

Scriptures, and his expository power, than on the more popular gifts of oratory and eloquence. When quite a youth he could repeat whole chapters of the Hebrew Bible from memory; and so marvellous, indeed, was his memory that in after years he admitted, in his shy way, when pressed on the subject, that if the English Bible were destroyed, he could reproduce it verbatim, and in due order, though he could not be sure of the sequence of some parts of the book of Proverbs. Such a statement may seem astounding, yet it is duly set down in the book, on the authority of Dr. Macfarlane, the author, himself a reputable Scottish divine.

Selkirk and its charming neighborhood, its history and its literary associations, are too well known to need any description. There the Yarrow and the Ettrick meet, beloved of Scottish poets and romances; and there in olden times round the extensive landscape stood one vast forest. The forest is gone—"The scenes are desert now and bare Where flourished once a forest fair, Up pathless Ettrick and on Yarrow, Where erst the outlaw drew his arrow."

The famous Covenanters' battle of Philiphaugh was fought in the neighborhood in 1645; in a little farmhouse near by Mungo Park, the African traveller, was born; and in its hospitable kitchen, or in the manse study, Dr. Lawson and Park smoked many friendly pipes while the latter told to his delighted hearer the wonderful story of his wanderings. A mile or two away stood the ruins of Newark Castle, familiar to every reader of "The Lay of the Last Minstrel." Melrose Abbey was not far distant, nor Abbotsford, "standing on a beautifully wooded sloping bank, washed by 'Tweed's silvery streams.'"

For many years the good Secession minister of Selkirk and the sturdy Walter Scott (he was not baronet yet), sheriff, poet, and novelist, were neighbors, and held each other in mutual respect. Their acquaintance was not very close, for their ways of life, their convictions, and their religious and political principles were not akin. But they met occasionally, and Scott more than once expressed his high opinion of the great learning and simple pious life of the Burgh minister; while Lawson, on his part, admired the genius of Scott, and, though no reader of the lighter forms of literature, made an exception in the case of Scott's. When "St. Ronan's Well" was published, it was shrewdly suspected, by those who knew many stories of Lawson's gentle life and remarkable absence of mind, that Scott found the original of the Rev. Josiah Cargill in the Selkirk minister.

The Absent-Minded Minister.

Some of the anecdotes of the profound scholar's absent mindedness are certainly very amusing. One day in his later life, he was sitting in his study, when the maid rushed into the room and cried out that the house was on fire. The minister looked up from his desk in a puzzled sort of way, and calmly replied, "Ye'll just go and tell your mistress. Ye ken, Mary, I never interfere in domestic matters."

One very rainy day he was trudging along the road, deep in thought and very wet, when a friend whose door he was passing saw the plight he was in and hastily pushed an umbrella in to his hand. As Lawson went along, the rain still falling in true Scotch fashion, another friend met him and noticed that the umbrella was carefully buttoned up in his great coat.

"Doctor," said the gentleman, "I am sorry your umbrella has not served you in this heavy rain."

"Oh!" replied Lawson absently, "I have a good umbrella, but I have concealed it here, lest it got wetted by the shower."

His quiet dignity, his practical goodness, and a certain unmistakable mastery of character in all essential matters, entirely preserved him from ever becoming ridiculous. On the other hand his shrewd common sense and his philosophic temper, together with his marvellous knowledge of the Bible, often enabled him effectually to silence folly and ignorance.

He was told of a man whose hair was jet black one day and on the next it had become as white as snow through fright.

"Aye, ay," said the doctor, "I recollect to have heard of a man whose brown wig turned grey through a fright he got."

A grumbling and dyspeptic critic in the Selkirk congregation once excused his ill-natured comments in the not uncommon formula of such people,

"I aye like to speak at my mind."

"Do you know," sternly inquired the minister, "what Solomon says of such as you?"

"No," replied the man. "What does Solomon say?"

"He says," rejoined the doctor, "'A fool uttereth all his mind; but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards.'"

It is comforting to know that the critic never annoyed the minister again.

The theory of the verbal inspiration of the Bible receives a shock in the following. A certain dogmatic person asserted in Lawson's presence that he took everything stated in the Bible in an exactly literal sense and in no other. Lawson immediately replied—

"It is written in the Book of Revelation that 'There appeared another wonder in heaven * * * a great red dragon * * * and his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth.' Now, sir, do you take that as it stands?" It was a poser for the unwile dogmatist.

HOW THE MINISTER PROPOSED.

