circulation of *The Ambassador* had slowly gone up since its commencement; and as a little margin began to show after the printer was paid, I decided upon adding four pages monthly to the 16 of which the magazine originally consisted. There was need for enlargement, for with more time to bestow on the literary evolution of spiritual things, I found 16 pages quite inadequate to the matter developing in my hands. Letters and contributed articles, which I had from the beginning intended to make a feature, were standing over, and subjects of pressing moment were waiting a convenient opportunity that never seemed to come. It was not certain that I should get all the money back that the enlargement would cost; but I decided to venture, and in the end, was not disappointed. The enlargement commenced with the 19th number. Afterwards, other enlargements followed, till finally the magazine attained an established position.

Somewhere about this time, the following acknowledgment was received from Dr. Thomas of some money which had been collected and sent to him to alleviate the stress caused by the just concluded American Civil War:—

"The motive principle which has caused our brethren on your list to place the £55 at my disposal is doubtless their appreciation of the truth, and the enjoyment of the freedom it confers. No higher motive can actuate the human mind, and none can be more pleasing to him who has said 'I am the truth.' He will, therefore, doubtless accept it as an offering to himself, and be, therewith, well pleased. I am much obliged to the brethren for their liberal contribution in the straitness of the times which has come upon us here; but I appreciate it far above the amount, because of the spontaneousness of the gift. . . . My earnest desire is to see developed in Britain a people who shall be separate and distinct from all others; the foundation of whose distinctiveness and separation shall be *the intelligent belief and obedience of the truth*, not mere opinionists and speculators, but a people in whom is 'full assurance of faith,' and 'full assurance of hope.' Such a people would be 'a people prepared for the Lord.' The 'religious world' so-called, is the apostasy foretold by Paul. A prepared people must be separate and distinct from this in faith and hope and love. There can be no identity and sympathy between them. We cannot fraternize with the religious world and be prepared for the coming of the Lord, who comes to destroy it. A prepared people are Christ's brethren (*Christadelphians*), and rejoice in this exclusive relationship, and none are entitled to this high position but those who do the will of the Father who is in heaven (Matt. 12:50).

"The conscription has made it necessary for us here to *designate ourselves by some name*, and not only so, but I have been anxious that our brethren should have a name which would defend them from that of 'Thomasites.' I do not want to hear of such a people as the people I have referred to being called by my name. If they believed and rejoiced in theories and traditions invented by me, it would then be well to call them by my name, but as far as developed truly, they believe the truth which makes them Christ's brethren, and CHRISTADELPHIAN expresses that fact. To be called

by this name is a great honour if we believe it. It is an unappropriated name by any sect, and, therefore, distinguishes us from all. Christian has lost its original signification in the mouth of a Gentile; hence the Pope, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Mormon High Priest of Utah, are all Christians so-called and brethren, but not Christadelphians."

Also about this time, we were all deeply interested in a petition got up by the brethren in America to Congress, praying for exemption from the military conscription which the exigencies of the civil war had caused to be more vigorously and generally applied to the population. Shortly after the petition was sent in, the war ceased. The document itself is of spiritual value and of historic interest. It was the composition of Dr. Thomas, and is as follows:—

*To the Senators and Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled.*

GENTLEMEN,—Your petitioners respectfully submit that they belong to "*a very small remnant*" of that sect, which in the days of the Apostles was "*everywhere spoken against*" because of its testimony against "*the world-rulers of the darkness of that age; and against the spirituals of the wickedness in the high places of the State*" (Eph. 6: 12). This has been their testimony in all ages of their standing before the "Powers that be." Inheriting their principles, your petitioners are brought under the obligation of maintaining their testimony; although, as in past experience of thousands of them, it may be necessary to seal it with the loss of goods, liberty, or life.

During the past eighteen hundred years they have been distinguished from heterogeneous "names and denominations" of the kingdom of the clergy, by various titles imposed upon them by their enemies. These names they repudiate; and, in accordance with apostolic teaching, that all the real children of God are the brethren of Jesus (a relationship in which their brethren in all ages have glorified), your petitioners

choose to be known as CHRISTADELPHIANS, or brethren of Christ.

Your petitioners belong to *a very small remnant* whose constituents are found in England, Scotland, the British Provinces, the United States, Virginia and Mississippi. Wherever found their principles are identical, having been taught by THE WORD, not of man, but of God. By this teacher, whose authority alone they recognise, they are commanded not to kill, nor even to be angry with their fellow-men without a cause, under penalty of the judgment; not to resist evil; to love their enemies, bless them that curse them, do good to them that hate them, pray for them who spitefully use them and persecute them, not to be as the hypocrites who profess one thing and practise the contrary; and that whatsoever they would that men should do to them, even so they must do to men; for this is the law and the prophets. These commands your petitioners are bound to obey, come what may, and under whatsoever government they may happen to sojourn. Human governments, indeed, undertake to change the times and laws of Deity; but eighteen centuries afford no scope for change with Christadelphians who "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the Saints"; and who, under pain of exclusion from eternal life, are bound to "obey God rather than man."

Now your petitioners respectfully affirm that they are of that class especially provided for in the Enrolment Act as conscientiously opposed to the bearing and use of "weapons of war," and to the shedding of human blood; and as brethren of Christ, owing allegiance only to Him, as King of Israel, positively refuse, under any circumstances whatever, to engage in the armies and navies of any government.

The Divine Word teaches them that wars and fightings come of men's lusts. Hence the brethren of Christ, who are commanded to "crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts," have no sympathy with, and will take no part in such conflicts; but ask the world-rulers of this age to be considerate enough to let them



alone. They render to Cæsar what is lawfully his ; but when he undertakes to circumvent the principles Deity has enjoined, they, as His people, resist even unto death.

In conclusion, your petitioners would add, that the brethren of Christ in Richmond, Lunenburg, and King William County, Va., and Jefferson, Co. Mississippi have, under the influence of the principles herein avowed, refused to bear arms in the Confederate service, as we hereby do in that of the United States ; and that a law was passed by the Confederate Congress recognising their refusal as lawful and right. Being, therefore, desirous of placing themselves clearly upon record as opposed to war by whomsoever waged ; your petitioners firmly protest against any enactment that forces them into antagonistic relation with their faith and conviction of duties to God, and their fellow-men, and ask of the Honourable the American Congress, respect to the *Divine injunction which says "Touch not Mine anointed ones, and do My prophets no harm."*

And, as in duty bound, they pray to the God of Heaven, through Jesus Christ their elder brother and High Priest, that you may be directed to such an issue in their behalf as will be approved by Him.

## CHAPTER XXX.

AFTER THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR—LETTER FROM  
DR. THOMAS.

AT the close of the American Civil War, which had nearly involved the brethren in that country in the toils of compulsory military service against which they had petitioned in the document published in the last chapter, Dr. Thomas visited the South, and, on his return, wrote me an account of his journey, under date June 28th, 1865. I cannot better occupy this chapter than by transcribing the following extracts from his interesting narrative :—

"I arrived in Richmond on Saturday, May 27th, and next day spoke to a few who happened to meet in the Universalist House. I sent no previous notice of my visit, so that I came upon them quite unexpectedly. Ten righteous would have saved Sodom, but Sodom fell, and Richmond fell ; but is this proof that there were not ten righteous in Richmond ? I cannot say. This, however, may safely be affirmed, namely, that, taking the gospel of the kingdom of God as the rule or measure of the community, there are not many over ten righteous in Richmond ; they certainly fall far short of the number originally suggested by Abraham, as the few brethren in the city are free to confess.

"Richmond, in the business part of it, is a scene of desolation. Viewed from the capital square is an open space of about eleven acres, filled with burnt bricks and tottering walls and chimneys. There is but little business doing ; for, though many goods have been brought in from the North, the people have no money to buy.

"The citizens of Richmond say that the Federals have behaved very well since they entered the city. They have been a protection to them against the negroes, whom they compel to behave orderly on pain of whipping or death. This of course the negroes do not like ; but they have to submit, for military law is the law of



bowelless and inexorable brute force, which it is vain for unarmed weakness to resist. It is well that the non-combatants of the South can at length find some protection from the Federals; for hitherto they have oppressed them cruelly. An officer of the Federal army declared that the army of the United States was 'an army of thieves'; and one of the New York regiments, to which one who was once in fellowship with the ecclesia here belongs, is styled, as he testifies, by its own men, 'The New York Thieves.' The accounts I heard from citizens in Richmond and Petersburg, and in Widdie, Lunenburg, King William, Goochland, and Louisa counties, all corroborate the thievishness both of officers and men. Men in Federal uniform, rare exceptions to the general rule, have said they did not think human nature was capable of such villainy until they witnessed it in the Union army. This is the saying of the men who are ignorant or infidel of the word which testifies that 'in the flesh dwells no good thing.' It is not necessary to go into the sectarian army of the Union to learn this.

"Lust is the devil, and flesh the devil-nature; and when the truth has found no lodgment in a creature there is nothing in it to control its diabolism. Hence an army of such sectarian creatures, whose 'piety' is the mere blind impulse of excited feeling, is an army of devils. No wonder one of its officials should style it 'an army of thieves.' Only think of thousands of such lawless marauders being let loose against non-combatant old men, women, and children, as was the fact, and you can imagine results without exaggeration. The fiends spared nothing they could carry off; and what they could not remove, they wantonly destroyed. The only safety for meat, corn, flour, pickles, preserves, honey, watches, jewellery, raiment, money, horses, mules, cattle, hogs, sheep, and so forth, was to hide them.

"In Petersburg, I stayed a night with Captain Silvanus Johnson, who has lost about 700,000 dollars by the collapse of the Confederate Government. On the entry of the Federals into the city, the mob broke

into his mills, and stole all the flour and tobacco stored there. Mr. Johnson is very friendly to our brethren, and no little interested in the truth. He re-published copious extracts from *Elpis Israel*, at a cost of 400 dollars, and sent copies to the clergy, whom he invited to refute the doctrine taught, if they could. But from those gentlemen he could elicit no response. He requested me to address his family, which he had assembled, on the first principles of the doctrine of Christ. There were eleven, including the Federal officer who boards with him. I spoke to them about two-hours-and-a-half on man's condition by nature, as a material and moral being; of the means appointed for his cure; of his destiny; of sacrifice in general; of the sacrifice of Jesus in particular; of faith, repentance, immersion, and so forth. The teaching was sown in the ears of seemingly attentive listeners, but whether any of it will settle into their hearts and spring up thence to eternal life, is beyond my ability to say. The Federal, who is an Episcopalian, said he had been much edified, and that it was all new doctrine to him. He asked several questions for explanation, which I endeavoured to answer. At the conclusion of our sitting, he remarked that such a social exhibition of Bible teaching, he thought, would do more good than many years of such preaching as usually sounded from the pulpits. Such was his opinion, which seemed to be endorsed by all the rest.

"In the afternoon, my friend Silvanus, having obtained the loan of this Federal officer's horse and buggy, drove me out some 16 miles to brother Joel M. Ragsdale's. Brother R. is cultivating one of Mr. Johnson's plantations. I never travelled a worse road than this same 'Cox Road.' Over fifty miles out from Petersburg, the distance I travelled upon it with Captain Johnson and afterwards with brother Ragsdale, desolation reigns. The wagon trains of the armies have made it in places almost impassable. The fences being all destroyed, the road and field are blended into a common wilderness. Very many of the homesteads are burned, and the chimney stacks only remain to indicate

their former position. Brother R. and J. were twelve hours in going forty miles. Travel of this kind (at three miles an hour) in an open vehicle and in the hot sun, is very fatiguing; and with so many unburied dead horses and mules, as lie along the road, very sickening. I was seized with vomiting and diarrhoea the second day after leaving Petersburg, which I could attribute to no other cause than the foul smell arising from putrefying animal matter. I fear there will be much sickness among the people this autumn from this cause. The dead are but superficially buried, so that much of their effluvia must exhale through the ground.

"We arrived at brother Ragsdale's at sunset. He received us with a southern welcome, and treated us with all the hospitality that could be shown by one whom the Federal marauders had so thoroughly cleaned out as not to leave him 'enough to feed a mouse.' He was receiving rations from the military authorities in Petersburg; and Captain Johnson, taking thought of his necessities, and that we might be as little burdensome as possible, took with us some additional supplies from his own stores. The Captain returned next day, and I remained.

"At midnight brother R.'s son arrived from the North. He had sojourned with me some three months in the previous winter, and had been immersed in New York City. He was now re-united to his family, and prepared for a common effort to repair their fortunes, broken and prostrated by the troubles of the times. Five hours after his arrival brother R. and myself started for Lunenburg county. We came to a halt at sunset at brother Maddux's. We were kindly and cordially welcomed here, as indeed in every place visited, and were glad to find that though the robbers had been here, they had not done as much damage as elsewhere.

"On Sunday I spoke about three hours to an overflowing house at Good Hope, about eight miles from brother M.'s, and some thirty miles from the North Carolina line. My visit to the neighbourhood was only

known a few hours before I arrived. I found some of the brethren absent. This ought to be a rare thing, because the only proper place for the faithful is around the Lord's table on the first day of the week. But all who pass for saints *pro tempore* are not faithful, and, therefore, do not act faithfully. Some day the Lord's angel will come upon them unexpectedly, as I did, and find them missing, when it will be no excuse that they were at home and engaged in entertaining some newly-hatched and newly-fledged acquaintances of the world. 'Cry aloud, spare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression and the house of Jacob their sins.' In the spirit of this testimony I addressed them, as I did in all the places I visited. They recognised the truth of what was said, and will, I trust, be stirred up to an earnest preparation to meet the Lord, whose coming must assuredly be very near.

"The people in this county have suffered, but not so severely as in other places. I heard of surplus meat and corn in the hands of some. We stayed near the meeting-house with brother Smithson. His family is in deep affliction. He is himself over three-score years and ten, and enfeebled by disease. His two sons and son-in-law were forced into the Confederate army and made prisoners. One of them died in prison; the other son was released, and died on his way home at Captain Johnson's in Petersburg; the son-in-law also died. Thus brother Smithson has left upon his hands his son's wife with eight children, his own daughter with two, beside his own wife and two single daughters. He has land and crops growing, but, in the present anarchy of labour, no reliable aid to work and gather them. What a condition is this to be in! Surely there are states in this life worse than poverty. On the morrow we departed, brother Ragsdale for home, and I for Petersburg, where I arrived by train in the evening. And such railroading I had never experienced in America, where the railroad system is far superior to the British. The car I rode in was as 'demoralised' as its inmates in uniform by whom it was chiefly occupied. It had once

been a respectable passenger car, with plush-cushioned seats with backs to lean against, but it had fallen from this estate to the low level of a covered pen, such as Paddy is crowded into when returning from English harvest fields to his miserable sty, in Emerald Erin, the first flower of the earth, the bright gem of the sea, with this difference, however, that 'the finest pisantry of earth,' stand upon their broganed pillars, while in 'the United States Military R.R. Cars,' we sit on hemlock boards fastened on uprights to the floor, defiled with tobacco-spit (technically styled 'juice,' and 'ambier') and other abominations. Had I known before what sort of place and company I was to be imprisoned in for four or five hours, I should certainly have contrived some other way to get to Petersburg than by the South Side Railroad, so renowned in the history of the war. After this exceedingly unpleasant travel, I arrived at Captain Johnson's in the evening, and stayed under the shadow of his hospitality until three o'clock the next day.

"It was expected from Federal antecedents that when Grant's fellows got into Petersburg, they would steal everything they could lay their hands on. To prevent this wholesale appropriation, many sent their valuables to other places. A lady living opposite to Captain Johnson's, sent her plate to the Virginia bank in Richmond. If she had kept it at home it would have been safe; but in the bank vault it was destroyed by the Richmond conflagration. Captain Johnson was not more fortunate. He collected the gold watches and jewellery of his family, and sent them by his son-in-law to the care of a professor of a female institute in Farmville, where one of his daughters was at school. The professor says he hid them, with 2,500 dols. in gold and silver also committed to his care by his brother-in-law, between the floor and ceiling of his house. The professoress also compelled Miss Johnson to give up her gold watch for safe keeping. The Federals entered Farmville, but did not steal the treasure hidden by the professor; nevertheless, the watches, jewellery and coin all took to themselves

wings and flew away from under the carpet, and between the ceiling and the floor.

"Thus all my friend's prudence was circumvented; and by his losses a new admonition was afforded not to set the affections upon things below, but on things above; that when Christ, who is the life of his people shall appear, we also may appear with him in glory. I reminded him the events of the past four year proved to this generation the vanity of riches; and that when a day of judgment comes they are only an embarrassment. Men were not sent into life to labour for riches as the end of their being, but to use the world without abusing it, for all necessary purposes, while proving their moral fitness for a higher state of existence.

"Having returned to Richmond, I departed the day after for King William County. I spoke to the brethren and the public, on three successive days, on the moral aspects of this 'day of the Lord' upon the United States; the righteousness of the visitation, and the necessity of individual and national repentance, lest a worse condition of things come upon them. Jehovah punished His own people, Israel, with terrible evils because they turned not from their iniquities, nor devoted themselves to understand the truth (Dan. 9:13). How then is it to be expected that He will spare Gentiles 'who are not His people,' and guilty of the same crimes? Nay; but if these repent not they must all likewise perish. What is 'the Church' in America but a Body-Corporate of Blasphemy, or in Apocalyptic phrase, 'a Name of Blasphemy.' It is ignorant of the truth and a blasphemer of the Word, which has no more influence upon its creed and practice than upon Indians; so that the sentence falls upon it in full—'whoso despiseth the Word shall be destroyed.' This is the fate awaiting the thing called 'Church' in America, fruit which is solely of the flesh in all its abominations. But the ecclesia is a different institution to the thing called the 'Church' in the vernacular of the multitude. 'The Church' is a community of ungodly blasphemers—the world churchified, whose spirituals are 'the spirituals

of the wickedness in the heavenlies,' who speak the things the world approves. Not so the 'ecclesia.' This is a people called out by the gospel of the kingdom—called out of the world-church, a people who have accepted the invitation to God's kingdom and glory, and are the pillars and support of the truth. 'The ecclesia' is the light of the world and the salt of the earth; but if the light become dark, and the salt insipid, putrefaction reigns, and judgment must follow. The brethren in King William are responsible for the truth there, for they have believed and accepted it. It was for them to say whether they had been faithful to their trust, not for me. God had visited them and judged them, and reduced them from affluence to comparative poverty. Would they not turn over a new leaf, and for the future live less for themselves and more unselfishly for the truth, and for the widows and orphans and needy of the household of faith? On leaving them they confessed their shortcomings with tears. They thanked me for the honour of my visit, and that I had thought so much of them as to come so long a journey for their especial benefit. They acknowledged the truth and justice of all I had said; and sent by me some money, bacon, fish and butter to a needy family of two adult sisters and their children in Richmond, with a promise of more. God's way of retributing men and nations, in the present state even, is remarkably effective. He empties the rich, and makes the poor poorer. This is the nature of the present situation here. Men's eyes stood out with fatness, and their hearts swelled with pride. But all this is changed now. Yet will not the people turn from their iniquities, and seek to understand the truth. The words of Isaiah concerning Judah and Jerusalem, though spoken exclusively with reference to them, are highly descriptive of the situation of the South. Ah, sinful (American) nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, offspring that are corrupters. They have turned their backs upon Jehovah, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger, they are apostate. Why should ye be stricken

any more? Ye will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in the body politic; but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores; they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment. Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire; your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate as overthrown by foreigners. . . . Except he who shall be hosts (Yahweh T'zvaoth) had left a very small remnant (the ecclesia), we should have been as Sodom, and like unto Gomorrah.

"From King William, I returned to Richmond, where I radiated to Louisa County. I met several brethren and friends here, from the surrounding country, at the meeting-house, called the Octagon. A large congregation assembled here to hear what I had to say about the times; for the idea has taken possession of many, though not believers, that I can tell them more upon the subject than the preachers in general; well, if I could not, I would never open my mouth again; for I should be like them, a dumb dog that could not bark. I spoke there two days. On the first for three hours; and on the second for four. I conclude that they must have been interested in the indictment found against them; as on the second day they sat so long on the hard benches without restlessness, and, after I had finished, sat an hour longer to hear brother Albert Anderson, whose name you may have seen in the *Herald*. Well, what would have been the use of me going four hundred miles to preach a sermon of the fashionable length of fifteen or twenty minutes? No; I had their ears; and as I might never have a chance of speaking to them again, I was determined to hold on to them as long as I saw them attentive, and my own strength was not expended in expounding to them the principles on which God governed the world; and the premises, from which there is good reason to conclude, that the coming of the Ancient of Days must be exceedingly near."

## CHAPTER XXXI.

## "THE ATHENÆUM."

MY appointment at the Bankruptcy Court as official shorthand writer got reported in some quarters in the wrong way. It was said that I had become a bankrupt. Some good people in the South of England, for whom I had consented to lecture, wrote in distress to the effect that they did not believe in the morality of bankruptcy, and that if my affairs were "in court," they must cancel the proposed arrangement. When I explained the real state of the case, they were amused, and increased the cordiality of their invitation. Thus it always is with a false report: it may be the arrow of malice, but in course of time it falls point-blunted to the ground. The armour of righteousness, in the shape of a state of facts that will bear investigation, opposes a plate of steel to its entrance, "quenching the fiery darts of the wicked." But woe to the man of whom an evil report is true. He becomes as chary as a hunted hare, and flies before the fatal arrow.

