

Pastor and People.

THE BLESSING OF SONG.

"What a friend we have in Jesus"—
Sang a little child, one day;
And a weary woman listened
To the darling's happy lay.

All her life seemed dark and gloomy,
And her heart was sad with care;
Sweetly rang out baby's treble
"All our sins and griefs to bear."

She was pointing out the Saviour
Who could carry away our sin;
And the one who sadly listened
Needed that dear Helper so!

Sin and grief were heavy burdens
For a fainting soul to bear—
But the baby, singing, bade her
"Take it to the Lord in prayer."

With a simple, trusting spirit,
Weak and worn, she turned to God,
Asking Christ to take her burden,
As He was the sinner's Lord.

Jesus was the only refuge:
He could take her sin and care,
And He blessed the weary woman
When she came to Him in prayer.

And the happy child, still singing,
Little knew she had a part
In God's wondrous work of bringing
Peace unto a troubled heart.

—*Clara H. Tardy, in the Christian Observer.*

OLD SCOTS WORTHIES

WILLIAM GUTHRIE—THE SOUL WINNER.

BY REV. JAMES A. R. JACKSON, B.D.

When we have read a book which deeply interests us we are anxious to know something about the author. We feel a curiosity to learn all we can about one who has in any way enlarged our intellectual horizon and brought us beneath more glorious skies, who has opened for us new fountains of inspiration, or in any way ministered to the truest and highest life of our spirit. There is a book, well known in Presbyterian circles, which has been to a great multitude, both young and old, a source of spiritual stimulus and spiritual strength, and also, of spiritual comfort: a book representing a kind of work which was done with great judgment and tender compassion, and unwearied zeal by the noble men of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries; a book dealing with man's relation to God and Christ, so that he may attain full assurance of faith and know that he has passed from death unto life. That book is William Guthrie's "The Christian's Great Interest; or the Trial of a Saving Interest in Christ, and the Way to Attain it." Dr. Thomas Chalmers says of it, in his introductory essay: "We think it impossible to peruse this valuable Treatise with the candour and sincerity of an honest mind without arriving at a solid conclusion as to our spiritual condition." Of the man who wrote this book, not large in size, but comprehensive in thought, we would now set forth a few interesting facts. He was born in the year 1620. His father was an honourable man, and laird of Pitfrohly in Angusshire. His mother was a descendent of the ancient house of Easter Ogle. He was their eldest son—the eldest of eight; three being daughters and five being sons. All the sons, save one, gave themselves to the ministry of the Gospel. William early in life gave evidence of possessing talents of mark. He pursued his studies with avidity and success, and graduated Master of Arts with honour. Under the ministry of Samuel Rutherford he was converted, and under him also he studied Divinity; and that he might be unencumbered in preaching the Gospel, being heir to his father's estate, he so disposed of it, giving it to his only unministerial brother, that he might not "be entangled with the affairs of this life."

Being licensed to preach he did not at once enter into pastoral work; but for a time became tutor to Lord Mauchline, eldest son of Earl Loudon. On November 7, 1644, he was ordained to the work of the Gospel Ministry in New Kilmarnock, or Fenwick, and here he preached the Gospel with great success, and it is recorded, "became in an eminent manner the wisdom and power of God to the salvation of many perishing souls." He was a true fisher of men. He so baited the Gospel hook that he caught many by a heavenly wisdom and consecrated zeal. He did not hold to one mode of action. He adopted diverse modes according to the characters with which he had to deal. Indeed, as we read the lives of these grand old men, we are struck; they lived to save souls and they used every means to attain this end—means that make them appear full of eccentricities, but when we recall the spirit of entire consecration that was theirs, all these eccentricities fall away into a pure devotedness to the glory of the master. They acted as their circumstances seemed to warrant. Take these stories

in illustration: The people were rude and irreligious they neither went to Church, nor would they receive the minister into their houses, so that many of them knew him not by face. To such, sometimes Mr. Guthrie would go disguised as a traveller, and seek lodging, and having obtained it on much entreaty, he would engage in some general amusing conversation at first, and then ask them how they liked their minister. When they told him that they did not go to Church, he engaged them to go and take a trial; others he hired with money to go. (Think of the depth of that love, the power of that affection!) When the time of family worship came, he desired to know if they made any, and if not, what reasons they had for it.