Our meetings in Ann Street schoolroom becoming inconveniently crowded, we began to look round for another place. With increasing numbers, we began to feel able to face a larger responsibility in the way of rent. Our enquiries resulted in the discovery of the Athenæum Hall, situate in the very heart of Birmingham, viz., at the top of Temple Street, in Temple Row. It had been built for an Art Gallery, and had the words "Permanent Art Gallery" cut in large letters outside in stone; but the gallery had been a failure and the place was now empty—not only empty of a tenant, but empty of seats or furnishings of any kind, and in a very dirty state. It was being used as a temporary show place for a new toy rocking horse by a Quaker named Mr. Seed, whose affairs proved very seedy indeed. We had to apply to this Mr. Seed about the Sunday tenancy. He agreed to let us have it for £40 a year, but would do nothing to it. The

black walls he would leave standing in their grime; and the floor he would leave naked and bare as we saw it. We could do what we liked with it, but he would do nothing to help. The brethren decided they could not look at the place on these terms. The rent would be of itself about as much as they could manage. To go to the expense of whitewashing and painting it, and providing seats besides, was quite out of the question. So the matter ended for the moment. But I considered the matter, and decided to venture on taking the cleaning and furnishing part of the burden on myself, with the probability of others voluntarily joining me afterwards. I then submitted the matter afresh to the brethren: would they take the hall at the rental of £40 if the cleaning and furnishing were found?

They hesitated, but finally consented. So we set to work and got the place cleaned, painted and an array of benches put in, capable of seating about three hundred people. The place looked neat and bright when the workmen walked out. It took two or three weeks to set the place in order. We arranged to enter on the 19th of August, 1866: but lo, we were caught in a snare before the happy day arrived. We learnt that Mr. Seed was in the hands of his creditors, and the landlord from whom Mr. Seed held the premises would seize our things for his arrears of rent, if we did not at once remove them. There was nothing for it but to take our reverse in the pleasantest manner possible, and at all events to get our little bits of furniture out of the clutches of the wolf. If I remember rightly, we got the news on a Saturday night or Sunday morning, a week or so before the opening day. At all events, we set to work on a Sunday morning and removed all our things. Where we removed them to, I do not now remember. And we felt in a somewhat foolish position, with such a quantity of stuff on our hands and no place to put them in. Some of our slower brethren, who had been afraid to take the hall, were not slow to speak lugubriously now.

However, the storm soon blew over. The landlord of the place, learning the situation, waited on me and

offered to hand over the whole place to me for £30 more than we had agreed to give for a Sunday and one week day occupation—pointing out to me that in such a central position, the hall would easily let for casual purposes, and that I might easily make something beyond the rent. After considering his proposal and perceiving that I would be able to have an office in the hall, for which I was already paying £25 at 25, Waterloo Street, I decided to take the hall on the terms offered, and thus, through the force of circumstances, I found myself in the position of a lessee of a public hall.

The thing worked advantageously in various ways. We were able to introduce an immersion bath, and so get rid of the inconvenience of having to repair to the upper room of a barber's shop in Summer Lane every time a friend desired to obey the truth. Then having command of the corner downstairs (for the hall stood at the corner of two thoroughfares), I was able to put up permanent notice boards which kept the truth's existence and operations steadily before the community. Then, we were able to have the hall any time and as often as we liked for the purposes of the truth, which led to our having a week-night meeting, a singing practice meeting, tea meetings, etc. The public lets were not numerous. Still, between one thing and another, I was able to meet all expenses and to furnish first the office and then the hall with various cupboards required for the increasing stock of books.

Our entrance upon the hall coincided with the culmination of a slowly-developing crisis in the affairs of the truth—arising out of what came to be known as Dowieism—from the name of the leading man, whom it became necessary to resist. Dr. Thomas had from time to time warned us against the influence, from which we had finally to break away. In 1865, he wrote:—

“They (these men) acknowledge so much of the truth as to give currency to the thinking of their unenlightened brains with the ignorant and weak. What they acknowledge is the gilding of the base metal of their currency; from which the genuine ring of fine gold can-

not be struck out. For over thirty years I have been engaged in ferreting out the truth to the obedience of which I was brought by ‘the testimony of God’ some fifteen years ago. In those days, the current periodicals were as destitute of allusion to the Gospel of the Kingdom and the Name, as though such things had not been revealed in the world. Now, however, the phrases are in the mouths and articles of a multitude of talkers and scribblers. This shows that the subject commands attention; and in this I rejoice. But when I perceive that these ‘heavenly things’ are made only a vehicle for ‘earthly things’ of the most ‘sensual and demoniac’ description, I am both chagrined and mortified. Had I the authority and power, I would very soon suppress, without one warning, much less three, such twaddling sheets as *The Messenger*, with you; and *The Banner*, *Harbinger*, *World's Crisis*, *Voice of the West*, etc., with us. The public head is crazed enough with nonsense without putting into it more than is already there. If their publishers understood the truth and were loyal to it, they would pursue a different course. They need to be taught the first principles of the oracles of God—to learn instead of to teach, for which they have neither the knowledge, faith, nor aptitude. But I have neither the authority nor the power, and therefore the evil which is rampant will have to grow till the Lord's apocalypse, ‘who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall every man have praise of God’—every man, of course, who has earned it by faithfulness in the truth.”

Again, he wrote on February 9th, 1865:—“I am no man's personal enemy, I have neither time nor inclination to trouble myself about persons or their affairs. I have enough to do in this department to take care of my own personalia, without interfering in other people's. But when they approach me on the premises of the truth, then they are either my friends or my foes, and I am their's. I am their friend for the truth's sake, or I am their foe for the truth's sake. I would rather be the



friend than the foe of any one, upon any ground. This is the bent of my fleshly nature: and if men will not be friendly, I do not feel resentful, but my disposition is to give them a wide berth or margin, because the world is wide; and if they are disposed to travel north, I will travel due south; or if they would go west, I will go due east; and think of them and their's no more. This is the natural man. But if they pretend to be the friends of the truth, and they are neither intelligent in, nor faithful to, what I believe to be the truth, and will not consent to be instructed, then I have a duty to perform as one of Christ's brethren, in obedience to apostolic injunction, and that is 'to contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints,' and in so doing, which is well-doing, 'to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, that, their mouths being stopped, they may no longer subvert whole houses, and lead captive silly people laden with sins'. In the performance of the duty common to all the faithful, I do not wait to be attacked. If no one will go with me to the assault, I go alone, with the determination to scatter them, or be demolished in the attempt; in which, however, I do not expect to succeed, because 'the saints are prevailed against till the Ancient of Days comes.' Why then labour in expected failure? To obey the injunction, and to prove my own faith. In this spiritual warfare whose weapons are neither lead nor steel, but more effective than either for putting to flight the aliens, there are neither truce, armistice, neutrality, nor peace. He that is not with us is against us; and he that gathereth not with us scattereth abroad.

"I, for one, know no one in this warfare as a brother and friend who is neutral or not gathering. A man who is neutral stands by with arms folded and sees the enemy crushing me to death. He believes in the cause I am fighting for, but he calmly views my destruction without any sign of help. Is such a man my friend and brother? Is he not rather a sympathiser with the enemy? If he helped me, we might prove too strong for the foe; the enemy knowing this, cannot look upon neutrals in any other light than his friends. And this is

just where Christ puts all neutrals in the good fight of faith.

"But, if this be the position of neutrals, what shall be said of those who either oppose or nullify what we believe to be the truth? Who not only do so, but seek to destroy the influence of those who have, while they were mere heathens, proved themselves through evil and through good report, and when the truth had few to say a good word for it, faithful advocates of it—what shall be said of them? They may virtually acquiesce in the theory of the truth, but can we call them friends and brethren? Are they Christ's brethren? How can they be, seeing Christ is the truth? If they were Christ's brethren, they would love the zealous and disinterested advocates of the truth, and would be careful to do nothing that would embarrass them. Shall I call such enemies of Christ my friends and brethren? I tell you, nay; I will have none such, if I know it. They are my enemies, and it is my duty to make war upon them. If I belong to the Spirit's witnessing prophets clothed in sackcloth, and any man will to injure me in my witnessing, it is my duty to devour him with the fire of my mouth—to torment him with my testimony. He may not feel very pleasant while under this fire; if he get wounded, it is his own fault; he should keep out of the way; but if he persist in storming our works then 'he must in this manner be killed.'

"I have no sympathy with a yea-and-nay profession and advocacy of the truth. It does no good to the professor, to those who are associated with him, nor to those dwelling in outer darkness. 'The whole world lieth in the Evil One'—in sin, and the only exceptions to this are the untraditionised believers of the truth we believe and teach, and have obeyed, and are walking as little children therein. If we are these Scriptural exceptions, we have nothing to do but keep clear of this evil world, and to testify against all the traditions it would substitute for the truth, or by which it may seek to nullify it. The greatest and most dangerous enemies to Christ are those who pretend to be his friends, but are

not faithful to his doctrine ; and they are unfaithful who, from any motives of personal interest, would weaken the point of the doctrine, or soften it for the gratification of their natural feelings, or for fear of hurting the feelings of the enemy, and so affecting their popularity with him. I trust that this is not the case with any of our friends in Calton Convening Rooms. They and all such in Britain have a great and important work before them in this country. It is to bring people to the understanding of the ancient apostolic faith doctrine, and to the obedience of faith, in the form inculcated by them upon all believers. If our friends faithfully and intelligently execute this mission, they will be placed in opposition to all the world—they will find themselves in the position of the Spirit's witnessing prophets, standing in the court of the Gentiles, and bearing testimony against "the God of the earth," with all the power, learning, and influence of the Great Harlot, her State daughters, and dissenting abominations arrayed against them ; and besides all this, the heartlessness and cowardice and treachery of professed neutrals and friends. To take up such a position, and to maintain it without surrender, requires knowledge and faith working by love of what is known. Hence, the necessity of meditation upon the word. This will develop faith, and the more an honest-hearted man understands of the word untraditionised by what is falsely called science, the more enlarged and the stronger will his faith become ; and the more valiant will he be for the truth, and the more efficient for the work before him as a ' witness,' a ' prophet,' a ' lightstand,' and an ' olive tree,' ' before the Deity of the earth.'

" You can do nothing for the truth in the Modern Athens that will be recognised by the King at his appearing, if you follow your old ways when you used, as brother Steel says, ' to discuss everything and settle nothing,' and call it exhortation and teaching. Such is mere twaddle, and will never make you appear before the enemy, the great Babylon around you, ' fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.' You will only be terrible to your friends. ' Discussing

everything and settling nothing' is a weakness that will never grow into strength. No good can possibly come out of it ; and will cause no one to wax valiant in the fight, or ' to turn to flight the armies of the aliens.' Some are always learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Such may unprofitably occupy time, but they can edify no one. All their ' discussions ' and ' investigations ' amount to nothing. The light of truth must shine clearly in a man's head, before he can speak critically or accurately upon ' the deep things of the spirit ' ; and if you undertake to implant these in the brains of modern Athenians, who, like their brethren of old time, are exceedingly fond of gossip, you must be bright and lucid in your irradiations, that you may shine away the darkness of the subtleties, and the vagaries of the inner-consciousness, with which the cup of the Old Harlot has crazed and intoxicated them. And this you will find to be, if you have not already done so, no easy work to do. The traditions radiating infinitely and at all angles form almost an impenetrable cloud—a cloud which befoes everything and renders it impervious to ' the simplicity that is in Christ.' But shall we despair ? By no means. The work before us at present is not to demolish Anti-Christ, and the tradition with which he is clothed, as with a black and threatening cloud. This is beyond our power, as it is extra the mission of the saints against whom he has prevailed almost ' forty and two months.' His demolition is their work, when joined therein by the Ancient of Days. This is their patience and faith (Rev. 13 : 10 ; 14 : 12). The real saints are waiting for this. In the meantime they hold the position of the witnesses for Jesus, and it is required in witnesses who are stewards of the testimony that they be faithful after the example of Christ and Antipas (Rev. 1 : 5 ; 3 : 14 ; 2 : 13). At present they have to show the truth in every way that will make the truth shine ; that it may stand out in the foreground of the picture so distinctly from all surroundings that observers at a glance may distinguish it in all its outlines without any possibility of confounding it with the dark cloud of the things beyond.



This is the work for us to do, that men seeing the photograph of Christ *written* upon their minds *by his testimony*, which is light, may confess that it is a true, faithful, and beautiful picture, and embracing it with affectionate hearts may so put it into their bosom and become married or rather betrothed, unto the Lord. In this way an enlightened and affectionate and valiant people will be prepared for him, who will not only be watching for him, but with garments kept, and lamps well trimmed with the golden oil of the good olive tree, be ready to enter in on the closing of the door against all the world."

## CHAPTER XXXII.

## BREAK WITH "DOWIEISM."

IT was a real trouble of mind to me to have to break with the professors of the truth in Edinburgh. A number of circumstances had combined to give them a large place in my affections. It was in connection with them that I had made my first acquaintance with active life; and association in such a case is always powerful. It was from their midst that I obtained the best of God's mortal gifts to man—an excellent wife. Among them I got my first lessons in ecclesial and literary work. Themselves, one and all, I esteemed and loved as a company of excellent people. The very city, with historical associations that fascinated youthful rawness, and with a topography and architecture that charmed youthful eyes unaccustomed to beauty, and with learned men and institutions of European reputation that invested the place with a lustre of glory in the view of one who had just broken the shell of aboriginal darkness, exerted a powerful spell.

It was no weak influence that broke through all these attractions; and the process was a painful one, and protracted. The chief disintegrator lay in the animus shown towards Dr. Thomas, whom I venerated with an ardour that time has not diminished; and next, in the little interest taken in the truth which he had been instrumental in recovering from sectarian darkness, and which formed the ground, and the sole ground, of my enthusiastic attachment: and next in the various oppositions to both points of truth advocated by him, and to a hearty policy in such part of the truth as they admitted. Slowly, these influences produced an alienation which grew to an unbridgeable gap, when a debate was published which they had among themselves on the question of the doctrine of immortality as affecting the question of fellowship.

This question arose from the circumstance of one of their number advocating the doctrine of eternal torments: some objected to his continuance in fellowship, while others advocated his retention. A series of meetings was held to consider the whole question of the bearing of the doctrine of natural immortality on the profession of the truth. As showing the need for deliberation and decision in the case, a letter was read from one of their fellowship in another town (one David Watson, of Dundee), in which the writer said, "I had never heard, or had paid no attention to the fact that men do not possess immortal souls until I had been a considerable time in the church, and now I think that I have been engaged either more or less at the immersion of every one in Dundee since I cast in my lot amongst them, and *never has their opinion been asked on this subject. . . . We allow great liberty of conscience in such matters, which are not essentials.*"

The discussion lasted three Sundays, and ended in a resolution which did not really touch the issue in dispute, and which even in its apparent meaning was inconsistent with the sentiments uttered by the leading members of the meeting during the progress of the debate. The whole debate was of the most uncertain and foggy character. Mr. George Dowie refused to say whether he would receive into fellowship persons who at the time of their immersion believed in the immortality of the soul and eternal torments. He refused to admit that the holding of the immortality of the soul was inconsistent with the holding of the faith of Christ. At a subsequent interview with me he said, "The difference between you and me is this; you believe the dead are annihilated and require to be made over again, and I do not. I don't believe in re-creation." He further said he believed in the resurrection of all heathens, Hottentots, Esquimaux, and he did not deny that his belief was that the devil was a supernatural being in heaven.

It was impossible to ignore a state of sentiment like this in men claiming our fellowship and standing before the brotherhood in a representative character, in a yearly

fraternal gathering, through the publication of a monthly magazine, the *Messenger of the Churches*. I therefore brought the question before the Birmingham ecclesia, which passed the following resolution:—

"That the ecclesia, having heard read to them, and having considered the report of a discussion on the bearing of the immortality of the soul on the one faith, which took place on Sunday, April 8th; Sunday, April 15th; and Sunday, May 6th (1866), among those in Edinburgh, styling themselves 'Baptised believers in the Kingdom of God,' and meeting in Union Hall, 98, Southbridge, the ecclesia considers it their duty, as witnesses of the truth, to disavow, and does hereby disavow and refuse all connection with the said so-called 'Baptised believers in the Kingdom of God.'; and requests the Secretary to write to George Dowie, the Secretary of the community in question, apprising him for the information of himself and the said community of this their solemn decision."

This was the first of a series of cataclysms in the little world of the truth which caused me more distress of mind towards God and man than would be believed by any but the closest intimates. The distress arose from the struggle between the fear of doing wrong to man and the fear of acting unfaithfully by the truth. The recovery of the truth in an age of universal worldliness and superstition was an event of such unutterable consequence, in my estimation, and the having been allowed to become acquainted with it after the horrors of sectarian theology, was a privilege of such incomputable magnitude, to my judgment, that the duty of resisting the corruption and slack handling of it seemed self-evident. Yet those precepts of Christ that prescribe care as to stumbling blocks in the path of the little ones believing in him, and that enjoin abstention from judgment and condemnation of others lest we ourselves be judged, exercised a deterrent effect, which almost paralysed decision.

At last, the manifest opposition to Bible truth, and the counsels of elders, prevailed over all scruples, and led me to see that the only path of light and safety was to

disregard mere persons, to "know no man after the flesh," and to make the truth of God the rule of friendship and communion. The course of events has since justified the soundness of this policy. Our Dowieite friends have drifted into a state of lifelessness and uncertainty, hardly distinguishable from the absolute ignorance and unbelief of the sectarian bodies around them, while the truth, delivered from their suffocating embraces, has gone on in an unfettered course, generating a class of men and women in whom enlightenment, decision and fervour combine to identify them with the saintship of the first century.

Afterwards, the subjects of the devil and of the judgment came into prominent controversy. The friends we had left contended, some of them for the existence of a personal supernatural devil of some kind, and others denied that the Lord would dispense life or death to his people in judgment at his coming, maintaining that all of them would come forth from the grave immortal and enter into life eternal, and that the only question to be settled between the Lord and them would be the question of their rank and position in the kingdom. A strong issue was also taken on the subject of requiring the rejection of error as a condition of fellowship. Our Dowieite friends thought it sufficient that truth in its positive elements should be admitted.

Our contention against them was expressed in the following terms at the time :—

"At first sight, it might appear superfluous, and even unwarrantable, to set forth points of non-belief as a basis of faith, but a moment's reflection will dissipate this impression, and reveal the negative side of faith to be of equal value with the positive.

"Every affirmative proposition has a converse. Every yes has a no ; and if a man is not prepared to accept that 'no' it shows his 'yes' is not worth much. For instance, if a man profess to believe in the God of Israel, he is bound to be able to say that he does not believe in the gods of the heathen. If he were to be timorous about affirming the latter, would it not show

that his belief in the God of Israel was no belief in the real sense, but merely a fragment of ancient polytheism, which recognised different gods for different nations ? Is it not part of a true profession of faith in Jehovah to be able to say boldly that we do not believe in any of the deities of heathen imagination ? Would any even 'Christian' community recognise the faith of a man who hesitated to commit himself to this negative ? Does not the acceptance of any truth involve the repudiation of everything opposite to it ? and would not hesitancy to repudiate the opposites, show uncertainty and indecision with regard to the positives ? There is but one rational answer to these questions, and that answer falls in with Paul's exhortation, that in maintaining the truth we must "refuse" profane and old wives' fables.

"Now, in the present day, there are many profane and old wives' fables abroad in the earth in the name of the gospel. Paul predicted that such would be the case—that the time would come when men professing the name of Christ would turn away their ears from the truth and be turned aside unto fables (2 Tim. 4 : 3, 4). Now, is it not of the first importance that these fables should be repudiated ? Can anyone hold the truth without rejecting them ? Is it not a part of a true profession of faith in our time to reject the traditions that make the Word of God of none effect ? Common sense will supply the answer.

"There is a negative as well as a positive side to the faith in our day, for the simple reason that there is a spurious faith to be destroyed before the true faith can enter the mind. In the Apostles' days the work was more simple. There was no counterfeit Christianity to obstruct the operation of the truth. The Apostles had only to propound their doctrines constructively. There was no necessity to go out of the way and deal with the dogmas of Paganism. Paganism was Paganism, and the gospel was the gospel. They did not stand on the same ground. There was no competition between them. If Christ was received, Paganism was rejected as a matter of course. But it is a different thing now. We have to deal with

Paganism in the garb of Christianity. We have to deal with another gospel preached in the name of Christ and his Apostles, and it therefore forms one of the first duties of intelligent and faithful testimony to protest against and expose the imposture.

"One of the first acts of a valid profession of the truth is to repudiate 'the profane and old wives' fables' which abound in the disguise of truth. In fact, in times like these the repudiation of false doctrine is almost a criterion of the reception of the truth. If a man shrink from the rejection of the fictions of so-called Christendom, it is a sure sign that his apprehension of the verities of the gospel is very weak, if it is not altogether *non est*. Positive belief (that is full assurance of faith) on one side necessitates and produces positive dis-belief on the other. A man heartily believing the truth will heartily reject error; and if he does not heartily do the latter it is proof that he is incapable of heartily doing the former. . ."

On another point :

"If any professing the truth are not prepared to contend earnestly for the uncorrupted faith as *the seed of eternal life*, they are unfaithful to the truth they profess. Nay, more, they are traitors to it. They wound it in its tenderest part; they rob it of its principal glory; they deny its chief testimony of itself, viz., that without it a man cannot be saved. They insult it by saying in effect, 'Yes, these things are true, but they are of no particular consequence; a man may be saved without them.' It is here that Dowieism is most hateful. It makes a profession of the truth, but covertly gives it the lie. It kisses it with the mouth, and with the hand stabs it to death. In words it protests friendship and agreement, but in actual working it makes greater havoc than the adversary. . . .

"Dowieism says it 'most surely believes' that man is absolutely mortal, and that this is 'embraced in the gospel.' If this is a genuine profession, of course it 'most surely believes' that the immortality of the soul is a lie, and upsets a part of the gospel. If so, why does it 'hesitate to accept the conclusion' that a man must

reject the immortality of the soul before he can accept the truth? (See James Cameron's speech, *Ambassador* for December, 1866, p. 269), and why does it lay down a 'kind of postulate' with the object of discountenancing all condemnation of the immortality of the soul in the proclamation of the truth? (*G. Dowie* on p. 265 ditto). If this statement of faith means what it says, why did its framers refuse to append a declaration to the effect that it was necessary to reject the immortality of the soul before the truth of the matter could be received?

"When the 'statement' was submitted to the Dowieites for adoption, W. Norrie proposed the addition of a clause affirming that it involved a repudiation of the doctrine of natural immortality, AND THEY REFUSED TO ADD SUCH A DECLARATION, *although the very object of the statement being drawn up was to rebut the accusations in circulation as to the unfaithfulness of the Dowieites on this point.*

"Dowieism professes to recognise some merit in 'most surely believing' in the 'absolute mortality of man!' If so, what objections can it have to saying to people who most surely believe the contrary, that they are believing a lie, which they must reject before they can believe the truth? Why 'decline to answer' the plain question, whether a person believing the immortality of the soul can hold the faith which is unto salvation? (See *G. Dowie's* statements, p. 258, December *Ambassador*). Can a man believe in the immortality of the soul and believe in the 'absolute mortality of man'? Of course not. Then can a man believe in the immortality of the soul and believe the truth? Dowieism is not sure, and declines to answer. Does this not show that Dowieism's profession of belief in the 'absolute mortality' of man is not a profession of the one faith at all, but a mere statement of abstract conviction to which it attaches no importance whatever? The mortality of man is a part of the truth or not. If it is a part of the truth which Dowieism professes to believe, it must be upheld without compromise. Dowieism must not only believe in the mortality of man; it must be able to say,

that no man believing in the immortality of man can believe the truth. Then it will cease, on this particular question, to be Dowieism, and put on a new and more worthy name, and take its stand side by side with the truth, in its uncompromising warfare against the lies and fables everywhere abounding in the outward garb and profession of the gospel.

"Such a change would gladden the hearts of men and angels, and give a new and a joyous impetus in the labours which are here and there in weakness, but in love, progressing against the strongholds of Satan. Till then Dowieism must stand off, and leave the King's friends alone, and bring not upon itself a severer condemnation by obstructing the path of the truth's triumph. It must not pretend to be at war with the 'imagination and high thoughts that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God,' while all the while it gives them quarter and encouragement, by refusing to say 'Begone.' It must not pretend to 'most surely believe' in human mortality, while afraid to declare against the most sure belief in human immortality. So long as it does so, its profession will be scouted by all honest men as a mere accommodation, a blind and a delusion.

"It is found as a matter of words professing a belief in the 'absolute mortality of man,' but as a matter of practice tolerating immortal soulism by refusing to proclaim the imperative necessity of its rejection. It is found confessing a belief in judgment as a matter of phraseology, but in point of actual fact denying it, by excluding the resurrection of the unfaithful at the appearing of Christ. It is found in words saying that the wages of sin is death, that sin is disobedience instigated by rebellious promptings of the flesh; that Christ came to take away sin, by enduring the consequence, but in absolute principle, it reduces the whole to a nullity by admitting the existence of a separate personal supernatural Being, who has the power of death in his hands, and whom in the same way it is Christ's mission to destroy. In many other respects, it stultifies its professions by its principles, and lands everything in obscurity,

trying all the while to hide itself under Scripture forms of speech, which it cannot trust itself to grasp or explain.

"Farewell to Dowieism. The master of the household will soon be here to set things in order. Meanwhile, 'tis ours to abide by the truth, measuring all men and things by it, and accepting every issue to which it guides us. Division and bitterness, even to fire, were foretold long ago as the result of the truth's working among men, we therefore need not be discouraged at realising them in an unexpected form now. Heat and conflict is what we have to expect on the field of battle. In due time the fight will be over, and the crown conferred in peace and glory, where the strife is nobly and heroically sustained."

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

## CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH.

THE separation from the Dowieites naturally caused embarrassment in various directions. On my next visit to Aberdeen, in August, 1867, I was warmly taken to task for my action. I was told I ought not to judge, as Christ had forbidden it. My answer was that while we are not to judge in the sense forbidden by Christ (*i.e.*, deciding in advance who are and who are not worthy of eternal life), there is a sense in which we are to judge, as Christ indeed expressly enjoins in saying, "Why do ye not of your own selves *judge* that which is right," and "beware of false prophets, ye shall know them by their fruits." I contended that we were called upon on our own behalf to decide where fellowship should be given and where it should be withheld. I asked:

"If this is not a true principle, whence arises the true distinction between the ecclesia and the world? We come out of the world; we separate from the Apostasy; we withdraw from the fellowship of both, and would one and all refuse to resume that fellowship by admitting parties belonging to either class into the ecclesia, and we would even, without dispute, refuse to countenance a disobedient brother. Paul says to the Corinthians (1 Epistle 5: 11), 'I have written unto you not to keep company if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, *with such an one no not to eat.*' Again, to the Thessalonians, he says (2 Epistle 3: 14), 'if anyone obey not our word by this epistle, *have no company with him* that he may be ashamed.' Again, verse 6, same chapter, "*withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly*, and not after the traditions he received of us.' Again (1 Tim. 6: 3), 'if any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to

the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing. . . . *from such withdraw thyself.*' Here are plain Apostolic injunctions which cannot be carried out without forming a judgment on the matters involved. For how shall we know when to withdraw from another, unless we conclude that a state of things justifying it exists? And how can we come to this conclusion without observing and considering the matters relating to it. The mental act is the very basis of the withdrawal enjoined.

"I pointed out that if these things were not so, the Aberdeen brethren themselves have committed the very crime of which they accused me; they were guilty of schism. Why had they left the Presbyterians, the Baptists, the Morisonians and the others? Were not all these respectable, well-behaved people, plentiful, many of them, in gracious looks, kindly words, and good deeds? On what principle could they defend separation from them? Did not the orthodox communities believe the Bible, and profess the name of Christ? Why had they come away from them? Were they not guilty of having 'judged' these 'sincere' professors of religion? They had done quite right, for they are commanded to judge of themselves what is right, and act accordingly. John had said (2 Ep. : 9, 10), 'If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine (that is, the truth concerning Christ's manifestation in the flesh), *receive him not into your house neither bid him Godspeed*: for he that biddeth him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds.' Paul indicates the same duty in several places. He speaks of certain 'false brethren brought in.' He says, 'to whom we gave place by subjection no not for an hour.' Judaistical believers taught the necessity for Paul being circumcised and observing the law. He says of them, '*a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.*' I would they were even cut off which trouble you' (Gal. 6: 9-12). There is nothing more conspicuous in Paul's letters to Timothy, than his jealousy of those in the ecclesia, whose influence was detrimental to the truth. He says, '*hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me,*

in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. . . . *The things which thou hast heard of me* among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. . . . Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, *rightly dividing the word of truth*. But shun profane and vain babblings: *for they will increase unto more ungodliness*. And their word will eat as doth a canker; of whom are Hymenæus and Philetus . . . having a form of Godliness but denying the power; **FROM SUCH TURN AWAY**. (For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. . . . Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned. . . . Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, with all long suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables' (2 Tim. 1:13; 2:15-17; 3:5-8, 13, 14; 4:2, 4).

"The same anxiety about preserving the truth in its purity from the corrupting influence of its loose professors is manifest in his letters to Titus. Defining the qualifications of an elder, he says he must be a man 'holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine to exhort and convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped . . . a man that is a heretic after the first and second admonition reject.' (Titus 1:9, 11; 3:10.) To the same purpose are the words of Jude, 'It was needful for me to write to you that ye should contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints; for there are certain men crept in unawares,' etc. (verses 3, 4). The Aberdeen brethren and the Dowieites themselves had shown their

apprehension of these apostolic precepts by separating from the sects and denominations of the orthodox world.

★ "It was said that the Dowieites had a great part of the truth: this is not enough. There is no authority for making one part of the truth less important than another. A reception of the truth on one point will not condone its rejection on another. Can we suppose that the Judaizers had no part of the truth? Did the Gnostics who denied that Christ had come in the flesh, reject the kingdom of God? Did not the unbelieving Jew hold the truth in great part? Yet Paul counselled withdrawal from them all. Nothing short of fidelity to the whole truth can be accepted as a safe policy. 'The things concerning the kingdom of God,' and 'those things that concern our Lord Jesus Christ,' in their scriptural amplitude must be the measure and standard of fellowship. Those who go for less than this must be left to themselves; in this they are not judged, they are only subjected to the action of another man's conception of duty, and are left at perfect liberty to organize themselves on whatever they may conceive to be a scriptural basis.

★ "By what means shall a community, based on the truth, preserve the truth in purity in its midst? Obviously by the means indicated by Paul and John, that is, by exacting of all who are in it an implicit adherence to the things, facts, principles, points, tenets, or whatever else they may be called, which go to make up the truth in its entirety, and by refusing to associate with those who oppose or refuse to endorse any of those elements. Some recommend in opposition to this the employment of argument with those who may be in error. As a preliminary process, common wisdom and humanity would dictate this course; but if an ecclesia is to go no further than argument, how could its existence continue? An effort should doubtless be put forth to reclaim those who are in error; but, where those efforts fail, dissociation by withdrawal is natural and inevitable.

"The ecclesia is not a place for argument; it is for worship in agreement. When a man requires to be argued with, his natural place is outside, and if he will



not go outside, separation must be enforced by withdrawal on the part of the rest. Division is the inevitable concomitant of an uncompromising adherence to the truth. Peace purchased at the cost of compromise is doubly dangerous. The truth is the standard and must alone be allowed to rule. All doubt ought to be solved in its favour. This is the principle of action to which study will ultimately lead. The action of separation is not an act of judgment against those from whom we may separate. It is an act of self-vindication; an act by which we discharge a duty and wash our hands of evil. The truth has gradually emerged from the fables in which for centuries it had been lost, and only an inexorable policy on the part of those receiving it will preserve it from a recurrence of the disaster which drove it from among men shortly after the days of the Apostles."

I paid a visit to Edinburgh about this time. I find I wrote of it, as follows, in *The Ambassador* for 1867:—

"The Editor stayed only one day, and gave but one lecture. He would have given more attention to Edinburgh than this, but for two things: the limited time at disposal compelled a preference for those places that were most in need, and in which labour might probably be more productive. In the second place, the door of utterance was not very wide in Edinburgh, not so wide as it might have been. The brethren are keepers of this door, to some extent, in every place where they exist. It is their business to throw it open as wide as possible, and they are responsible if they neglect their duty. In this case they did not open it at all. They left the Editor to push it a little ajar, and only didn't just slam it in his face. They left it to him to say he was coming and how long he would stay, and made no suggestion of extended operations, and no arrangement by which even the little labour offered should be utilized as much as possible, but crowded into a mere house apartment, the endeavour which, with a little enterprise, might have had given to it a wider and stronger effect. Such poor-spirited policy is a mistake. What are well-to-do brethren

afraid of? Expense? They spend money on their persons, their houses, and their tables, and is the truth less worthy? Ought not the cause of the truth to stand the highest? Or are they afraid of compromising their respectability too publicly? Let them know that shame will recoil with disgrace in the day when Christ comes to acknowledge where he is acknowledged. Is it that they are luke-warm and insensible to their duty, paralysed by the deception practised on the senses by the world, which appears to be real, while it is the merest shadow, flitting with every hour? Or is it that they are afraid of giving too much scope to the stripling? Afraid that he will feel too much honoured? Afraid that he will get above them? Let them rouse and fling away this nonsense. The stripling has only one earnest business in hand, and has no other business to serve or object to promote. The paltry jealousy fostered by the tongue of the slanderer is a hindrance. Let the sons of God in Edinburgh throw it to the winds. The stripling has been too well castigated from the beginning to spoil now. He sets but one thing before his mind now—and this he pursues by inflexible courses which are sometimes evil-interpreted by those who are trampled on the toes thereby—and that is the promotion of the truth, and the protection and *encouragement of its results among those who receive it*. To accomplish this, he has laboured and spent money for years, fagging body and mind continually, and impoverishing his pocket on every hand. Are brethren afraid to encourage him in this? What is his offence? He is young and plain. If he were a lordly visitor, from parts unknown, with fine clothes, and bumptious 'we-are-the-people' airs, wouldn't they exert themselves and make a fuss, and say great things? But being a young man whom they knew as a boy, who makes no brag, and puts on no airs, but does the work, they are afraid to open the door to him. They will repent this, perhaps, in time. Don't let them delude themselves with the idea that 'deep things' are their exclusive property. 'Deep things' as they talk, may be but the illusions of mere morbid ingenuity. 'Deep things' are sometimes deep



mire, in which a man may lose himself. There are deep things, but there is a medium in all things. About the glorious gospel of the blessed God there is no mistake. There are those who slanderously impute evil aims, and say many things that are as utterly false as a lie can be ; and there are many to open their greedy mouths and smack their lips over the delicious morsels. This is why the Editor submits to the humiliation of putting in a word for himself, that the barriers of an unreasonable and mischief-working jealousy may, perchance, be removed from the path of the truth's progress, at least among those who ought to be, in Edinburgh, the untiring, the enterprising, the unselfish, and the by all and by any means, effective soldiers of Christ.

"As to the Dowieites, it is not to be wondered at that they should be full of bad feeling and evil-speaking. They have no answer to our case against them on the merits, and so they indulge in personal disparagements. This we pass by with the simple observation that no one shall be able on a fair, close, and personal examination for himself, to verify a single point in the allegations that are made to our detriment. They are, every one of them, falsehoods."

One of the back ripples from the Dowieite commotion took the shape of a strongly-expressed protest on the part of a few against a proposed enlargement of *The Ambassador*, as it was then called. The following extract from an editorial which I wrote at the time will illustrate this :—

"One of the objectors writes in the following excited strain :—' You act like a madman. Your tendencies are in the worst direction. What new folly is this you aspire to ? To live "off" preaching and printing your peculiar ideas. By the first love you had for the truth, and the virgin hatred we all had for hirelings, cease to ape the clergy. Work fairly and honestly for your bread, and give the truth for nothing. How can you denounce those you seek to imitate ? You have not the calm

dignity to be a great father in the Church, so that you will never be one, I fear. Take, then, your place and comport yourself as becometh the gospel you profess."

"So much as there is of mere denunciation in the foregoing, we pass by with the simple remark that the writer's undoubtedly sincere impression that we are mad and bad, is one of those moral hallucinations which have, from time out of date, been created by moral antagonism. Difference of view, principle and policy, lead to this kind of misunderstanding. The ancient Pharisees, who thought themselves a very circumspect and excellent order of men, were of the opinion that 'Jesus was beside himself ; and the 'most noble Festus' (doubtless a sensible Roman in his way) formed the same idea of Paul. It is natural for minds of narrow scope, to condemn proceedings having their impulse in a state of mind beyond their own experience. If they call the master of the house Beelzebub, one must not be surprised if he incur the same obloquy in attempting to pursue the part of a servant.

"So much as there is of argument in the letter aforesaid, it is easy to answer. The writer very much misapprehends the nature and origin of Christadelphian hostility to clerical hirelingism, if he imagines that it arises from the simple circumstance that the clergy are supported in their efforts to confer a supposed spiritual benefit. The objection to their practice is : 1st, that the supposed gospel has been made a trade of, by which a man may acquire a stated income, in a settled place, in return for a stipulated amount of sermonising ; 2nd, the service of the supposed gospel is made use of to support absurd personal pretensions and titles, creating a distinct and separate and unscriptural caste among professors of the truth ; and 3rd, that they do not preach the gospel at all. If they were men who in the judgment of full age, and from an intelligent appreciation of the truth, and a disinterested desire to serve the supreme interest of God and man, gave themselves up to continued voluntary exertion in this behalf—their acceptance of temporal co-operation from those who might

sympathise with their efforts, so far from being reprehensible, would be in accordance with the dictates both of common sense and apostolic precept.

★ "The truth cannot be brought under the attention of men without active personal agency. In theory, it is in every man's possession who has a Bible; but as a matter of fact, it does not get into his head or his heart until his attention is arrested by external means, and his notice drawn to what the Bible contains. Experience is the proof of this. The truth prospers in proportion as there is an effective agitation of it. When there is no one to call attention to it by mouth or pen, through the power of the apostasy it remains unnoticed, although in the Bible. If, then, it be to the advantage of men, and according to the will of God, that they should know the truth, it is clearly a good thing and a dutiful policy to set in motion every agency that will conduce to this result. This is the common sense view of the matter. It must be left to wisdom and experience to apply it in any given case. There is nothing to exclude any arrangement which the friends of truth, in love, may voluntarily devise in the highest interest of men. The apostolic side of the question is coincident with the dictates of good sense (1 Cor. 9: 7-15). We admit the liability of such an arrangement to be abused. The uprise of the clerical system has shown it. But abuse is no argument against use. Lawful co-operation among the friends of truth to discharge a common duty in a given way, is not to be cried down because a pretended gospel is upheld by an ignorant compact of many people, and because an order of men has arisen in connection with it who put forth unscriptural pretensions and assume blasphemous titles. To hate the clerical system is good, but it is possible to hate the evil and not to love the good.

"We append similar ebullitions of antagonism:—One writes to say that those with whom he is associated are of the same mind they were some 18 months ago, viz., that *The Ambassador* would be better reduced than enlarged—and accordingly they have reduced their order. The letter contains a cut about loaves and fishes.

We are offered employment as soon as the Bankruptcy Court closes; and accepting that offer, we should be better off than we should probably be by charging 8d. for *The Ambassador*. But, then, we should have to give up *The Ambassador* and the service of the truth, and this we should not feel justified in doing, if we can swim at all by continuing *The Ambassador*.

"Another writes to discontinue *The Ambassador*, observing that the mode of conducting it, especially in the matter of the Dowieites, indicates, *phrenologically considered*, a very low and deficient organisation. Perhaps this correspondent would like to hear the definitions of one of the first phrenologists of the day. It may afford him a key to matters that now appear cloudy. 'You are full of sympathy, are very much interested in whatever excites your kindness; you can be positively enthusiastic in a benevolent enterprise. Veneration is rather large, and with large conscientiousness, gives you a tendency to value things that are divine. You have very large hope. You are constantly scheming, planning, projecting something new, and you are sure you are going to succeed. You have no faculty for contriving bargains. It bothers you to look after money matters; you are spirited in resistance—are prone to overcome obstacles in your way—but you are not cruel. You are fond of discussion, but your strongest motive is to advance ideas that appear to you to be important. Your conscientiousness and self-esteem, acting together, incline you to take responsibility and guide other people. You are sensitive to the opinions of others, but are not so much stimulated by ambition as by a desire to advance principles that you think are right.' We add no more, as this is a sufficient set-off to the opinion of our correspondent."

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

## THE "DECLARATION."

THE *Declaration*\* came into existence about the beginning of 1867. Its history is peculiar. It is an anonymous work, as all are aware: but of course it had a definite authorship—the suppression of which was due to an unpleasant complication with its pleasant compiler—a gentleman, originally from London, but who had been living for some time in the United States, and who was in England at this time on a visit of some duration. He came to Birmingham, stayed a while and made himself most pleasantly useful in the office—a lithe, active, cheerful, and munificent volunteer.

While co-operating in this way in the most acceptable manner, the idea of the *Declaration* was broached—that is, to get up a pamphlet which should set forth the truth in a series of propositions, with the proof texts quoted in full, instead of being merely referred to for the reader to turn up. Our agreeable volunteer undertook to provide the funds for the printing of a large edition of said pamphlet, to sell at a penny—whatever it should cost. (In point of fact, the first edition cost about sixpence per copy.) He also undertook to collect the material for its contents; that is, to cut out and roughly arrange the various passages that would be wanted under various headings. As a matter of fact, he devoted a large amount of industry to this work, collecting footnotes from various writers in addition to passages from Scripture. The first idea was that the work should be wholly his, and with this idea, I had advertised it in advance as a pamphlet by him.