There was one person, in particular, whom he would have to perform family worship, but he told him that he could not pray. Mr. Guthrie asked him what was the reason? He told him that he was never used to pray. Mr. Guthrie would have him try, to which the man replied; "O Lord, Thou knowest this man would have me to pray, but Thou knowest I cannot pray." After this, Mr. Guthrie bade him stop, and said he had done enough, and prayed himself to their great surprise. When prayer was ended the wife said to her husband that this surely was the minister; for they did not know him. He engaged them to go to Church, and see what they thought of their minister. They went and said to their great surprise, that it was their minister, who

Tried each art, reprov'd each dull delay,
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way.

By such means he gained many to righteousness, to the praise of God.

There was another person in his parish who was wont to go a-fowling on the Lord's Day and neglecting the church. Mr. Guthrie asked him why he did so on the Sabbath day. He said that Sabbath was the most fortunate day for that sport. He asked him what he would make by that day's fowling. He said he would make half-a-crown. Mr. Guthrie told him that if he would go to church he would give him as much, and by that means got his promise. After sermon, Mr. Guthrie asked him if he would come back next Sabbath, and he would give him the same, which he did, and from that time he reformed, and at length became a member of Mr. Guthrie's session. He was very fond of out-door sports, such as fishing, fowling, curling, which brought him into company with the neighbouring gentry, and as the occasion gave him opportunity he would bear in upon them reproofs and instructions with an inoffensive familiarity. He did not conform to the evil about him, and being in Rome do as the Romans do, but he stood up with a noble inflexibility of character and was God's witness, with this result: "in the disguise of a sportsman, he gained some to a religious life, whom he could have little influence upon in a minister's gown; of which there happened several memorable examples."

His pleasant and facetious conversation made him a great favourite with the officers of Cromwell's army at this time in Scotland, and made them fond of his company; while at the same time his courage and constancy did not fail him in the cause of his great Master, and was often useful to curb and correct the extravagances of the sectaries, who disregarded all church order and law, and who would press forward to the Lord's Table without acquainting the minister, or being in a due form found worthy of that privilege. In every position, civil or social, William Guthrie's motto was "For me to live is Christ." His heart was set on seeking the good of souls. He thought of nothing else. He did not seek ecclesiastical promotion. He had calls to more important parishes, such as Renfrew, Linlithgow, Stirling, Glasgow and Edinburgh. Fenwick was imposing enough and important enough for him! This is one of the sublime elements of character in the old Scots worthies. They were content to labour in lowly places, in hidden corners. Ah! but there were multitudes of perishing souls there, and they sought them. They were not always in a feverish scramble after the high places where all eyes might see them. They cared only to live in the great Task-Master's eye. In 1657 imperfect notes made by a hearer of sermons preached by Guthrie on Isaiah lv. were published under the title, "A Clear Attractive, Warming Beam of Light from Christ the Sun of Light, leading Unto Himself." This book was anonymous and defective, so that Mr. Guthrie had to publish his only genuine work in self-defence, "The Christian's Great Interest," which was blessed to great multitudes then, and has been ever since. Dr. John Owen said of this little work, "I have written several folios, but there is more Divinity in it than in them all." It has been translated into many languages. It reveals the great worth of Mr. Guthrie, in his wisdom, his tenderness, his knowledge of Christ the Saviour, and man the sinner, and his ability in bringing them together. He was a mighty preacher of the Word. Where he preached was often a *Bochim*. Before his death he suffered much severe agony; in the midst of it he cried, "Though I should die mad, yet I know I shall die in the Lord." He passed to his reward on October 10, 1665. John Livingstone says of him, "He was a great light in the West of Scotland." Mr. Crawford, in an unpublished MS., says, "He converted and confirmed many thousands of souls, and

was esteemed the greatest preacher in Scotland." His passion was to save men by bringing them to Christ Jesus, and to accomplish this he was willing to do anything that was not sinful. Need we wonder that his life was fruitful, and his book a fount of spiritual blessing?