When he had collected all the material, he handed it over to me to put into shape. This I found a heavy piece of work, but I threw my whole energy into it, fore-

\* "A Declaration of the First Principles of the Oracles of the Deity"—See advertisement at the end of this book.

seeing in it a powerful instrumentality in the diffusion of a knowledge of the truth. What I did amounted to a complete writing of the work. I planned the distribution of the subjects; wrote all the propositions; arranged all the passages that my most pleasant friend had cut out, and the footnotes which he had industriously collected, and, in a word, gave structure and character to the work. When it was finished, I found myself in a peculiar position. I had advertised it as my friend's work and it was not his work. I did not think there was any difficulty about this, since a simple statement that it was a joint production would put the matter right. I proposed to my most pleasant friend that this statement should be made—and made in the mildest form, namely, that the pamphlet was by him and revised by me. I never imagined there could be any difficulty about this. The claims of truth required it, and knowing the malice that was at work against me, I feared the use that might be made of my allowing a work to go forth as the production of a liberal friend who had only collected the materials for it.

But, lo, my innocent suggestion was the application of a lighted match to gunpowder. I felt covered with shame; for the question of authorship in any honorary sense was nothing to me one way or other. I was simply aiming at truth and the service of the truth, and felt utterly humiliated to have to enter upon a contest in which I had to defend myself from a charge of seeking to rob another of his proper honour. If the pamphlet had not been actually in print, and ordered in hundreds by expectant readers, I would have retired from the dispute, and left each man to take his own way. As the matter stood, it had to be argued and settled.

A conference of friends was brought to bear, and it was ultimately decided that the dilemma should be composed by issuing the pamphlet anonymously. A line in *The Ambassador*, stating in the fewest possible words that the pamphlet had been revised by me, put me right with regard to previous advertisements. Since then (twenty-seven years ago) the *Declaration* has

circulated in thousands and thousands of copies, and remains to this day the most largely circulating publication connected with the truth. The rupture caused by this incident was one of many deep wounds that have had to be suffered in the course of the service of the truth—a course which, so far as I am concerned, I have reason to hope is nearly “finished.”

On June 21st, 1867, it was resolved to circulate the *Declaration* among the clergy and ministers of Birmingham and neighbourhood—not with any hope of opening their eyes, but with the idea that the simultaneous presentation to them of such a concentrated exhibition of the truth might lead them to talk about the truth, and perhaps oppose it, and thus do it the only service in their power. I cannot remember that any results ever came of the effort. If I was unsanguine then (as appears by the note appearing in *The Ambassador* for 1867, page 178) I would be a hundred times more so now.

The clergy are spoiled men in the making so far as divine things are concerned. They are manufactured to a pattern, and by a process that does not make a man, even in a natural sense. It requires hardship and not coddling; bad usage and not the worship offered to a god; stern experience and not rose-water theory to make out of human nature the sort of character required for the acceptable service of God and man. When, in addition to the absence of these, there is an absence of the robust truth of God and the overpowering presence of emasculating fable, there is nothing to be expected but the universal puff-blown abortiveness we see in the ranks of the false prophetism of every name and denomination. A similar state of things in Israel was blown to perdition in a tempest of red-hot anger such as the world had never seen; and no other fate awaits the hierarchies of Christendom at the coming of Him whose name they have travestied, and whose word they have made a laughing-stock throughout the world.

About this time we had a surprising secession from our little company. namely, one who had made himself very prominent in all our little efforts, and who was quite

a lovable and amusing character in his way. We used to say among ourselves that it was impossible for anyone who once saw the truth to go back to any of the sects. This was a pleasing delusion based upon a too limited experience, which a more extended experience has effectually put an end to. All depends upon the person. There are those who could no more be moved away from the requirements of divine truth than the sun can be stopped in its course. But there are others who can be so moved when the opposing force of whatever description gets above the level of the feeble power that holds them. Jesus recognises such in his parable of the sower: “these having no root in themselves, for a while believe, and in time of trial fall away.” The trial takes various forms. In our day it is not public persecution, but various vexing circumstances permitted to arise, without or within, and especially within (for circumstances “without” have little power to vex).

Our lovable and amusing friend was fond of public work, but was not fit for it; and because he was not allowed the amount of it that was to his liking he cooled off and left us, and attended the “services” of George Dawson, M.A., whom we find described in the intelligence note of June, 1867 (page 154) as “a quasi-clerical lecturer of the humorous sort, who is popular in Birmingham and throughout the country for his power to entertain the fleshly mind; who, after the Colenso school, pretends to be a preacher of Christ while denying Moses and the prophets and (in a manner peculiar to himself) deceives the understanding through the sheer force of dogmatic sarcasm; appearing to teach wisdom, while in reality inculcating principles that lead the ignorant into certain paths of destruction, or rather, make their escape from those paths a matter of impossibility.”

Our amusing friend did not stay long with Mr. Dawson, but taking flight from Birmingham, settled among the Dowieites in Edinburgh—with whom, however, he did not long stay, but wafted his way southward and disappeared in the human jungle of the metropolis. Once only has he since come to light—on the occasion of

my encounter with Mr. Hine. He effusively greeted me on that occasion, and was in high feather at having introduced in London the system of "repairs while you wait." Poor fellow! It will be nothing but a gladness to me to find at last that God has a niche for him in the Kingdom.

Towards the close of 1867, we made several changes in matters of ecclesial work. Till then, our immersions had been performed with difficulty. The authorities would not allow the use of the Public Baths; and we were obliged to use a private bath in the upper room of a barber's shop in Summer Lane, where the roof was low, the apartment small, and the bath of pinched dimensions. Having now the lease of the Athenæum Hall (since transformed into offices), combining our contributions we introduced a proper immersion bath in front of the platform, and forming the table for the breaking of bread; providing a retiring room by putting up curtains on a light iron frame, which could be taken down. The obedience of the truth in baptism was, after this, no longer done in a corner, but became part of the public work of the truth at our week-night meetings—which has ever since continued to be the practice.

At this time also, we saw the advisability of making a change in our mode of procedure with regard to business. We had been in the habit of bringing matters of business before the whole meeting, either on Sunday or Thursday. This gave undue prominence to casual and ephemeral matters and caused the diversion of the general mind from matters that ought to be paramount. This was the more strongly felt to be an evil as our numbers increased. Business was more and more an unwelcome intrusion at our ordinary meetings, so we resolved at a special meeting, held October 16th, 1867, that no business beyond necessary announcements be introduced at any of the ordinary meetings, and that seven brethren be appointed to transact all the secular business of the ecclesia, in conjunction with the secretary and treasurer, subject to the control of the ecclesia in quarterly meeting assembled; the meetings of these

managing brethren to be held on week-nights, and to be open to the attendance of any brother or sister who might choose to attend, but only the managing brethren to vote.—The first act of the newly-constituted managing body was to decide upon the delivery of several courses of week-night lectures, under the belief that a class of hearers could be reached on week-nights who could not be got at on Sundays. The first course was immediately advertised as follows:—

The PRESENT STATE OF CHRISTENDOM.—The doctrines of Christendom not in harmony with the Bible: and the truth proclaimed by Jesus and his apostles untaught and unknown in ordinary places of worship. SIX LECTURES, as follows:—

1. Christianity in the first and nineteenth centuries; the Apostles and their predictions: a parallel, a contrast, and a fulfilment.
2. The connection between prophecy and the primitive Gospel; modern preaching lacking in the main element of Gospel truth.
3. The re-establishment of the ancient theocracy of the Jews under Christ's personal administration, the appointed remedy for the world's afflictions.
4. The existing state of the world indicative of the approaching close of the present dispensation.
5. The New Testament doctrine of eternal life subversive of popular views of immortality and a future state.
6. Personal duty in the present crisis.

The meetings were a great success.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

"EUREKA," VOL. III.—DR. THOMAS'S LAST VISIT.

**A**BOUT this time, viz., 1867, an old brother, who was a character in his way, removed from Yorkshire to Birmingham. His name was Isaac Clissett. He had been a Chartist, and had suffered imprisonment for the part he took in the Chartist rising; after which he threw himself heartily into the Temperance movement. He was working hard in this line when the truth was introduced to his notice, and enlisted the enthusiasm which he was bootlessly extending in other directions. He was a natural demagogue of the better sort—full of natural health, voluble speech, but lacking in culture and general information. He was a kindly man, of the highest honesty, and possessing a child-like simplicity of character strangely mixed with personal dignity, bordering on egotism. He was an ideal stump orator. He threw himself heartily into public speaking, and worked himself up into an ardour which carried him away and left him under the impression that he had carried the audience away—which was quite another thing. He was in poor circumstances, but had a wonderful knack of making shift. If one thing failed, he would turn cheerily to another, with the certainty that the new affair was going to be a success. His last experiment in Yorkshire was the selling of toys on a stall in the Market Place of Heckmondwike. This ultimately failed him, and, on his wife dying, he wrote to me that if I *could* afford him the least bit of help, he thought he could get along in Birmingham.

I told him to come along, and I gave him jobs to do in the office. He managed to get hold of some kind of a truckle bed on which he used to sleep in the ante-room of the Athenæum Hall, with which the office was connected—getting his meals during the day in cookshops. This arrangement did not last very long. The awful solitude of the place at night and the activity of the rats

and mice compelled him to make a change. He took refuge in the attic of a cookshop which had been opened in Snow Hill by a newly-married brother and sister of the name of Blount. Here he remained till the place was given up, and then he was taken in by an elderly person (who was alone like himself), with whom he remained till cancer in the face carried him off. He was a cheery, lovable old man, notwithstanding some peculiarities, and was quite missed when he died.

The newly-married couple referred to had become associated with the truth during the previous twelve months, under circumstances that were felt to be above the usual level of interest, and which had a somewhat tragic ending. The young lady belonged to a well-to-do family in the suburbs of Birmingham. She had had the truth brought to her notice through the sewing visits to the house of one of the sisters. Becoming deeply interested in it herself, she introduced it to her sweetheart, who lived in another part of the country. He also embraced it, and both, in the course of time, were immersed, to the great sorrow of the young lady's mother and brothers. (Her father had died some years previously.) The young man, failing in business at this time, the mother and brothers objected to the continuance of their connection: but the young people were not to be deterred, and married without consent, in consequence of which they were disowned, and had to shift for themselves as best they could—which at first was no shift at all.

It seemed a case of "I was a stranger," and sister Roberts and I could see no escape from the duty of taking them in. They stayed with us five months, delighting us with the avidity with which they engaged in Scripture studies with us. At the end of that time, they ventured upon the experiment of the cookshop, in which brother Clissett found refuge. In course of time the young lady's mother died, and under her father's will she came into a sum of money, with part of which they embarked upon an iron bedstead making business in Dudley. In a few years the business came to grief, and the young man died. The young lady became affected in

her mind, and to this day has had to be taken care of. Her brothers were members of a great manufacturing firm in Birmingham, whose factory was said to embrace a mile of shopping. One of them was manager, and a leading Birmingham man. The business was turned into a company. Certain relatives of Lord Salisbury invested heavily in shares. In a few years, the business began to shrink. The Salisbury relatives took fright. The brother was turned out of the management. Litigation was commenced for the recovery of invested money, and the brother died in a few months broken-hearted—deserted of all the friends who had hovered round him in the day of prosperity. He called upon me a few weeks before his death—a young man in his prime, but looking utterly haggard and careworn. I had told him I would help him if certain prospects were realised, which, alas, were much not so. I was shocked when I heard of his death. He had had the truth offered to him—God's glorious gift, "without money and without price"—but he not only refused the offer, but tried to deter his sister from embracing it, and this was the end!

About this time (we are still in 1867, though the last few sentences have taken the narrative forward a little), the reporting of the "Sunday Morning" addresses was commenced. It was due to the conjunction of two circumstances—the high appreciation of them by our most pleasant friend of last chapter, and the advent in our midst of a shorthand writing brother from Yorkshire—the same whose help in my reporting work in Huddersfield had enabled me to write *Twelve Lectures* in the first instance. Between the suggestion of the one and the willing help of the other, the *Sunday Morning Addresses* began to be a feature of *The Christadelphian* (at first named *The Ambassador*) in December, 1867. Over 250 have appeared since that time (writing now in March, 1894). About a hundred of them have been published in two separate volumes, containing 52 each, under the name of *Seasons of Comfort*. They would have ceased being reported long ago were it not for the decided emphasis with which their suspension has from time to

time been objected to. They are read in many little communities of believers in various parts of the world where there are no brethren of speaking ability. They are an entirely unpremeditated development, like a good many other things connected with the truth, and the end is not yet.

Before the finish of the year (1867) a movement was set on foot which resulted in the third and last visit of Dr. Thomas to Britain. I had heard in some way—I now forget how—that the Doctor would not refuse an invitation, and therefore inserted a notice in the December number of *The Ambassador*, page 324, proposing that the friends of the truth should unite in such an invitation and in providing the needful funds. There was a hearty response to the proposal on the part of everyone concerned. The Doctor's answer was favourable, but not to an immediate visit. He said he was busy with the writing of the third volume of *Eureka*, and he said, "I cannot come to you until I get *Eureka* III. off my hands. I think I may finish the MS. in a month if not interrupted. I have then to issue prospectus and await returns. When I find I may venture to publish, I shall then proceed to get it through the press. This will bring me to the close of 1868. I shall then be better prepared to say when you may expect me. In the meantime, you can go on as you are now doing, in preparation of the means to meet the demands of shipmasters."

In a letter written some weeks later, the Doctor announced the completion of the MS., and intimated that the subscription of 514 copies would be necessary to enable him to publish. I then appealed to readers to send in orders, with the double view of getting possession of the last instalment of an exposition of the Apocalypse, which had already imparted such joyful satisfaction, and of removing the obstacle in the way of the Doctor's proposed visit to Britain. But the number required was too great for the feeble resources of the brethren, who were few in those days, and who were already burdening themselves with the provision of the money required for the coming visit. Orders came in wonderfully well



considering: but it was evident there would not be nearly enough for the necessities of the case.

While we were wondering how the matter would turn, a sister in England and a brother in the United States came forward with the sum needed to pay the printer, consenting to be recouped as the book might afterwards sell. (In the upshot they both released the Doctor from any obligation to refund the money.) This was a happy release for all. In September the Doctor wrote that he had put the book into the hands of the printers, and that it was more than half in type. In a letter dated November 2nd, 1868, he announced the completion of the work, and stated that the same steamer that brought his letter would bring a box containing 350 copies of the work. This was joyful news. The book duly arrived, and the experience connected with the receipt of the second volume was repeated. The reading of it was a prolonged deep draught of pure satisfaction.

In two more months, viz., on February 23rd, 1869, the Doctor wrote me that in a month more, after the completion of a tour in Canada and the States, he would sail for England, accompanied by his daughter, and that he might be expected in the month of May. The time soon sped. A subsequent letter said he would sail "about the 1st of May," but did not mention the name of the vessel or the precise day of sailing. It afterwards transpired that he purposely kept us in the dark with the idea of stealing into Birmingham and into the meeting without being recognised. He was fortunately foiled at the last moment in this playful cruelty. But for more than a week, the brethren in Birmingham—at that time 123—were kept in a ferment. The *City of Paris* sailed from New York on the 1st of May, and as "about the 1st of May" was the only indication of the time of sailing we had, we all thought it likely she contained the expected passengers. But she arrived without them, to our great disappointment. The daily arrival of the American steamers was intently watched—with no results. Brethren were calling at the office all day long: "Any word of the Doctor?" As day after day went by the

answer "No" became painful. At last, on May 18th, I received a brief pencilled note from the Doctor, asking me to send a copy of *Eureka* and *Elpis Israel* to Captain Cutting of the *Idahoe*—not a word more.

The Doctor was in the country then, but where? I examined the envelope for the post-mark, but found that in my haste to open the letter, I had torn off a fragment on which probably the post-mark was. Didn't I earnestly search for that missing fragment? Wouldn't I have rejoiced to find it? While engaged in the search, I thought, "Now, supposing Dr. Thomas, who is at the door, were to walk in, would you continue to look for that bit of paper? No; it would instantly lose all value in my eyes. Just so," thought I, "is it with the signs of the times—the events and movements among the nations that indicate the near approach of the Lord. They are very interesting and challenge research while we are waiting; but let him appear, and that instant we shall cease all care about the drying of the Turco-Euphrates, the increasing aggrandisement of Russia, etc."

The consideration of the pencil scribble yielded the conclusion that the Doctor had arrived in Liverpool by the *Idahoe*. I telegraphed to the company there and received a reply that the *Idahoe* had arrived, that Doctor Thomas and daughter were among the passengers, but that the passengers had landed and dispersed, and that the persons enquired for were not at any of the hotels. Their arrival at Birmingham, therefore, became an hourly expectation. I awaited the arrival of every Liverpool train for about two days—without result. It was getting tiresome work. I thought "I will just wait one more, and if the Doctor is not in that, we must give it up and take him when he comes." When the train drew up at the New Street platform, a white-bearded, military-looking gentleman, accompanied by a slim lady in black, became visible among the crowd that stepped out of the carriages. I quickly saluted Dr. Thomas, who was playfully disappointed. He said he had thought of going aside to an hotel, and not letting us know till he walked into the meeting on Sunday—which he hoped he might



do, unrecognised, as a listener! I told him he had no idea of the state of feeling among the brethren, or he would never have dreamt of such a thing. However, I had caught him, and should stick to him. Piling his boxes on to a cab, we quickly drove to Belgrave Road, where sister Roberts had given up expecting us. She had been ready two days before as regards table preparation for the visitors, but was now off guard. She has often said, "It will be so with the Lord's coming." She soon forgot her embarrassments in the joy of receiving her most welcome visitors

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

## DEATH OF DR. THOMAS—"THE CHRISTADELPHIAN."

THE Doctor stayed in Birmingham about four weeks. They were weeks of pure enjoyment to all the friends of the truth—especially to those of us who had the privilege of intimate association with him. His lectures were interesting and powerful; in private he reminded us of Christ by a gravity of deportment that was mixed with urbanity, and a dignity that was sweetened by unfeigned humility, a quiet penetrating depth of intelligence, unweakened by the least approach to frivolity; a cordial interest that was free and natural in all things connected with the truth. It was a great change to us to have one in our midst who was, if possible, more interested in all our arrangements than we ourselves.

The first meeting for the breaking of bread was of thrilling interest. We were meeting at the time at the Athenæum Hall, at the corner of Temple Street and Temple Row West, a place capable of holding about 300. None of the brethren had seen the Doctor. They were in full muster to the number of 120 or thereabouts. None were late that morning except the Doctor himself, who came in after they had been all seated for about ten minutes. As he quietly walked in and was led forward to a front seat, there was a deep hush of attention. The meeting that followed was of the sort that goes deep into the memory. After hearty singing and preliminary exercises, the Doctor was called upon, and ascending the platform addressed the assembly. He made no personal allusions of the kind that are common with public speakers. He did not say how pleased he was to be there; how gratifying to his feelings for such interest to be taken in his work, nor how deeply moved he was by the appreciation that had been manifested, etc., etc. He simply said, in dignified and sonorous voice, "It is written in the prophets" (and proceeded to call our attention to the truth). I was a shorthand writer, but I

was too deeply moved by the words of the speaker to take them down, and I am not aware that anyone else took notes of them. They were words of weight and power, such as we probably shall not hear again till we meet in the kingdom of God.

By a pure but most suitable coincidence, we brought into use for the first time on this occasion, a new "service" of electro-plate vessels for the breaking of bread, consisting of a central flagon, two cups, two plates, and two collection boxes. They had been provided in consequence of the increase in our numbers, causing too long a time to be taken up in passing a single plate and cup. To preserve the symbolic unity of the table, the two cups were supplied from the central flagon at the moment of dispensation, and the two plates from a central plate likewise. On the same occasion, the new Christadelphian hymn-book (not the present music hymn-book, which came after) came into use for the first time; and there was also the extra circumstance of newly-painted hall and premises. These features were, of course, entirely extraneous and insignificant, but they added an element of interest to an occasion deeply interesting in itself.

The Doctor lectured in all fourteen times among us—eight times in the Athenæum Hall, and six times in the Temperance Hall (the present meeting place of the brethren). The Athenæum lectures were all crowded; the Temperance Hall lectures were not less numerous attended: but the audience, being in a larger place, did not show to so good an advantage—especially on week nights. It marks the great advance made by the truth in Birmingham since that time, that the ordinary Sunday evening audience is far larger than the audience got together by special advertising to hear Dr. Thomas.

At the close of Birmingham appointments, there was a tea meeting in the Athenæum, at which 150 persons assembled to say temporary farewell to the Doctor. I find by *The Christadelphian* for July, 1869, that I presided at the meeting, and said that the occasion, though a farewell occasion, was not so sad as such occasions usually were, as we were looking forward to see

the Doctor's face again at the end of a lecturing tour in Britain, which had been arranged for. The tour would occupy about nine months, when we hoped to see him in Birmingham again. The Doctor was then called upon, when he proceeded to give us a promised treat. He stepped on to the platform, at the back of which, on the wall, were displayed three large charts of the prophetic times, which he proceeded to explain, wand in hand (appearing for the first time, as he observed, in the character of showman). The diagrammatical exposition was a rich treat. It lasted about two hours, and was afterwards published in form of a pamphlet entitled, *The Book Unsealed*.