KEPLER'S PRAYER.

Both Kepler and Newton were profoundly devout. Kepler has left us a touching testimony of his sentiments in a prayer placed by him at the end of one of his works. Here is a translation of that prayer.

"Before quitting this table, upon which I have made all my researches, it only remains for me to raise my eyes and my hands toward heaven, and address with devotion my humble prayer to the Author of all illumination. O Thou, who—by the glorious light which Thou hast shed over all nature—raiest our desires up to the sacred light of Thy grace, in order that we may be one day transported unto the eternal light of Thy glory, I give Thee thanks, my Lord and my Creator, for all the joys that I have experienced in the ecstasies into which I have been thrown by the contemplation of the work of Thy hands! Now I have completed this book, which contains the fruit of my labours, and I have used in composing it the whole of the intelligence that Thou hast given me. I have set forth before men the grandeur of Thy works. I have explained these mysteries as well as my finite mind has permitted me to embrace the infinite extent of them. I have made all efforts to arrive at truth by the ways of philosophy and if it has occurred to me, a despicable worm, conceived and brought up in sin, to say anything unworthy of Thee, make me know it, in order that I may remove it. Have I allowed myself to cherish any self-complacent presumption in the presence of the admirable beauties of Thy works? Have I proposed to myself my own renown among men by raising this monument, which ought to have been consecrated entirely to Thy glory? Oh! if it has been so, receive me in Thy clemency and mercy, and grant me this favour, that the work I have just finished may ever be powerless to do evil, and that it may contribute to Thy glory and to the good of souls!"

GIVE GOD HIS OWN.

First give yourself, then your child to God. It is but giving Him His own. Not to do it is robbing God. Always prefer virtue to wealth—the honour that comes from God to the honour that comes from men. Do this for yourself. Do it for your child. Give no heedless commands, but when you command require prompt obedience. Cultivate a sympathy with your child in all lawful joys and sorrows. Be sure that you never correct a child until you know that he deserves correction. Hear its story first and fully. Never allow your child to whine or fret, or to bear grudges. Early inculcate frankness, candour, generosity, magnanimity, patriotism, and self-denial. The knowledge and fear of the Lord are the beginning of wisdom. Never mortify the feeling of your child by upbraiding it with dullness. Never apply to it epithets harsh, low, or degrading. Never lose your self-control in its presence. Never strike it when you are angry, nor punish it when you are under excitement.—*Mother's Magazine.*

IN THE FURNACE.

How often we pray, "Lord, refine and purify me," forgetting the fires which will become necessary for the accomplishment of the desired work or end. And our Father, desiring more the purity of our hearts than our happiness in this world, lays upon us some crucifying burden, some great cross, and startled, we cry, "O no, not so;" but if intent on His image, we readily exclaim, "Even so; Father. Not my will but Thine?" Yes, welcome rain, or sunshine, only let me have Thy presence, for with Thy favour, loss is gain. I covet trial, adversity or any storm, so that the Divine presence may be manifest in me. Why not, when He is constantly saying, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." Blessed rest! Jesus! let me cling to Thee "till the storms of life be past."

VITAL FULNESS.

Mechanical fulness is one thing, vital fulness is another. Fill a pitcher with milk this evening, and to-morrow morning the pitcher will be full. Fill a babe quite full with milk this morning, and before to-morrow morning the babe will want more. All vital fulness demands a constant supply. The trees of the Lord are full of sap—not only sap enough for the roots and trunks, but for the bark, the twig, the branch, and the topmost bud or leaf. So with us. The trees of the Lord are full of sap, but to be full of sap they must draw every day from the heaven above and the earth beneath, and they must never interrupt the drawing. There must be a dependence that is perpetual—never interrupted. The moment the cedar of Lebanon felt that it was so strong that it could do without rain, and sun and the soil—that it could live on its own power and glory, it would soon cease to be full of sap.—*Rev. William Arthur.*