During the Doctor's stay in Birmingham, he suggested the change of the name of the monthly magazine from *The Ambassador of the Coming Age* to *The Christadelphian*. He did not do so directly: he was too much of a gentleman for that. He said one day in the office, if he should ever conduct a monthly magazine again (which he thought very unlikely), he should call it *The Christadelphian*. He had a reason for it. He judged from the progress that was being made in numbers that, by and by, there would arise ambitious men, lacking depth, who would desire to lead without all the qualifications for it—mediocrities who would start magazines for the liking of the thing or for the ventilation of crotchets, and if the name *Christadelphian* were unappropriated, it would be sure to be taken by some of this class to the detriment of the truth. I expressed concurrence in his views, and intimated that if he did not object, I would substitute the suggested name for *The Ambassador*. He was evidently pleased at my agreement with him on the matter. I adopted the new name at once without, however, making an immediate change. I used both names together for a while, gradually enlarging the size of the type in which the new name was printed, from month to month, and diminishing the size of the other, until in about six months I dropped the name *Ambassador* altogether. The reasons for the change I set forth at length in an article appearing in

July, 1869. On the appearance of that article, many who disliked the change turned to be in favour of it.

The Doctor had not long arrived in Birmingham when the Campbellites made an attempt to neutralise his visit by circulating a scurrilous tract entitled *A Glance at the History and Mystery of Thomasism*, by David King, who was, and ever since has been, resident in Birmingham.\* The brethren were much mortified by this publication, which made no attempt to confute the Doctor's contention with regard to divine truth; but laboured to create a personal prejudice by a coloured representation of the Doctor's dealings with the Campbellites in 1848, and by making sport of the disappointment of the Doctor's expectation that the Lord would return in 1866-8, and by charging him with plagiarism in the use of historical matter in *Elpis Israel*. As the best way of antidoting this movement of malevolence, I challenged David King to debate the question, What is the truth? and having received his expected refusal, I put together a tract, in which, besides announcing his refusal, I answered his personal charges against Dr. Thomas, and inserted a pithy definition of the creed of Campbellism written by Dr. Thomas for the purpose.

Looking back at the said publication now (as found in *The Christadelphian* for August, 1869, page 227), I am made to feel the modifying effects of time on all human excitements. If I had to write it now, it would not be so juvenile in any sense. I would not fling so many epithets, nor serve the vinegar quite so strong. I was writing under the stimulus of feelings that owed their intensity, in some degree, to the Doctor's presence, as well as to the virulence of the enemy's attack. In style, it is quite overdone; but in matter and meaning, I don't know that I could mend it much. The tract commenced thus:—

"David King, editor of the Campbellite organ in this country, and evangelist (so-called) of the Campbellite

\* Since this was written, his death has been announced in the papers. He died in the last week of June, 1894.

body in Birmingham, is very shy of the truth. He is pugnacious enough; but his pugnacity cannot be brought to a healthy bearing. His attacks are always personal and of an insignificant character. He keeps as far off as ever he can from the great issue existing between the 'Thomasites,' as he delights to call them, and his own body and Christendom generally. He is ready to debate on the character of Dr. Thomas (which is unhurt, however, by the slander he has helped to cast upon it): but flies like a startled mouse from the proposal to discuss the question which does not depend upon the character of any living man, viz., what was the gospel which was preached for the salvation of men by the apostles in the first century?—the no-creed creed of Campbellism, or the faith contended earnestly for by the Christadelphians.

"In 1864, when challenged to this encounter, he declined on the score that the 'Thomasites' were too insignificant in number to justify the labour, and dying out with a certainty which made it superfluous. In 1869, he has a new excuse, as the old one does not suit. He finds that the hated class have grown to about 130 'members' (as orthodoxists coldly say) and a large circle of outside sympathisers; and that they have brought Dr. Thomas to their midst to help on the successful battle of the truth in this country; and instead of joining issue on the main question—which would be inconvenient to him, as he is on some points more of a 'Thomasite' than anything else—he meanly seeks to neutralise their efforts by the circulation (on the eve of the Doctor's departure) of an *ex-parte* hash, in pamphlet form, of exploded slanders about Dr. Thomas, hoping by this means to smother the real issue, on which he knows it would be difficult for him to sustain his part."

The Doctor's definition of Campbellism was very racy as well as true. He amused me much by reading it to me one day at home on my return from business. The following are the leading features:—

"I believe, as a Campbellite, that I am an immortal sinner, or saint, as the case may be, having in my living carcase a particle of the divine essence, derived indirectly

from the Deity, through the first rebel against His law, which particle, infinitesimal, invisible and intangible, is the real *I myself*—the veritable and immortal man.

"I believe that when I die, I don't die, but merely change the mode of my existence; and that when I die, but don't die, my invisible and impalpable, because immaterial and infinitesimal, immortal soul, poised upon a down feather of an angel's wing, goes straight to glory in Heaven 'beyond the skies.'

"As a Campbellite, I believe there are kingdoms in the Heaven to which my immaterial and impalpable soul flies, when it drops its 'mortal coil,' or carcase, and that said Heaven is

"Beyond the bounds of space,  
The saints' secure abode."

"I believe, with all Pagans, Papists, Protestants and Mohammedans, in a mighty black fellow they call 'the Devil,' having horns, hoofs and forked tail, whose abode is in flames of burning sulphur in Hell, which is somewhere in the universe, but where I can't imagine.

"No word, I think, will please the Lord  
Unless it smell of sulphur."

"I believe in three kingdoms, the kingdom of law, the kingdom of grace, and the kingdom of glory, beyond the skies where no space is.

"I believe that the 'church,' consisting of all Christians of all denominations, except Christadelphians, is the kingdom of grace, and that Christ is now upon the throne of David reigning with the Apostles, also upon their thrones, in the regeneration gloriously.

"I believe that all that is necessary for an ignorant sinner's salvation in the kingdom of grace is to say 'Yes' in answer to the question 'Do you believe in Jesus Christ?' and to be immersed in His name, the signification of which is not essential to be known.

"I denounce all sectarianism but my own ISM, and I hate all 'sect-makers' but Walter Scott and Alex. Campbell who, about 40 years ago, made the sect to which I belong.

"I believe that an immortal soul may be converted without faith or obedience, in a flash of lightning, as preached by one of our so-called evangelists, who testified that

"Between the stirrup and the ground,  
He pardon sought, and pardon found."

"I believe in these things, yet I protest I have no creed. The things I believe may or may not be believed according to one's inclination. It is of no importance, as salvation 'between the stirrup and the ground' is not dependent upon conditions. I hate all creeds and confessions as the work of the devil to divide Christians. Protestant unionism is the panacea of all the ills of Christendom ! ! !"

The Doctor left us about the beginning of July and visited the following places:—Bilthorpe, Nottingham, Leicester, Cheltenham, Mumbles, Swansea, Devonport, Dorchester, London, Maldon, Nottingham, (second visit), Scarborough, Whitby, Halifax, Manchester, Edinburgh, Tranent, Galashiels, Wishaw, Paisley, Beith, Galston, Cannock, and Halifax (again). Particulars of his visits to these various places appeared in *The Christadelphian* at the time.

During his journeyings, I was in close correspondence with him on various matters of more or less importance, springing out of his visit to Birmingham. First of all, was a scheme for his settlement in England. He said his work in America was done, and he felt inclined to spend the rest of his days in Britain, in which he recognised a more promising field of future labour. With a view to this, he purchased a small plot of land at Olton, about five miles out of Birmingham, on which he authorised me to employ a brother to erect for him a small house to his own plans. He proposed to call it *Yahlom Lodge*, or wayfaring place provided by Yahweh Elohim for one of his pilgrims. In my juvenility I had my qualms about putting the name of God on a house. But the Doctor took it very calmly as a thing in

harmony with the practice of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The house was duly put up, but the Doctor did not live to occupy it, and it went into the hands of the stranger, after being enlarged to twice the size to suit the neighbourhood where it stood. When it was put up, it stood by itself among fields, by the side of a road newly formed. It now stands in a small forest of villa residences in one of the rapidly rising suburbs of Birmingham. The road has been named St. Bernard Road, from the name or associations of a Roman Catholic College that has sprung up in the neighbourhood. The house itself is called Elmhurst, and stands nearest in the road to the Great Western Railway Station of Olton.

The next business the Doctor had in hand was the settlement, with friends of the truth in various parts of the country, of a plan for the establishment of *The Christadelphian* on a solid foundation. The necessity for this arose from the passage of a new Bankruptcy Act which put an end to my appointment as shorthand writer to the court. The change was in progress at the time of the Doctor's visit. It was not a question of a living. I was offered employment on one of the daily papers, but the acceptance of that offer would have involved the suspension of *The Christadelphian* or the embarrassing circumscription of editorial and other activities in connection with the truth. The Doctor arranged that instead of a salary from the proprietors of a Birmingham paper for reporting ephemeral town's affairs, I should have a salary for editing a monthly magazine in the service of truth. The arrangement caused some unkind criticism among some, but not among those who were actuated by disinterested or reasonable views. It lasted long enough to serve its purpose. *The Christadelphian* by-and-by became self-sustaining, and it has since withstood the shock of some severe onslaughts, and now appears to be upon a basis that cannot be assailed.

The Doctor returned to us about the middle of March, 1870. The last days of his stay were embittered by a domestic complication of which the providential

meaning has since become apparent. The prying and presumptuous intrusion of a professed brother (who has since pursued a course of enmity and allowed himself to be known as a "Reverend," from whom early in the day we had to withdraw) goaded the Doctor into the determination to appoint me sole custodian of his affairs in the event of his death. I suggested that he should associate brother Boshier with me, in which he concurred. The history of the past 25 years has shewn that this arrangement was necessary to save the Doctor's works from suppression. Many changes and enmities have arisen, but the Doctor's works have been steadily published, and the lamp of truth has not lacked a vantage ground from which its rays, however feebly, have been scintillated in the darkness resting so heavily on all the earth. God could have provided other instruments, but this is how it has been done.

The Doctor left us in the beginning of May, 1870. Before his departure, we held a tea meeting, at which he gave a very interesting account of his three visits to Britain. His speech on the occasion will be found fully reported in *The Christadelphian* for June, 1870, page 126. Towards the end of June, I received a letter announcing the safe arrival of the Doctor and his daughter at New York, with many interesting particulars of the voyage. The letter will be found in *The Christadelphian* for August, 1870, page 230.

For nine months afterwards, I was in the regular receipt of letters from the Doctor, several of which appeared in *The Christadelphian*. On Saturday, March 19th, 1871, having returned from the office, and dinner being over, sister Roberts, with a solemn air, handed me a letter from sister Lasius, the Doctor's daughter, which began thus:—"You will be surprised to hear that my father has died." I could go no further. The announcement, though so quietly made, was more than startling; it was bewildering, overwhelming, crushing. I felt as if the sun had been extinguished; as if life had been robbed of all interest. It was indeed a day of blackness. We were to have had a tea meeting of the Sunday School

teachers that evening. The holding of it was impossible. Next day (Sunday), at the breaking of bread, I reported the news I had heard. There was nothing but sobbing all over the meeting for several minutes. A brother inviting us to join with him in prayer, soothed broken hearts a little. Afterwards, I found solace in reviewing the history of the truth since the days of Paul to the days of Dr. Thomas, with reference to its glorious finish at the Coming of Christ. The Doctor's death was a great shock throughout the country (in a limited circle). All felt they had sustained a personal bereavement. While all realised that death was to the Doctor an unmixed good, in suddenly abridging the interval that divided him from the glory to be revealed, all felt the anguish of being deprived in the conflict with the present evil world of so trusty a guide and counsellor in the things of the Spirit.

The letter announcing his death also enclosed an unfinished article for *The Christadelphian*, on which he was engaged at the moment of his fatal attack—an article entitled "What is flesh?" The article is one of remarkable vigour, as may be seen from its perusal in the *Doctor's Life*, or *The Christadelphian* for April, 1871, page 106. A friend on reading it exclaimed, "What a pity that so great a mind should cease to work." There was another side, with which we consoled ourselves: how much better that the Doctor's work should end while his powers were yet in the fulness of their vigour rather than that it should last till a time when the strongest of faculties begin to give way.

The Doctor had left the following directions on the subject of his interment:—

"I order that, being dead, I myself be not deposited in so-called consecrated ground; but in some portion of our common mother, undefiled by the episcopal or presbyterial mummery of the harlot daughters of Rome on either side of the Tweed; nor is any parson, Popish priest, or Nonconformist minister, ordained or unordained—all of them dealers in the merchandise of the apostasy, and traders in 'the bodies and souls of men'—

to be permitted to read, pray, preach, or in any way officiate in committing me, myself—not a fraction or a part of me—to my temporary resting and sleeping in the ground. But as some one or more must put me there, I will that a brother of Christ, of good standing and repute among immersed believers of the Gospel Paul preached, and commonly known among men by the name of Christadelphians, read as my living representative on the occasion; so that, though dead, I may yet speak through him, declaring to the spectators the faith in which I died, and previously lived for many years, and earnestly contended for; either an address written by myself, or in default of this, Job 19:25-29; Rom. 14:7-12; 2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Cor. 15; 2 Tim. 4:7-8; to be read in the order quoted; then cover up, and without sorrowing, leave me to a brief repose until I hear 'the voice of the archangel and the trump of God,' when the earth will cast me out, and I shall awake to sleep the sleep of death no more."

These instructions were carried out by brother Bosher and myself on our going over to New York in connection with the administration of the will some weeks afterwards. We found that the Doctor had not been permanently interred, but only deposited in a vault pending our arrival, so that we had the unexpected gratification of complying with these instructions under circumstances that seemed to render it impossible.

(Here ends the autobiography entitled,  
"My Days and My Ways.")

# HIS DAYS AND HIS WAYS

## APPENDIX

### CHAPTER XXXVII.

AFTER DR. THOMAS' DEATH: "RENUNCIATIONISM."

"MY DAYS AND MY WAYS," an autobiography, ended with Chapter xxxvi.; what follows is by "a later hand." The autobiography originally ran through three volumes of *Good Company*, a magazine edited by the deceased from 1890 to 1894, when it expired. The volumes have for a long time been out of print. But though the magazine in question died then, the author of the foregoing survived for four years more, dying in 1898; so that there remain twenty-seven years of "his days and his ways" to be accounted for—"few and evil days," as he was wont to say, taking up the words of Jacob before Pharaoh (Gen. 47:9) without the least trace of affectation.

The writer of this "Appendix" bespeaks the forbearance of the few in the land of the living who may be affected by anything he may say concerning the controversies that have arisen since the death of Dr. Thomas. His aim is rather to illustrate the ways of Providence in the modern contention for and keeping of the truth, than to propitiate or offend individuals.

Taking up the thread of the autobiography, or looking back a little perhaps, we find ourselves in interesting times (1870). The magazine gave brother Roberts a good vehicle for the testimony of the truth, and he was not slow to make the best use he could of it. A certain Dr. Angus, President of the Baptist College, London, published three letters in *The Christian World*

## HIS DAYS AND HIS WAYS

in defence of the now almost obsolete doctrine of "Eternal Torments." The editor of *The Christadelphian* replied to these in October, November, and December, in a series of articles, afterwards published in pamphlet form under the title *Everlasting Punishment not Eternal Torments*. The pamphlet is still current.

The final fall of the Temporal Power of the Papacy occurred in September, 1870, and it has been remarked as a matter of surprise by some that it did not attract more attention and comment in the magazine. The reason doubtless is that it was overshadowed by the apparently greater event of the overthrow of the French Empire in the Franco-Prussian war. And time is needed to see world-events in their true perspective. Not that the matter was unnoticed—far from it, but it was more clearly understood and expounded in after years.

Among the activities of this time we notice the establishment of *The Christadelphian Children's Magazine* (Sept., 1871), a third series of which has just come to an end, due, among other things, to the war conditions at present prevailing. It was a very small affair in those days, but none the less valuable on its own scale. As to illustrations—photo process blocks were unknown, and the woodcuts were rather erratic in their appearance, and a serio-comic element sometimes obtruded itself in the puzzle pictures. But the children loved their magazine; and they were certainly helped by it to love their Bibles and to remember their Creator in the days of their youth, which was the whole aim and object of the enterprise.

The little community whose proportions stirred the contempt of David King, as aforesaid, kept growing, and some statistics in July, 1872, tell us that there were throughout the world 299 additions to the numbers in the year 1871-2. By-and-by these statistics were dropped, as it was realised that mere numbers meant nothing in view of the Lord's sayings about "many called, few chosen"; and it was also felt that the incident of David's numbering Israel, rightly regarded, was



a deterrent. So from that day to this no statistics have been compiled. Now, in the United Kingdom, the national necessity compels the numbering of the young men—"all that are able to go forth to war" (Num. 1:3). We notice that whereas the Law of Moses (which is the Law of God—Mal. 4:4; Num. 1:1) fixes the age at "twenty years old and upward," the British Government fixes it at eighteen years old and upward. By the way, a Jew recently pleaded the Law which says, "When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war, . . . but he shall be free at home one year; and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken" (Deut. 24:5). But the Tribunal did not admit the plea! How much better is the Law of God in Israel than the law of man in Britain! But we are digressing.

"The Fraternal Gathering" of 1872 is the next event that arrests our attention. It was held in Birmingham on August 10th, 11th, 12th and 13th, and is reported fully in a 76-page double number of *The Christadelphian*, the report subsequently appearing as a separate pamphlet under the title of "The Meaning of the Christadelphian Movement."

The first meeting was in the Athenæum on the Saturday evening. Brother Turner presided, and delivered an address of welcome to the assembled visitors from over thirty places all over the country. Brethren Shuttleworth, Meakin, Whitcomb, Smith, Townsend and Roberts followed with words of welcome, and brethren Boshier and Andrew, both of London, responded for the visitors. The proceedings were introduced and concluded with singing and prayer.

On the Sunday morning there was a large meeting (over 300) in the Temperance Hall for the Breaking of Bread. The order observed was almost exactly that which still remains. Brother Boshier presided; and he, together with others, addressed the meeting in exhortation. Among these were brethren Handley (of Maldon), Smith (of Edinburgh), J. J. Andrew (of London), Ellis (of Liverpool), and Roberts (Birmingham). In the even-

ing there was a lecture by brother E. Turney (of Nottingham) on "An Understanding of the Bible the Great Want of the Age," followed by another by brother Roberts (Birmingham) on "The Divine Solution of the Problems of the Day."

On Monday, August 12th, there was a meeting in the Athenæum in the morning at which various brethren spoke, as brethren Boshier, Andrew (both of London), Butler (Birmingham), Bannister (Derby), D. Clement (Mumbles), Yardley (Leicester), W. Clement (Mumbles), Dashper (Devonport), Dun (Birmingham), and Ellis (of Liverpool). In the evening there was a meeting in the Temperance Hall, the Athenæum proving inadequate for the accommodation of those present.

On Tuesday there was a muster at the Athenæum and a railway journey to Olton to Dr. Thomas' house, which he did not live to occupy. Here a tent was erected in the grounds, and lunch was provided. The company were photographed, the report telling us with delightful naivete that "the portraits are recognisable." We can bear witness to the truth of this, having only recently come across an old faded copy of the picture, and "recognising" several (though the figures are small). Forty-four years have sadly thinned the ranks. There are not many survivors now. There were more meetings, both at Olton and in the Temperance Hall in the evening. Among the names of the speakers we notice one who subsequently "went over to Rome," and others who have led controversies against the truth. But some have "kept the faith." And nearly all have now "gone the way of all the earth." The gathering was a great success.

*Dr. Thomas: His Life and Work*, a biography which began, as the Doctor smilingly complained, before he was dead, was announced in January, 1873, and was announced as "Now Ready" in August. Although rather heavy in parts, it is an interesting narrative, and "illustrative," as the author says, "of the process by which the truth has been extricated in modern times from the obscurity of Romish and Protestant tradition."



It contained a good steel engraved portrait of Dr. Thomas, but the block, a costly one, has vanished during the forty years' wanderings in the wilderness. The book is still in active circulation.

Just at this time (June, 1873) there arose "the Renunciationist Controversy," which threatened to undo Dr. Thomas' work with regard to a vital element of divine truth. It concerned the nature of Christ, his relation to Adam and humanity, and the nature of his sacrifice for sins. Edward Turney, of Nottingham, who had figured prominently at the Fraternal Gathering, issued in eight-page pamphlet form a series of "Thirty-two Questions and Answers concerning Jesus Christ." He acknowledged his indebtedness for the ideas put forth to David Handley, of Maldon, who also took part at the gathering. The first lines of the concluding paragraph of this pamphlet ran as follows:—

"BRETHREN AND FRIENDS,—Whatever I have taught by mouth or pen contrary to the views of Jesus Christ herein set forth, I NOW RENOUNCE."

Whence have arisen the uncouth technicalities "Renunciationist" and "Renunciationism." Unhappily the things "renounced" were true, and the things espoused were fables. These really and truly amounted to a phase of the old Gnostic heresies, the germs of which troubled the apostles themselves—especially John, who is very severe on men who "confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh" (1 John 4 : 3), and who thus manifest "the spirit of antichrist."

Brother T. excluded Jesus from "Adam's posterity" by defining that phrase to mean "Every human being who has been born of two human parents" (Quest. and Ans. No. 9). An "essential difference" was alleged to exist between "Jesus and the posterity of Adam" (Quest. 11). So much so that "Jesus Christ was *not* a son of Adam" (Quest. 13). It was alleged that "God gave life to Jesus direct from Himself, *as he did to Adam*" (Quest. 18), (another palpable untruth), and that in consequence "the body of Christ was not under con-

demnation" (Quest. 19) but possessed a free, unforfeited life. Consequently it was alleged that Christ himself was not redeemed by his own sacrifice (Questions 24, 27), and "might himself alone have entered into possession of life eternal"! And many other similar statements were made. These things were laid before the brethren in a lecture in the Temperance Hall on July 28th, 1873, and the next night brother Roberts delivered a reply lecture on "The Slain Lamb," in which the true doctrine of the nature and sacrifice of Christ were set forth. This lecture is still current in pamphlet form, a few of the personalities of so long ago having been eliminated as unworthy of perpetuation. It is, of course, controversial; a more simple and expository setting forth of the matter appearing in another pamphlet by the same author entitled, *The Blood of Christ*.

The controversy produced the usual crop of pamphlets, and bitternesses and separations, the echoes of which even now have not quite died away; but it was productive of a much better understanding of the purpose of God in Christ. A rival magazine was started in opposition to *The Christadelphian*, but it flickered out after a few years, and with the death of Edward Turney in 1879 the movement subsided. The doctrines advanced by "renunciationism" are being revived with embellishments by the "Russellite" movement of the present day; but it is only just to the memory of Edward Turney to exonerate him from anything quite so monstrous as the late "Pastor" Russell's doctrine of "ransom."

The work and worry entailed by this controversy brought on a severe illness, necessitating recuperation at a hydropathic establishment. From this seclusion, however, brother Roberts contributed to the magazine, dictating one article in particular to an amanuensis on "Twenty-one Years' Waiting and Watching, and at it still" (November, 1873). This was an interesting review of the progress of the world during the period in question towards the return of Christ and the establishment of the Kingdom of God. It covered the career of Louis

Napoleon; the Crimean check on Russian aggression; the overthrow of Austria by Prussia; the fall of the French Empire; the fall of the Temporal Power of the Papacy; and the beginnings of the Jewish movement for Restoration. Prophecy had been fulfilled and was fulfilling, and notwithstanding all troubles and controversies, there was good hope of speedy deliverance.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE BRADLAUGH DEBATE (1876) AND THE  
INSPIRATION CONTROVERSY (1885).

CONTROVERSY subsiding, the work of the truth and its testimony was resumed in something like normal channel. A new Hymn Book with music in both notations was brought out in 1873, and contributed largely to that excellence of congregational singing that has been remarked upon in more than one Christadelphian meeting by competent musical critics. Another reason, of course, is that the people "sing with the understanding also" (1 Cor. 14: 15). The truth intelligently received, and loved and obeyed, generates intelligent enthusiasm in praise. Perhaps this is the stronger reason of the two.

The Montefiore Palestine Colonisation Scheme was launched in 1875, and *The Daily Telegraph* appealed to the non-Israelitish public to join their Jewish fellow-citizens in contributing to the testimonial to Sir Moses Montefiore which was to take this form. Needless to say "Jews inwardly" were more than ready to contribute according to their ability, and brother Roberts was able to send a cheque to the paper (£100 or so), with a long letter dealing with current developments in their relation to the Hope of Israel. It is regretted that the limits of this volume do not admit of its reproduction. It will be found in *The Christadelphian*, 1875, p. 340. From that day to this, when "the time of Jacob's trouble" is surely at its worst, the brethren have maintained a brotherly solicitude for the persecuted people of God.

Looking back over the troubled years, the next activity that seems to challenge attention is the Bradlaugh Debate of 1876. This was a great event for the little community—a sort of David and Goliath encounter, for Mr. Bradlaugh was a man of herculean proportions

and great experience in secularist debates, while "David" was just "David," as we know.

After a lot of preliminary correspondence it was arranged that there should be a Six Nights' Discussion, three nights (June 13th, 14th, 15th) at Leicester; and three nights (June 20th, 21st, 22nd) at Birmingham. The proposition was to be:—"That the Scriptures are the reliable and authentic record of Divine Revelation." Mr. Roberts to affirm—Mr. Bradlaugh to deny. The discussion duly came off and was fully reported, making with "A Review of the Discussion by Mr. Roberts," a book of over 160 pages of small type. It has now for a long time been out of print and is not likely to be reprinted. The most divergent views of the discussion have been entertained by parties on either side thereof, each claiming the victory. The true merits of the case, of course, lay on the side of the Scriptures; but Mr. Bradlaugh's tactics were to admit nothing, deny everything, and raise every conceivable side issue possible. The immediate effect upon a relative of brother Roberts was to reclaim him from a threatened lapse into secularism. As for ourselves, we read the report (not having heard the debate) with a sense of extreme irritation at Mr. Bradlaugh's tactics. A discussion is interesting where both parties are honestly in search of the truth for its own sake, and at whatever cost; but where one is wholly given over to obscurantism and blocking the course of truth, it is otherwise. Mr. Bradlaugh made an exceedingly good handling of a bad case.

On one point (and more in all probability) subsequent discoveries have proved Mr. Bradlaugh wrong as to facts. He hazarded the assertion that, "There is not a scrap of Tatian existing except in a quotation of Eusebius." But all the time manuscripts were in existence, and in 1886 the Borgian Museum at Rome received from Egypt an Arabic MS. which was a version of the Syriac of Tatian's *Diatessaron*. An English translation appeared in 1894 by Mr. J. Hamblin Hill (T. and T. Clark), entitled *The Earliest Life of Christ ever compiled from the Four Gospels: being the Dia-*

*tessaron of Tatian* (circ. A.D. 160). Mr. Bradlaugh had strenuously denied that the four gospels could be proved to have existed as early as A.D. 150. Facts were against him here as all through the discussion.

If the brushes with scepticism in Yorkshire had prepared brother Roberts for the encounter with Mr. Bradlaugh, that encounter was to prepare him for one much more bitter, in which the character of the Scriptures was to be assailed, not from without but from within the body. It was some years coming, but in this year 1876 (July) "A Congregationalist minister became obedient to the Truth, un-Rev'd himself and gave up a salary of £400 a year." Such was the announcement in *The Christadelphian*, 1876, p. 313. Robert Ashcroft, for such was the minister's name, was an engaging personality, at that time about 34 years of age; and a man also of some eloquence, but without sufficient stability of character to "endure unto the end." That he endured much is indisputable, and brother Roberts felt a great affection for him in consequence, and it was a very great grief of mind when, through stress of controversy, separation had to come.

But this is anticipating a little, or perhaps more than a little, for it was not till nine years afterwards that The Inspiration Controversy arose. For a long time all went well. "Extracts from the Diary of a Congregationalist Minister" appeared month by month in *The Christadelphian*, affording sad evidences of the lifelessness of clerical theology.

About this time the Russo-Turkish war (1877) greatly exercised the brethren, and a special effort was made to draw the attention of the public to *Prophecy and the Eastern Question* by means of a pamphlet with that title written by brother Roberts. The pamphlet is well known, being still current in a modernised form. It was a great testimony. Copies were sent to all the members of the House of Lords and the House of Commons, and to very many public men all over the kingdom. By August "between 12,000 and 14,000 copies of the

pamphlet were in circulation." Mr. W. E. Gladstone gave it a tremendous impetus by the following letter, in which he acknowledged a copy sent to him :—

DUNSTER, January 24th, 1877.

SIR,—Allow me to thank you for your tract, which I shall read with great interest ; for I have been struck with the apparent ground for belief that the state of the East may be treated of in that field where you have been labouring.—Your faithful servant,  
W. E. GLADSTONE.

R. ROBERTS, Esq.

The political (press) adversaries of Mr. Gladstone rated him soundly for "supporting the cause of a few pig-headed local guardians of an American impostor, and of a crack-brained enthusiast"! But many papers treated the matter in a very different spirit, quoting the foregoing letter *in extenso*; and thus an advertisement was obtained which could not otherwise have been procured "for love or money." Never had there been such a testimony for the truth, and the brotherhood was made to feel that, as in the case of Philadelphia of old (Rev. 3:8) the Lord "had set before them an open door."

Another thing sprang out of the Russo-Turkish war in relation to the brethren, and that was the question of Military Service. A petition was drawn up, which appears in *The Christadelphian* for March, 1878, "Praying the Exemption of the Petitioners (the Christadelphians) from Conscription for Military Service." It was based upon the earlier petition drawn up by Dr. Thomas, and in a modified form has been presented to Parliament in connection with the present war\* with the result that exemption has been granted, conditional on the performance to the satisfaction of duly constituted authority, of alternative "work of national importance." Mr. Gladstone undertook to present this petition of 1878 if necessary. But it proved to be unnecessary, as was once more the case in the South African War of 1899-1902, when the matter was revived. It is truly wonderful to think that Britain has been for so many years free

\* The Great War, 1914-18.

from Compulsory Military Service. And yet more wonderful (when one looks across to Germany) to think that in the providence of God exemption has been granted to the brethren as it has been.

This year there was commenced in *The Christadelphian* a series of chapters on *The Ways of Providence*, a theme for which the mind of brother Roberts was peculiarly well suited. They were published in book form in 1881, and the book is by many considered to be the author's best work. Its peculiar interest lies in the fact that it abundantly illustrates from Bible history how easy it is for God to control the affairs of His children even in these days of His "silence"; and how the most untoward events (apparently) may turn out to be the channels of divine blessings untold.

"Anglo-Israelism" was much to the front about this time, due to the activities of Mr. Edward Hine, and another good advertisement for the truth was secured in a three-nights debate on the question, "Are Englishmen Israelites?" which took place between brother Roberts and Mr. Hine in Exeter Hall, London, on April 21st, 22nd and 23rd, 1879, Lord William Lennox in the chair. Mr. Hine was far from being the equal of Mr. Bradlaugh in making the best of a bad case, and the debate was an easy victory for the truth. A full report of the debate was published, making, with an added lecture and other matter, a pamphlet of 127 pages (now out of print). The lecture was entitled "The True Position of Britain in Prophecy," and the substance of it is still current in the pamphlet, "Anglo-Israelism Refuted." The Anglo-Israelite theory, though in many ways absurd, yet had this one redeeming feature about it, that it drew attention to the prophets. In fact, in some cases (including that of the present writer) it proved a stepping-stone to the truth. As concerning the debate, R. Ashcroft said that brother Roberts "was in his very best form"; and a correspondent of *The Rock* said: "Of Mr. Roberts I know nothing. Some said he was a Baptist, others that he was a Unitarian; but whoever he be, he proved more than a match for a dozen Mr. Hines." This testimony is

true, as any reasonable man who reads the debate must admit.

Through *The Christadelphian* of this year (1879) there appeared a series of papers on "Pulpit Perplexities," by R Ashcroft. And in August a prospectus of *Seasons of Comfort*, a volume of fifty-two Sunday Morning Addresses at the Breaking of Bread. "Personal Explanations and Proposals" were made. In brief, brother Roberts had encountered several losses, and one in particular through unadvisedly lending a brother a sum of money which represented subscriptions to *The Christadelphian*, paid in advance! The brother made default, and there was trouble. The proposal was to publish this volume at a price (seven shillings and tenpence, post free) that would redeem the situation. This was done, amidst various comments and actions, friendly and otherwise, the net result being that through a natural blunder no small spiritual gain and edification accrued to believers of the truth, especially to scattered individuals and small communities in the far corners of the earth. By-and-bye, the price of the book was reduced to little more than half the original figure.

Next year (1880) another book came into existence "without any design on the part of the writer," as was stated in the preface. This was *Thirteen Lectures on the Apocalypse*. The lectures were delivered in the Temperance Hall, Birmingham (January 15th to April 15th), "not with a view to publication," and were "reproduced from brief notes made by several shorthand writers during their delivery. Their publication is due to the importunities of those who heard them and others who heard of them." "Perhaps," said the author, "the design existed where *The Ways of Providence* have their roots and source." The book has done, and is doing, good and useful work as an easy introduction to the study of the Apocalypse; introductory to the voluminous exposition of *Eureka*. While these lectures were in progress the present writer was at sea (Australia to England) coming in contact with these activities of the truth at the end of this year. Next year (1881) there was

a course of lectures on The Return of Christ, in the Town Hall, Birmingham. These (four) lectures were published in pamphlet form, and this was about the first Christadelphian literature that came in the way of the present writer. He did not then suppose that in after years he would be so intimately connected with it.

There was also begun in this year a series of chapters in *The Christadelphian* on *The Visible Hand of God*—a companion theme to *The Ways of Providence*, which dealt with the invisible working of divine providence. These chapters, on Miracles, Signs and Wonders, were published in book form in 1883, and the book is still in circulation. Another work of this time was *The Trial*, a sort of dramatising, in the form of a lawsuit, of the evidences of the resurrection of Christ. The full title ran as follows:—"The Trial of the Most Notable Lawsuit of Ancient or Modern Times—The Incorporated Scientific Era Protection Society v. Paul Christman and others—In the Court of Common Reason—Before Lord Penetrating Impartiality and a Special Jury—Issue; 'Did Christ Rise from the Dead?'—Verbatim Report by a shorthand writer." The book was published anonymously, by Houlston and Sons, London, so that the argument might not be prejudiced by its Christadelphian associations. It is an exceedingly clever and even "racy" book, "this clever *Jeu d'esprit*," as one critic styled it. One of my dearest friends (in common with others) did not like the drapery, but I enjoyed the book exceedingly, and got some hundreds of copies sent out to Melbourne, Australia, and circulated, having several of the "Opinions of the Press" reprinted in circular form as an advertisement. Several of these "opinions" were very good indeed, and one paper actually guessed the authorship by reason of the life-like portraiture of "Mr. Bad Laugh," the shade of Mr. Bradlaugh! This paper said that the portraiture in this case was done to the life, and that one could almost imagine the Member for Northampton in the witness box. "And this," added the paper, "inclines us to the belief that the author of *The Trial* is no other than Mr. Robert Roberts,

with his memories of his debate with Mr. Chas. Bradlaugh"—or words to that effect. At the end of *The Trial* appeared this announcement:

By the Same Author:

In the press and will shortly appear—

CHRISTENDOM ASTRAY,

for the time was coming when the book, hitherto comparatively hidden away under the colourless title "Twelve Lectures," was to have an entirely new lease of life, and to become a much more potent instrument in the work of the Truth.

In this year (1882) Britain went into Egypt, and Dr. Thomas' anticipations in *Elpis Israel* in 1848 received so striking a justification and fulfilment, that the brethren were full of exultation and hope of the speedy appearing of the Lord. It was felt that a special effort to draw attention to the prophetic word was required, and brother Roberts wrote the pamphlet *England and Egypt—Prophecy Fulfilled and Fulfilling*, reviewing the events of the past thirty years, quoting in full Dr. Thomas' exposition from *Elpis Israel*, and showing the important bearing of the British occupation on the questions of Jewish Restoration and British Imperialism. The pamphlet had a wide circulation, and a second edition is still current. But now it sadly needs revision and bringing up to date, for much history has been made in Egypt since 1882.

*A Guide to the Formation and Conduct of Christadelphian Ecclesias*, based on the lessons of thirty years' experience, was published by brother Roberts in 1883; and *Christendom Astray* followed next year. In its new form, Long Primer, demy 8vo, it made a substantial book of about 400 pages, and with its new and very definite (though necessarily somewhat aggressive) title, more quickly challenged attention. It was widely advertised, and became more than ever a pioneer work in the truth. At this time also (1884, October) there was commenced in *The Christadelphian* a series of chapters on *The Life*

of Christ that were afterwards (1890) published in book form under the title *Nazareth Revisited*. But at the end of this year The Inspiration Controversy for a while eclipsed nearly all other literary effort than was related to it.

*The Christadelphian* for December, 1884, is mainly taken up with the question "Is the Bible the work of Inspiration?" the leading article being republished in pamphlet form and still current. The reason of this was that R. Ashcroft, having wearied under the restrictions of the truth, though still retaining a nominal connection, and having left Birmingham for Liverpool, started a magazine (*The Exegetist*) in the first number of which (and the only one that ever appeared), he propounded the doctrine of partial inspiration of the Scriptures. He maintained that only such parts of the O.T. as could not otherwise be produced were inspired; that the Bible contained a human (i.e., an erring) element; and that inspiration only covered "all that may be said to belong to divine revelation proper: by which is to be understood everything in the Scriptures that may have been beyond the power of man to discover for himself." This was supplemented presently from another source with the doctrine of erring inspiration. Brother Roberts was dismayed. He had made the most of the ex-Congregationalist minister and loved him as a brother; and had even given him the lists of names and addresses of subscribers to *The Christadelphian* to help launch the new magazine. And this was the result! The Birmingham ecclesia and nearly all the ecclesias in the country were at once plunged into a new controversy which affected the very foundations of the truth, for the Bible is the foundation of all. Long and bitter experience had given brother Roberts a quickness of perception and determination in action that could not be discerned and appreciated by those who were not like-minded, and strong and bitter resentment arose over his prompt and uncompromising hostility to the popular clerical doctrine of a very fallible Bible. Six months of misery were endured in the Birmingham ecclesia, and then there came

the inevitable division. The greater number, both of the executive and of the general body, declared for a wholly inspired and infallible Bible: and so declaring, dissolved the ecclesia, and re-incorporated themselves as The Birmingham Christadelphian Ecclesia, placing at the head of their "Statement of the Faith" forming their "Basis of Fellowship" the following:

#### THE FOUNDATION.

That the book currently known as the Bible, consisting of the Scriptures of Moses, the prophets, and the apostles, is the only source of knowledge concerning God and His purposes at present extant or available in the earth, and that the same were wholly given by inspiration of God in the writers, and are consequently without error in all parts of them, except such as may be due to errors of transcription or translation (2 Tim. 3:16; 1 Cor. 2:13; Heb 1:1; 2 Pet 1:21; 1 Cor. 14:37; Neh. 9:30; Jno. 10:35).

The minority formed a separate meeting, and the division endures to this day. Unity of mind on the subject was and is alleged by the minority, but one looks in vain for any such statement as the foregoing in their Basis of Fellowship. As for the ex-Congregationalist minister, he returned to his clerical associations, and afterwards even drifted into Spiritualism.

Again there was the establishment of a rival magazine, and the usual bitternesses of controversy; but it was a good and not a bad thing for the truth. The Bible is less and less esteemed in clerical schools where pseudo-criticism is rampant, and it needed a rough blast like this to wake Christadelphians up to a sense of their responsibilities. As to the subject of this biography, he felt the stress of the situation very keenly in many ways. In this troubled year (1885) he was moved to write a series of (four) letters, "To the Elect of God in a Time of Trouble" (February, March, April, May), and a fifth (June), "A Letter to My Enemies." In the judgment of the present writer, these letters form the high-water-mark of the spiritual attainments of the deceased. They breathe quite the spirit of David and of Christ.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### "THE SUGAR DISASTER."

THE inspiration controversy having reached its climax, a New Constitution of the Birmingham Ecclesia was drawn up as described in *The Christadelphian* for August, 1886. The Basis of Faith contained, as before stated, an initial clause defining our attitude towards the Bible. In this month also there appeared *The Christadelphian Instructor*, a kind of extended Catechism, a pamphlet of about 60 pages, which has become one of the most useful works on the truth, and is appreciated by many adults as well as by children. Next year (1887) the brethren came into closer connection with the work of Mr. Laurence Oliphant, who was at that time interesting himself greatly in the matter of Jewish Colonization in Palestine. He lived at Haifa, the little seaport on the bay of Acre at the foot of Mount Carmel. Here brother V. Collyer visited him in this year, and was able to report as an eye-witness of his activities. The time seemed ripe for that preadventual colonization of the land that was foretold in the prophets, notably in Ezekiel (chapters 37-39), and the brethren began to feel quite a tangible interest in the Land of Promise, having an influential friend there who was able and willing to administer whatever little help they could contribute to an object so dear to them.

In this connection there appeared for a moment to be a promise of considerable means wherewith to help forward the enterprise. But the brotherhood, and some individuals in particular, had to be reminded by rather drastic experience that just as Israel had sold themselves for nought, so they were to be "redeemed without money" (Isa. 52:3). And this introduces a subject which for good reasons is exceedingly distasteful to the present writer, but is by no means therefore to be slurred over in this veracious narrative, and that is "The Sugar Disaster."



I notice that this melancholy affair has been recorded in *Haydn's Dictionary of Dates*, under the article "Sugar." The following extract will introduce the matter:—"A secret process of refining sugar by electricity said to have been invented by Prof. Henry C. Friend, of New York, announced 1885. He succeeded in organising The New York Electric Sugar Refining Company to carry out the invention; the scheme collapsed and occasioned much loss in America and England by credulous persons, the whole affair being an imposture (1888). It caused a temporary panic in Liverpool (Jan.); Mrs. Friend, then a widow, and her daughter were arrested in Michigan (Feb.); William E. Howard, one of the Company, was sentenced to imprisonment for 'grand larceny' 21st June, 1889."

Such is the bald record of what is called in *The Christadelphian* of the period, "The Sugar Disaster," which involved, besides "credulous persons," some to whom that epithet certainly could not apply. A certain brother R. being commercially connected with the affair (though not with the fraud!) was approached by brother Roberts, who thought it would be a good thing if he himself and the brethren in general could secure some of the prospective wealth for the sake of helping forward the work of the Truth in general, and the Palestine Colonization Project in particular. Brother R., however, did not wish to entangle anyone in commercial speculation. But brother R. R. prevailed, and so it came about that "much loss" was occasioned in Christadelphian circles. Cynical friends (and enemies) were of course not slow to add to the affliction by the citation of such scriptures as Prov 28:22: "He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him"! And they did not scruple to suggest that the whole Christadelphian position was, like "Electric Sugar" itself, an unmitigated fraud! And many who were neither "cynical" nor "enemies" were very naturally exercised and grieved at an episode which, however unjustly, brought the good name of brother Roberts and Christadelphians generally into even

momentary disrepute. Some considered that an article ("Yet not altogether") that appeared in *The Christadelphian* for December, 1888, was, in nautical phraseology, "sailing too close to the wind," in its justification of co-operation with the world to the extent of holding shares in the Sugar Refining Company.

When the crash came in the beginning of 1889 brother Roberts went over to New York to investigate, and his article in *The Christadelphian* for February of that year explained his connection with the affair, which need not be further alluded to now. There were some curious incidents in the winding up of the matter, and in the end it was universally recognised that brother Roberts and all the brethren concerned were the innocent victims of a fraud. As he had been largely instrumental in inducing many of the brethren to hold shares in the company, brother Roberts long cherished the hope of being able to make good the losses he had so unwittingly caused. I used to say that it seemed to me that it would not be divinely permitted, and that the chastening we had got, though very unpleasant, was a good deal safer than the possession of abundant wealth. But this, of course, was not a convincing argument, and he would not be convinced; and this led to his being involved in other fiascos later on.

Just at this time, as if to emphasise the darkness and depression, Mr. Oliphant died at Twickenham, near London, and the Palestine projects went under eclipse. Added to this discomfort was the removal of the office of *The Christadelphian* from Edmund Street, whither it had been removed from The Athenæum about 1883, to 139, Moor Street, opposite where the Great Western Railway Station of that name now stands. It was the depth of winter, the premises were a sort of ramshackle conversion of a warehouse with goods entrance, and the whole outlook remains as it were the memory of a nightmare.

In anticipation of increased ways and means *The Christadelphian* had been increased in size (1888) and brother Shuttleworth had allotted to him sixteen pages



per month as "The Christadelphian Fellow Labourer" for the exercise of his peculiar gifts. He had conducted a little weekly, *The Lightstand*, for a few years, but it was not self-supporting, and was financed by friends. Brother Roberts proposed the solution above indicated. All these pleasant proposals evaporated by reason of "The Sugar Diasater," and the present writer found himself a servant of brother Roberts, to the great humiliation of all flesh concerned, though by no means to the detriment of the work of the truth, or of either party. The present writer had come over from Australia in 1887 simply and solely with the desire of getting into closer touch with the work of the truth, and entirely against every other desire and interest. And this rough hammer-blow riveted him into it at a stroke.

Next year (1890), to help the situation, brother Roberts projected a new magazine, "a sort of outer-court companion to *The Christadelphian*," as he expressed it. It was called *Good Company*, and ran till midsummer, 1894. It is from its columns, as already explained, that the autobiographical portion of this book is taken. From one point of view it was rather an Hibernian performance, for while it entailed a lot of work editorially and clerically, I very much doubt whether, on a fair calculation, it ever paid its way. But it was an interesting little paper while it lasted. In this year also, *Nazareth Revisited* (The Life of Christ) was issued, and after twenty-six years this edition has just been exhausted. We had anticipated that Nazareth would have been revisited by the Lord before now.

## CHAPTER XL.

## "RESURRECTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY."

THE phrase at the head of this chapter indicates yet another controversy, and one obviously related to "the time of the end." In one sense it would seem strange that the atmosphere of the truth should be thus beclouded with controversy; but the sense of strangeness vanishes when we look back to the life of Christ upon earth, and to the times of the apostles. It was controversy all the time; and we are apostolically warned that it will be so to the end.

Looking back over the files of *The Christadelphian* to complete the last few years of this biography, I notice a dream that has come true, and "a nightmare" at that. In the editorial for January, 1892, brother Roberts refers to a book that created a sensation at the time and was, I believe, suppressed. Here is a sentence or two:—

"A terrible book has intensified the nightmare horror of actual events (Russian Famine, Jewish Persecutions, etc.), *Cæsar's Column*, as the counterpart to Mr. Bellamy's optimistic *Looking Backwards*, has prepared a wide circle of readers for the most appalling anticipations as to the course of social events,—anticipations sufficiently founded on probability to scare sleep from all pillows where the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, has not penetrated to the sleepers."

*Cæsar's Column* in conclusion, among other things pictured the bombing of a city by "demons," air-ships; and in the familiar Zeppelin raids of 1915, 1916, the dream has in this particular come true. The social revolution remains to be revealed, but everyone can see that it is coming. Well, "the time of the dead," was to be in "a time of trouble such as never was"; so that the conditions are favourable. And it is not inharmonious

that at such a time the minds of men, and of Christadelphians in particular, should be providentially directed to the question of "Resurrectional Responsibility."

In the early part of 1893 there was another course of four lectures by brother Roberts in the Town Hall ("City Hall" then, but the usage has returned to "The Town Hall," though Birmingham remains a "city," as it was "Ordained and Declared by Letters Patent" in 1889). The subject was "The Return of Christ to the Earth," and there were crowded audiences. It was brother Roberts' last big testimony in Birmingham, and was a worthy finale. The first lecture, on the witness of history to Christ, was a very telling piece of evidence, and was very highly appreciated by the brethren and interested friends. Even now, nearly twenty-five years afterwards, one sometimes hears it referred to.

During this year there began to be allusions in *The Christadelphian* to the question of Resurrectional Responsibility, and next year (1894) an article by brother F. G. Jannaway, under the title "Repent" (March, p. 111), indicated that there was trouble in London on the subject. And so there was. The late J. J. Andrew, a highly esteemed brother of many years' standing in the truth, who had been a prominent figure at the Fraternal Gathering in 1872, had become possessed of the extraordinary idea that none but the baptized could possibly be raised from the dead for punishment. There was no disagreement as concerning the righteous; but his terrible thesis stated in its extremest form in his own words was this:—"Those who are outside (Christ's) redemptive work *cannot come forth*. They are in Adam; Christ has never 'bought' them. They never come within the scope of his blood; and therefore he is not their Lord to judge them." In other words, a man might with perfect impunity reject the gospel and commit every kind of wickedness, without fear of facing resurrection and condemnation so long as he diligently kept "outside Christ's redemptive work"; that is, was not "baptized

into Christ"! This was argued out at length in a pamphlet entitled *The Blood of the Covenant*, one of the most dangerous pieces of sophistry ever encountered by the present writer.

Brother Roberts was once more dismayed at the prospect. He immediately wrote a pamphlet in reply, entitled *The Resurrection to Condemnation: Who will come forth to it?* in which he emphasised the scriptural and reasonable doctrine that the coming of the light of God's truth is the ground of condemnation of those who reject it (John 3: 18-21); and that God will "require" of men a reason why they "would not hearken" unto His words in the mouth of Christ (Deut. 18: 18, 19).

There had been some haziness of perception with regard to this matter among Christadelphians, and divergent views were tolerated for many years; but when such a thesis as that above defined was forced upon the community by a leading brother, the time for toleration was past. It was for a little while hoped that further strife and division might be avoided, but this proved to be impossible. There was the usual crop of pamphlets and strife, the establishment of another rival magazine, and the twenty years and more that have since elapsed have not sufficed to eliminate all traces of the trouble. But, as in the case of previous controversies, the subject is much better understood now, and the testimony much more faithfully delivered.

In July this year (1894) there appeared the first of a series of chapters on *The Law of Moses*, which proved to be the last work of brother Roberts. The last chapter appeared in *The Christadelphian* for April, 1898, only a few months before his death, and an index in manuscript was among the papers found by the present writer when he took charge of the belongings of the deceased. The book was published in 1899, and is still in circulation. Thus the stress of controversy and other very adverse circumstances did not fatally obstruct the work of the truth; but the last few years of our author's life must have been an arduous and sorrowful experience.

## CHAPTER XLI.

## ROUND THE WORLD (1895-6).

IN 1894 there did not appear to be anything in existence that would be likely to cause brother Roberts to make a journey round the world, visiting and encouraging the brethren in many countries. But there was ; and it was a matter almost as untoward in external appearance as the selling of Joseph to the Ishmaelites who took him down to Egypt : or the famine which afterwards took the whole family of Jacob thither.

A certain brother was approached by a certain swindler who shall be nameless, and became convinced that he had in his possession a scheme of manufacturing unbreakable glass (!), which scheme, when it should be properly developed, would produce wealth by comparison with which that promised by the Electric Sugar Refining Company would be small ! The brother, knowing brother Roberts' earnest desire to make good the losses he had unwittingly helped to cause, innocently enough introduced this man to him. The man found an easy prey, illustrating only too sadly well the soundness of the judgment " of one of the first phrenologists of the day," recorded by our author himself (chap. 33) :—" You have no faculty for contriving bargains " !

The bubble soon burst, and the story of the imposture is told with singular frankness in *The Christadelphian* for January, 1895. One or two other ventures about this time, in which there was no fraud—only unwisdom and mismanagement—proved almost as disastrous as the broken glass ; and very serious financial embarrassment was the result. And instead of helping others out of the ditch, friends had to come to the rescue of the would-be rescuer ! It was a dismal time, and another great humiliation for brother Roberts ; but it afforded a striking measure of the love and esteem in which he was held for his work's sake, and opened the way for a useful and final phase of that work.

A severe illness naturally followed the strain of these unhappy experiences ; the doctor wondering at first at the spectacle of an apparently perfectly healthy man in a state of utter collapse. When he knew the history of the case he understood it perfectly, and told his patient that the only cure for him—or, at least, the best cure—would be a long sea voyage. Usually such a piece of advice is like telling a poor man to go to the Mediterranean Riviera for a change, without giving him a cheque to cover the expenses. But if he should by any means happen to have a lot of friends in the Riviera who love him sufficiently to provide the cheque—why, then all is well. That is about how this matter worked out. The Australasian brethren, hearing of the trouble, and of the prescription, jumped at the chance of providing the medicine. An announcement on the cover of *The Christadelphian* (April, 1895) met with immediate response ; in fact, a cable from Sydney (invitation and paid passage) came almost as soon as the magazine reached that city. In a very short time a journey round the world was arranged ; which, on being turned into history, occupied almost exactly a year—" 21st August, 1895—19th August, 1896."

The interesting record of the sayings and doings of this year will be found in *The Christadelphian* (October, 1895, and onward). It was afterwards published in book form under the title *A Diary of a Voyage to Australia, New Zealand and Other Lands*, making a volume of about 200 quarto pages. It has been out of print for some years.

The itinerary was as follows :—From London to Albany and Adelaide in the ss. *Oruba*, via the Suez Canal, touching at Naples and Colombo. From Adelaide overland to Ballarat, Bendigo, Inglewood and Melbourne. From Melbourne to Beechworth, Albury and Sydney. From Sydney to Newcastle and Toowoomba, Ipswich, Gympie, Brisbane and Rockhampton. From Brisbane by sea to Sydney. From Sydney to New Zealand (Auckland). From Auckland to Stratford, Wanganui, Woodville, Dannevirke, Napier, Wellington, Christchurch,

Timaru, Inchlutha, Dunedin and Invercargill. From Invercargill to Tasmania (Hobart). From Hobart to Launceston. From Launceston to Melbourne. From Melbourne further visits to Adelaide, Ballarat, Daylesford, Beechworth, Albury and Sydney. From Sydney to the Fiji islands, and thence to the Sandwich Islands (Honolulu) and Victoria, B.C. From Victoria overland to Toronto, Buffalo, Philadelphia and Boston. From Boston to Liverpool and Birmingham.

The opening paragraphs of the *Diary* may be quoted here :—

"*Sunday, August 18th.*—My last Sunday before sailing. It was the last thing in the world I should have thought of, this making a voyage to the other side of the world. Very rough circumstances have coerced me."

"I depart with considerable reluctance, but with the confidence, which an enlightened view of life inspires, that all circumstances, even the undesirable and untoward, contribute their part to the evolution of divine ends—whether with a man or a nation."

And so it turned out. To start with, he had a two-berth cabin. "I made the acquaintance (he says) of my room-mate, who I was glad to find was not a Roman Catholic priest, or a clergyman, or a rake, but a young Australian farmer from Toowoomba, Queensland, who had been on a visit to 'the old country.' I rather like him. He seems the sort of man that might receive the truth."

As a matter of fact, he turned out to be a most congenial companion, and did receive the truth, in the possession of which he still rejoices. With his help, brother Roberts managed to liven things up a bit, and get a hearing for the truth. There was an amusing little debate with a theosophist, and there were one or two lectures on board.

As to the details of his long journey, it is manifestly impossible to allude to them here. Suffice it to say that there was the usual mixture of testifying to the truth in lectures, letters and private conversations, interspersed

here and there with controversy, and that "earnest contention for the faith" which can never be absent in this mortal sphere. And there was, of course, always the opportunity in the Sunday meetings for the Breaking of Bread for that brotherly "speaking unto men to edification, exhortation and comfort" which the apostle Paul calls "prophesying" (1 Cor. 14 : 3), and in which our deceased brother was so faithful a "prophet." So out of the blunders and misfortunes of 1894 God brought much good in the years following, and many to this day are very thankful for the help and encouragement then received.

## CHAPTER XLII.

## REMOVES TO AUSTRALIA (1897).

BROTHER ROBERTS returned to Birmingham in August, 1896, as he said, "to find many changes among some things unchangeable. The local ecclesia (he continued) is much larger: the general ecclesia is much livelier: the outlook in the field of foreign politics, where lie 'the Signs of the Times,' is much brighter. In the human elements of the situation, the tendency to new transformations is as steady and persistent as the changes in the shapes of the clouds on the most tranquil of days. Friendly friends are friendlier: unfriendly friends are not improved: some worldly believers are worldlier: some crotchety ones more crotchety: some treasured ones are in their graves: others are visibly wending their way thither, as in a sense we all are. As for our own clouded sky, it is broken up into masses with a wind rising to blow them over the horizon. As for Israel's Hope, 'Higher yet that star ascends.'"

In connection with this last remark, I am reminded of one of my early "editorials" of over twenty years ago (Jan., 1896). Sister Roberts was quite interested in it, and remembers it to this day. Mr. Stead had brought out the *Review of Reviews Annual* for 1896, and had actually painted a picture (in fiction) of the Restoration of Israel! I dished it up under the heading, "The Hope of Israel in Caricature." It is not uninteresting reading at the present time (1917) when we are on the eve of some sort of realization of the vision.

"Blown over the horizon," of Brother Roberts' allusion above, was rather a disquieting simile; and when he announced the proposed transfer of himself and family to Melbourne, Australia, with the idea of "spending every alternate year in England"! "friendly friends" were sad. "If my vote had to settle the matter," said one of these, "you would not have to go."

And so said the present writer, and many others. But we all recognised the hand of God in human affairs, and awaited developments.

I think I have heard that the late Mr. W. E. Gladstone said he once wrote something on Homer "to clear his head." In the early part of 1895, about the time of the severe illness mentioned in the last chapter, brother Roberts did the like. Indeed, I think his head might have given way but for this kindly distraction. But he himself will tell the tale by means of the following extract from *The Christadelphian* for October, 1896:—

"WHERE IS JOHN SMITH?"

This question was suddenly asked me, in a most unexpected place—in the heart of the Queensland bush, far from open country, seated at dinner with six or eight others round a table in a shanty, in the midst of surrounding wood. The question was asked with all eyes fixed on me.

I replied "What John Smith?"—to which the response was a shout of laughter, followed by a statement that the company in that thinly-settled neighbourhood had received from England the first number of an anonymous work, entitled, "*England's Ruin*"; or JOHN SMITH's answer to Mr. Blatchford's plea for Socialism, as contained in the widely circulated work, *Merrie England*," and that the said first number was accompanied by the expression of the opinion that the author was the editor of *The Christadelphian*. They had read the pamphlet, and they were sure the opinion was correct.

This was a severe ordeal for a man with a secret, especially a man who could not claim to fall back upon Sir Walter Scott's technical right, under similar circumstances, to a plea of "Not guilty." I could not lie, and therefore I was in a hapless corner. My very attempt to appear ignorant was evidence of guilt: I said if they would keep the matter to themselves, I would tell them. There was an object in secrecy, which I would explain.

Some twelve months ago, there appeared an impassioned plea on behalf of the wrongs of working men. It was entitled *Merrie England*. It was in the form of a series of letters to an imaginary John Smith as representing the working classes, in the same way that John Bull represents England. The book sold in thousands upon thousands, and created a great impression. It was sent to me to read. I read it. It struck me as affording a great opportunity of showing not only the hopeless nature of Socialism as a scheme of human government, but the complete adaptation of the gospel of the kingdom to all the woes of man. It was while I was beginning to get better of my recent illness that I set myself to the writing of it, which helped to divert my mind from the sorrows of the hour. I wrote an answer, letter by letter, as from the said John Smith (being in truth an ingredient of the great impersonal individual addressed by Mr. Blatchford).

But I thought it would have little chance of a public circulation if its authorship were known, and therefore I approached a London publisher through a third party, and the publication took place in penny numbers. Many thousands have been sold, but on nothing of the scale of Mr. Blatchford's book. The Bible flavour has been unfavourable to popularity. The sale has now practically stopped, except in Australia.

The author explained that the publication had been "no profit to him, but the reverse"; and this remark holds good with reference to the greatly superior edition I issued when Mr. Blatchford re-issued *Merrie England* in 1908. (*England's Ruin* was this time issued in one pamphlet of 162 pages, with portrait, price sixpence, in cloth one shilling.) It is well worth reading, and will presently be more in season than ever.

We "awaited developments" and they developed. In July all arrangements had been made for the removal to Australia. There was a farewell tea-meeting in the Temperance Hall, Birmingham, on July 22nd, and

painfully pointed reference was made to Acts 20, where Paul took leave of the Ephesian elders, who "sorrowed most of all for the word which he spake, that they should see *his face no more*." If I remember rightly, one brother applied the passage openly and emphatically with only too true a presentiment. Privately I had argued with brother Roberts the inexpediency of the contemplated step from a merely human point of view; but had been "floored" with Luke's words concerning Paul and some at Cæsarea who attempted to dissuade him from going up to Jerusalem: "And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done" (Acts 21:14). To this I could only answer, "Amen."

This recalls another curious incident. Brother Roberts and I were in strong and hopeless disagreement about a certain business detail concerning transfer of premises. He "would not be persuaded," and I, feeling that right and reason were on my side, was equally loth to give way. Suddenly he said, "Oh, brother Walker! let's draw lots." In a moment we did so, and "the lot caused contentions to cease and parted between the mighty" (!)—(Prov. 18:18). The lot came out in my favour, and, in view of subsequent developments, I am fully persuaded that in this matter also "the will of the Lord was done."

The reflections at the tea-meeting aforesaid, if somewhat sorrowful, were of a very edifying character. Brother Roberts had been "just forty years at work," over thirty of them in Birmingham. He had "just finished the public exposition of the Scriptures in Birmingham, on a method that had taken us through the whole Bible, beginning at Genesis and finishing at Revelation." He "commended the brethren to God and the word of His grace," as did Paul those of whom he took leave (Acts 20:32). This only could give them "an inheritance among the sanctified."

Brother Roberts lectured in the Temperance Hall, Birmingham, for the last time on Sunday, July 25th. The subject was appropriate, and in a manner prophetic:

"The Last Message." But he spoke of the Apocalypse. Nevertheless that was *his* "last message" to Birmingham, though another was projected. On the following Tuesday, he left Birmingham for London, sister Roberts and her daughters having preceded him. I saw him off at New Street Station, feeling a deep and irremovable presentiment that I was saying Good-bye to a man of God whom I should see no more in the land of the living this side of the judgment seat of Christ.

Our travellers sailed from Southampton in the ss. *Darmstadt* on August 2nd, touching at Genoa and Naples on the voyage. It is interesting to note the descriptions of fellow-voyagers of places you yourself have visited, and I followed the record of "A Second Voyage to Australia" (*The Christadelphian*, September, 1897, and onwards) with as much interest as the previous *Diary*. But of course there was an inevitable sameness, though the conditions were now so much pleasanter. Pleasanter in some ways; but one smiles at the encounters of brother Roberts with "Egdon and Company," some very boorish and drunken nuisances who would have pitched him overboard had they dared. He didn't quite know how to handle them; though in some respects he did admirably. There was a lecture on August 29th on "Nebuchadnezzars' dream," and brother Roberts' notes concerning the date that it is "sister Roberts' 67th birthday." She is now within about six months of 87, and is still most interested in all the activities and outlooks of the Truth. What other interest remains in mortal life at 87? There was another lecture on September 5th, in the steerage. This led to the discovery of brother Ralph Holmes, to the mutual surprise of all parties. We never know who may be our fellow-voyagers. Once in the Mediterranean an angel appeared on board (Acts 27: 23).

The vessel reached Melbourne on September 12th, and our travellers found themselves in a new world. They settled down at Coburg, a northern suburb of Melbourne, in "Orient House," which had been built by brother Firth. I notice that in *The Christadelphian* for

April, 1898, in which this chapter appears, there appears also the last chapter of *The Law of Moses*. Brother Roberts just finished this for the press before his death. This again reminds me of another curious circumstance. It is thus alluded to in the Preface to *The Ministry of the Prophets* :—

"This book is really supplementary to one dealing with the ministry of the greatest of the prophets save the Lord Jesus Christ, that is Moses. 'The Law of Moses' is the title of the last work of Robert Roberts. It deals with the Law as 'a rule of National and Individual life, and as the enigmatical enunciation of divine principles and purposes.' Moses' work was the building of: the house of God in Israel, as it were by a faithful servant. The work of the later prophets was the carrying on of the affairs of the household. 'The Law and the Prophets' is a natural sequence, and on the completion of the aforesaid book the present was suggested to the author (then in Australia) by his fellow-labourer in England. The reply was the first chapter in print, the idea having naturally occurred, and having borne fruit."

The first portion of *The Ministry of the Prophets* was written by brother Roberts in the course of his journeyings, and at sea on the Pacific Ocean. When brother Roberts died in 1898, I took up the thread with Isaiah ch. 6, which begins, "In the year that King Uzziah died." My first contribution appeared in *The Christadelphian* for December, 1898. It was with some surprise and amusement that I afterwards learnt that the "later hand" had not at once been detected even in some well-informed quarters. In fact, sister Roberts herself is hazy as to where the break occurs even to this day! I thought the incident was a good testimony to the oneness of mind on divine things that existed between brother Roberts and myself. As to the literary problem, I always maintained that he could not write half-a-dozen pages without my recognition of the authorship. Like those lynx-eyed Queenslanders, I bowled "John Smith" out with the first ball.



There were one or two courses of special lectures in Melbourne, and then brother Roberts began his travels again. He visited Gippsland, Albury, Sydney, Newcastle, Toowoomba, Southbrook, Brisbane and Rockhampton, returning to Sydney in the middle of March, feeling quite unwell. Hearing that sister Roberts was ill in Melbourne, he returned at once, for her sake, and for recuperation in preparation for another visit to New Zealand, in which she was to accompany him. Another visit to Ballarat took place about this time; but something hindered as regards Adelaide. And Melbourne itself was troubled by an unhappy divorce case, the echoes of which lasted for many years.

On May 21st brother and sister Roberts sailed from Melbourne for New Zealand *via* Tasmania (Hobart), landing in New Zealand at Invercargill (The Bluff) in the extreme south. Here the unfortunate subject of this biography had literally to scramble out of the steamer and train on to the platform to deliver a lecture that had been arranged. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" certainly; and a stout heart well stored is necessary for such experiences. From Invercargill, where our travellers renewed the acquaintance of brother and sister Mackay, very old friends, they went north, visiting Riverton, Otautau, Balclutha and Dunedin. At Dunedin they met a brother Heenan, who in the early days found a copy of *Eureka* on a second-hand bookstall. The price was £4 15s! but the bookman let him have a read at 2s per week, the hire going towards the purchase! "Buy the truth and sell it not," saith the proverb (Prov. 23 : 23); but we do not often come across such a curiously literal illustration of the initial obedience to Wisdom's voice. It reminds me by contrast of a clever engineer of my acquaintance, who after rejoicing for a while in the truth, sold *Eureka* and all his books "for an old song"—"clearing out old stock," as he profanely expressed it.

From Dunedin brother and sister Roberts departed on June 16th for Timaru, where Russellism and other "isms" had deflected some from the hope of Israel.

Brother Roberts found some more contention for the faith here by reason of this strange departure. From Timaru they left for Christchurch on June 18th, and thence, on the 28th (Port Lyttleton) to Wellington, where they met brother and sister Lesueur. Thence to Napier and Wanganui, meeting brother and sister Dexter and others. Other places visited were Hawera, Stratford, and New Plymouth, whence they departed by steamer for Auckland. From Auckland there was a visit to Ngaruawahia, returning to Auckland, whence they sailed for Sydney, reaching that port on August 5th and Melbourne on August 10th.



## CHAPTER XLIII.

DIES AT SAN FRANCISCO, AND IS BURIED AT  
NEW YORK (1898).

**S**IMULTANEOUSLY with the voyagings of our fellow-travellers to and from New Zealand, briefly alluded to in the last chapter, there were developments in Birmingham (now *their* antipodes), which providentially cleared the way for the change that was so near. The lease of the premises at 139, Moor Street, was optionally terminable at Christmas, 1898. But before then, brother Roberts was to be dead and buried, though we knew it not.

I transcribe a short paragraph that I wrote for *The Christadelphian* (August, 1898):—

"This is the last issue from the publishing offices at 139, Moor Street. The lease is not up till Christmas, but we make way for a *tenant who desires immediate possession*. In the absence of the editor, and in view of the impossibility of making satisfactory arrangements for new central premises at such short notice, temporary premises have been found at 21, Hendon Road, Sparkhill, whence all the business will be transacted for the next few months."

The address given is my own house, into which I hurried what books were necessary, storing the remainder in the warehouse of a furniture remover in the district. The bearing of this upon the future developments will presently appear.

We return to Melbourne, Australia, to which city brother and sister Roberts had returned on August 10th, 1898. "After spending a pleasant fortnight with the brethren," he says, "attending the meetings and lecturing two Sundays on 'The Voice of God in History' and 'The Voice of God in Prophecy,' I bade them a reluctant adieu early on Thursday, August 25th, and

took the train at Glenroy for Albury, where it had been arranged I should lecture on my way to Sydney."

Sister Roberts accompanied him to Sydney; but this was the last that his daughters saw of him. The lecture at Albury duly came off on the Friday, and the same night they left for Sydney, reaching their destination about midday on Saturday. From *A Second Voyage*, etc., I extract the following few lines:—

"After a certain amount of writing, I spent a very enjoyable day with sister Roberts at Manly, a seaside resort at the lower side of the harbour just outside The Heads. We could not help some degree of sadness at the prospect of separating so soon for so long a time. Next day (Sunday, August 28th), we had a profitable day with the brethren, morning and evening. The lecture was on 'The meaning of God's dealings with mankind past and future.' On Monday, having done the needful packing, we sent my part of 'the things' down to the ss. *Alameda* and then went for *the last few hours together*. (My italics.—C.C.W.) At four o'clock there was a good muster of brethren and sisters at the wharf of the Union Steamship Company, at the foot of Margaret Street. (Sister Roberts was to sail next day in the coasting steamboat for Melbourne.) Having said farewell, the gangway was unshipped punctually at four o'clock, and the *Alameda* slowly left her moorings and was soon moving down the harbour among those handkerchief wavings which sadly mean so much more than can be expressed, a curious mixture of reminiscences, friendship, sorrow and hope."

Sister Roberts had seen the last of her husband in this life; she returned to Melbourne as arranged.

Brother Roberts settled down to literary work on the voyage. "I had a certain amount of work to get through which required sticking to," said he, and he enumerated some items. I marvel that he did what he did under such circumstances. And he found time for conversations on the truth by way of diversion. In particular there was one studious young Englishman who, talking of eternal life, which brother Roberts of course

defined to be immortal bodily life by resurrection from the dead, was surprised to hear that "there were nearly as many recognitions of this in the Old Testament as in the New." "I drew out a list of 140 references," says brother Roberts, "under the heading—'Passages in the Old Testament in which either by figure, by implication, or by express statement, the doctrine of a future life is taught.' In going through this list it struck me that it would make a good subject for a book some day if time permitted. I handed him the list and received thanks, but heard no more of it."

I found the rough copy of this list among brother Roberts' papers, and taking the hint, afterwards wrote a series of articles on the subject in *The Christadelphian*, publishing them in a little book in 1906, under the title—*The Old Testament Doctrine of Eternal Life*, the subtitle being just as given above. Whether it is anything like what the deceased intended I cannot say. When he awakes it will at any rate interest him to know that his idea bore some sort of fruit while he slept. By the way, that is how Jesus himself says the Word-seed of the Kingdom of God springs and grows up (Mark 4 : 26-28).

The *Almeda* touched at Auckland on September 2nd, and brother Roberts saw a few of the brethren for a short time. Sailing eastward he notes "duplicating Sunday, to square with our longitude"; i.e., when crossing the "International Date Line," which mainly follows the 180th meridian E. or W. of Greenwich, departing from it only near New Zealand and Melanesia on the South and Siberia and Alaska on the North, for convenience of reckoning. Sunday, 18th September, he says, "was our last Sunday at sea"; and it afterwards appeared that he landed at San Francisco on Wednesday morning, September 21st. But the last thing he wrote in this *Second Voyage*, which was the last thing he ever wrote for publication, was the following somewhat quaint but very appropriate paragraph:—

"When we left Auckland, we had a flock of sheep penned away on deck at the stern—in the very worst position, just over the screw where there is the greatest

heave of the vessel. I spoke to them frequently during the voyage. They were quietly responsive with ear and eye to the voice of sympathy. They thinned in number as the time wore on. Yesterday they were all gone. I asked what had become of them. 'We have eaten them,' was the answer of a gentleman, who had suggested early in the voyage that perhaps they had souls. In that case, I remarked, we are cannibals. He gave the kind of squirm that signifies a nonplussed state of the intellect. But on the serious side, I thought to myself, the men around us will all disappear as completely, though not in the same way. The very figure is used by the Spirit of God: 'Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them.' It may be retorted, 'So will you.' It might have been so said to David. What would have been his rejoinder? 'God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave.' 'The upright shall have dominion over them in the morning.'"

And thus *Finis* is written to the writings of Robert Roberts—a singularly happy finale:—"God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave." What more is there to desire?

On Saturday morning, September 24th, 1898, in Birmingham, I received the following cable from San Francisco:—

"Roberts died suddenly. Cable disposition remains."

He had died of heart failure at the Cosmopolitan Hotel, San Francisco, on the morning of September 23rd. We learned this afterwards. I was shocked, but not in the least dismayed; in fact, I saw daylight. I telegraphed to Dr. Roberts in London (son of the deceased), who came down in the evening with brother A. T. Jannaway. We soon agreed that burial with or near Dr. Thomas in Brooklyn Cemetery, New York, seemed to be the best course; and that I should go over to New York by the next steamer to see it carried out. A cable was at once sent to our bereaved sister Roberts informing her of brother Roberts' death, and of our intentions concerning burial; and another to brother Bruce, of Jersey City, who at once volunteered his aid.

Sister Roberts consented ; and sister Lasius (Dr. Thomas' daughter) gladly consented to brother Roberts being laid to rest beside her father. A cable to Mr. Cockcroft, agent of the American and Australian steamship line at San Francisco, who had sent the cable concerning brother Roberts' death, arranged for the transference of the body from San Francisco to Brooklyn Cemetery, New York. And I left Liverpool in the ss. *Campania* for New York on Saturday, October 1st. The change of premises to my own house (see previous paragraph, and the casting of lots alluded to in ch. 42) left me perfect freedom of action ; a young married sister, since deceased, kindly took over the office routine in my absence, and I got away with marvellously little friction and discomfort, though of course "with a desolating sense of personal bereavement," as I said at the time.

We made a quick passage, landing in New York on Friday, October 7th, the funeral being fixed for October 9th. Brother Bruce took me in hand, and was kindness itself. He proposed we should run over to Greenwood Cemetery, Brooklyn, on the Saturday to assure ourselves that all was in order. We went, and found that it was so, and then returned and paid a visit to sister Lasius at Jersey City, in Dr. Thomas' old house.

On Sunday, October 9th, the funeral was fixed for 10-30, and brother Bruce and I repaired to Greenwood an hour or so earlier, that we might see and identify the dead. The coffin lid was removed and the form of our departed fellow-pilgrim exposed to view. Whatever apprehensions or fears we may have had, vanished at sight. In perfect repose, without the least trace of distortion, the features rested with an air of dignified contentment. He looked as though, in response to the command from heaven, he might at once have arisen, and stepped forth modestly to receive the verdict of the judge of all the earth. In the midst of all the sorrow a sense of satisfaction came over us: "So He giveth His beloved sleep."

At the time appointed the funeral took place in the presence of a large company of brethren and sisters.

After the singing of a hymn and the reading of Psalm 103 by brother Bruce, I addressed the assembled company briefly on the work of the deceased in relation to that of Dr. Thomas, by whose side he was thus providentially laid to rest. "There was a kind of dramatic sense of completeness in the career that had ended thus and here. He was 'taken away from the evil to come,' while we remained. Concerning him we were comforted, but for ourselves we mourned. We must not despair, but holding fast the blessed hope press on to the end." Then a hymn and prayer. Then the coffin lid was removed and the whole company filed past to take the last look before the resurrection. When the coffin was lowered into the grave and this filled up, it was crowned by some loving hands with a large and beautiful floral emblem, displaying in violet colour on a snow-white ground the simple legend—

"OUR BROTHER."

This is "An Appendix" to an autobiography, and has already overflowed its legitimate bounds. I refrain from comment on the work of the deceased, but it might be said concerning him, as is said of Wren in St. Paul's Cathedral, though with reference to a very different "temple":—*Si monumentum requiris, circumspice*. (If thou seekest a monument, look around.) For he did much to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

# LIST OF NEARLY ALL THE WORKS OF ROBERT ROBERTS

*From 1862 to 1898 Arranged Alphabetically according to  
titles with dates of Writing Appended*

**ANGLO-ISRAELISM REFUTED:** A lecture in London in reply to  
Mr Hine, (1879)

**APOCALYPTIC LECTURES:** Thirteen Lectures on The Apocalypse,  
(1880)

**BIBLE COMPANION (THE):** or, tables for the profitable daily  
reading of the Holy Scriptures, (about 1853, see Ch iii of this  
book)

**BLOOD OF CHRIST (THE):** an expository lecture, (1895)

**BRADLAUGH DEBATE, "IS THE BIBLE DIVINE?"** (1876) A  
six night discussion between Mr Roberts and Mr Chas  
Bradlaugh, Editor of the National Reformer, in Birmingham  
and Leicester, together with a review of the argument by  
R Roberts

**CHRIST ON EARTH AGAIN:** The nature of the kingdom he will  
set up at his second appearing, (1892)

**CHRISTENDOM ASTRAY:** (1883) originally published as Twelve  
Lectures (1862)

## SUBJECTS -

LECTURE I The Bible  
LECTURE II Human Nature  
LECTURE III The dead  
LECTURE IV Immortality  
LECTURE V Judgment to come  
LECTURE VI God Angels Jesus Christ  
and the Crucifixion  
LECTURE VII The Devil  
LECTURE VIII The Kingdom of God  
LECTURE IX The promises  
LECTURE X The final instrumentality  
in human redemption  
LECTURE XI Christ the future king of  
the world  
LECTURE XII The Covenant made  
with David  
LECTURE XIII The second coming of  
Christ  
LECTURE XIV The Hope of Israel  
LECTURE XV Coming troubles

LECTURE XVI—Times and Signs  
LECTURE XVII—What shall we do to  
be saved?  
LECTURE XVIII—Christendom and  
Christ's commandments

**CHRISTADELPHIAN CHILDREN'S MAGAZINE** (Illustrated)

**CHRISTADELPHIAN INSTRUCTOR (THE):** (1886) Questions  
and Answers on the truth revealed in the Holy Scriptures

**CHRISTADELPHIAN (THE):** Founded by R Roberts as *The  
Ambassador*, 1864 (Name changed to *The Christadelphian*  
1869) A Monthly Magazine, dedicated wholly to "The Hope of  
Israel," and devoted to the exposition and defence and practical  
illustration of the faith preached by the Apostles In opposition  
to the dogmas of Papal and Protestant Christendom, with a  
view to making ready a people prepared for the Lord Edited  
by R Roberts until 1898

**COMMANDMENTS OF CHRIST:** Pocket Epitome of

**CONSTITUTION OF THE BIRMINGHAM ECCLESIA:** To  
which is appended a Statement of the Faith, forming their  
basis of Fellowship, Doctrines to be Rejected, and the leading  
features of the Commandments of Christ

**DANIEL,** and his great unfulfilled prophecy of chapter eleven  
(1897) A Brief demonstration of the authenticity of the book  
of Daniel, a verse by verse illustration of the fulfilment of the  
closing prophecy, and a glance at the future

**DEBATES.**—Bradlaugh Debate Is the Bible Divine?—(1876), Hine  
Debate—(1879), Jew Debate (1871) Nightingale Debate (1866),  
Resurrectional Responsibility Debate (1894)

**DEFENCE OF THE FAITH:** (1874) Being a reply to a Clerical  
Attack on "Twelve Lectures," now published as "Christendom  
Astray"

**DIARY OF A VOYAGE** to Australia, New Zealand, and other  
lands (1896)

**DECLARATION, A,** of the first principles of the oracles of God  
set forth in a series of 36 propositions, with about 500  
scripture proofs quoted in full, in proof that the faith of  
Christendom is made up of the fables predicted by Paul (2  
Tim iv 4) With copious footnotes, original and selected  
(1867), see Ch xxxiv of this book)

**DR. THOMAS, HIS LIFE AND WORK:** With portrait (1873)

**ENGLAND AND EGYPT:** (1882) Prophecy fulfilled and fulfilling  
Review of the events leading up to the British occupation, and  
telling of the nearness of Christ

## HIS DAYS AND HIS WAYS

**ENGLAND'S RUIN:** (1895) "John Smith's" answer to Mr. Blatchford's plea for Socialism as contained in the widely circulated book, *Merrue England*. The subjects considered from a Bible point of view.

**EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT NOT ETERNAL TORMENTS:** (1871) being a reply to three letters, written by the "Rev." J. Angus, D.D. (President of the Baptist College, London), and published in the *Christian World*, to prove the doctrine of eternal torments

**"EVIL ONE" (THE):** (1881) The alteration in the Lord's Prayer in the Revised Version of 1881 considered in relation to the Question of whether there is a Personal Supernatural Devil

**GOOD COMPANY.** (1890-1894) Monthly Magazine.

**GOOD CONFESSION (THE):** (1868) A specimen with an applicant for baptism and fellowship.

**GUIDE TO THE FORMATION AND CONDUCT OF THE CHURCH OF THE CHISTADELPHIAN ECCLESIAS,** based on the lessons of thirty years' experience (1884)

**HELP TO THE MEMORY OF HISTORY,** (1897) 28 tables in which the leading events in the History of the World are briefly summarised in methodical periods, and the bearings of prophecy briefly indicated

**HINE DEBATE: "ARE ENGLISHMEN ISRAELITES?"** (1879) A three nights' debate between Mr. R. Roberts and Mr. F. Hine, in Exeter Hall, London.

**INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE (THE):** (1885).

**JEW DEBATE: WAS JESUS OF NAZARETH THE MESSIAH?** (1871) A three night's debate between Mr. R. Roberts and Mr. Louis Stern, an Orthodox Jew, of Birmingham.

**LAW OF MOSES (THE),** (1898) A rule of national and individual life, and the enigmatical enunciation of divine principles and purposes. The last work of Robert Roberts.

**MAN MORTAL,** (1875) An exhaustive reply to Mr. F. W. Grant's "Life and Immortality," in which he assails the truth under the epithet "Annihilationism"

**MINISTRY OF THE PROPHETS: ISAIAH,** by R. Roberts and C. C. Walker, former Editors of *The Christadelphian*, 8vo., 780 pp., plus 32 pp., with exhaustive Contents, Analysis, and Indexes of Subject Matters and Scripture References. (The Three "Introductory" chapters, and the exposition of the first five chapters of Isaiah, by R. Roberts in 1896.)

## HIS DAYS AND HIS WAYS

**NAZARETH REVISITED:** (1890) The life and work of Christ exhibited anew harmony with the Scriptures

**NIGHTINGALE DEBATE:** (1866) "HAS MAN AN IMMORTAL SOUL?" A two nights' debate between Mr. R. Roberts and Mr. R. C. Nightingale in the Temperance Hall, Birmingham

**PROPHECY AND THE EASTERN QUESTION:** (1877) The light shed by the Scriptures on the current political situation in the East, showing the approaching fall of the Ottoman Empire, War between England and Russia, the settlement of the Jews in Syria under British protectorate, the appearing of Christ, and the setting up of the Kingdom of God. In ten chapters

**RESURRECTION OF CHRIST (THE),** the Foundation of Human Hope; A lecture

**RESURRECTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY:** (1894) A two nights' debate between R. Roberts and J. J. Andrew

**SCEPTICISM ANSWERED:** (1884) A reply to an attack on "The Trial" by ex-believer in Christ

**SEASONS OF COMFORT** at the table of the Lord, fifty-two Sunday Morning Addresses at the Breaking of Bread (1880)

**FURTHER SEASONS OF COMFORT:** (1885) A second volume of fifty-two addresses similar to the above

**SLAIN LAMB, THE,** (with diagram) (1873) A lecture by R. Roberts, exhibiting the sense in which Christ came in the "likeness of sinful flesh"

**THIRTEEN LECTURES ON THE APOCALYPSE.**—See "Apocalyptic Lectures"

**TRIAL, THE:** (1882) Did Christ rise from the Dead? The evidence presented in the form of a Trial in a Court of Law

**TRUTH ABOUT GOD AND THE BIBLE, THE:** The substance of two lectures delivered in the Athenaeum, Melbourne, in 1897

**TWELVE LECTURES.**—See "*Christendom Astray*"

**VISIBLE HAND OF GOD, THE:** (1883) The Miracles of the Bible, their Nature and Design

**WAYS OF PROVIDENCE, THE:** (1881) as authentically illustrated in Bible history (companion volume to the above, dealing with the invisible divine manipulation of human affairs)

\* few lectures and minor writings are omitted from the list