It is stated—though the story is not vouched for—that when the shy young minister had been settled in the manse four or five years his people decided that he ought to marry. A deputation waited on him and offered him friendly help. Lawson asked them where he could find a good wife. They mentioned a particular family where there were several daughters, any one of whom would suit. Acting on the advice, Mr. Lawson called at the house where these fair ones lived. He inquired first for the eldest, to whom he stated his wishes, but was unsuccessful, he then proposed to the second, who also refused him; finally, he sent for the third, who accepted him and became Mrs. Lawson.

It is also asserted that Lawson, being on a short visit to a friend in the country, forgot his wedding day until in the middle of the forenoon he was reminded of it, and as he could not reach home before night it had to be postponed until the next day.

There was a quiet vein of sly humor hidden beneath the usually grave manner of the learned doctor. Towards the close of the eighteenth century there was in London a celebrated Presbyterian minister, Dr. Waugh, who was somewhat of a courtier. Dr. Waugh went down to Stitchel for healing. As he and Lawson were walking in the street they met the minister of Stitchel and his young wife. Waugh shook hands with the minister, and then courteously kissed the minister's wife.

"Oh, Dr. Waugh, Dr. Waugh!" Lawson smilingly exclaimed; "you remind me of the Scribes of old, of whom it is written that they loved salutations in the market places."

IN THE LEISURELY DAYS.

There I must reluctantly close this racy old book, though the half has not been told of its wonderfully good things. Such pleasant glimpses of the more leisurely life of a hundred years ago are worth catching by us as we go along our busier way. It scarcely needs to add that I have touched the only lighter vein; that there were deep and tender lights, fine qualities of heart and soul, in this old Scottish theologian which I have not dwelt on at all—qualities which endeared him to a loving and admiring people, and to the scores of students he trained for the sacred ministry, in an unusual degree. Indeed, I have seen nothing to equal the glowing, many tributes which these same students paid to the memory of their beloved professor. Very touching and very beautiful is the last scene, when the aged doctor lay dying, and confessing his faith with the simplicity of a little child.

"His sufferings were severe, but he never waxed impatient. He was full of faith and much in prayer. There was no cloud upon his view of the future. Mrs. Lawson asked Mr. Young of Jedburgh to offer prayer that his departure might be in peace. This was done. 'Lord, take me to Paradise,' added the dying saint; and as the sublime petition dropped from his lips his soul was with Jesus."—Rev. H. Higgin in The Quiver.

THE NEW DELUGE TABLET.

So long as the excavator's pick strikes into the earth, and his spade digs up his treasures, does the negative critic of the Bible seem doomed to find his unstable theories struck down and their very foundations digged away. Professor Hilprecht's patient study of cuneiform tablets that were secured at Nippur in 1898-1900 has been rewarded by what seems to be an epoch-making find. The new deluge tablet is fully described by himself in this issue of The Sunday School Times. Where the Nineveh Babylonian deluge accounts were grotesque and absurd, this is simple and dignified. It has been claimed that the Genesis story of the flood could not have been written as early as the Mosale period, but must have been written centuries later, after Israel was carried away into exile. But Hilprecht's tablet discloses a deluge account strikingly similar to that of Genesis, and this tablet was written and broken before Abram left Ur of the Chaldees, or some six hundred years before Moses was born. The late-authorship theory for the Pentateuch has been dealt a severe blow.—Sunday School Times.

THE BLESSING OF FRIENDS.

Friendship is a mutual enrichment. The stream refreshes the tree with its crystal waters, but the tree returns the favor by its cooling shade. Friends cannot go to each other empty handed. There is always something to give and something to get that the needs of each be supplied. It is a commerce of souls. In giving you are getting, and in getting you are giving, and both friends are enriched.

"For the heart grows rich in giving:
All its wealth is living grain;
Seeds which mellow in the garner,
scattered,
Fill with gold the plain."

The friend who is always receiving favors and conferring none, soon becomes weariness and profitless. Friendship has its obligations as well as its privileges. When our Lord said to his disciples, "I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you," he would not let them rest in the thought that they had nothing to do but receive. What they received as revelation was to be returned as life. And hence he added, "I have chosen you," as friends, "that you should go and bring forth fruit."

The friend who only makes the poor return of flattery is to be shunned. There is no such flatterer as a man's self; and if his flattery is echoed from the soul of a friend, he may conclude that his friend's soul, which sends back his voice, is as empty as his own. One flatterer at a time is more than enough. He is one too many even for the best of men. Flattery is not an office of friendship.

One of the assumptions common to most men is that friendship can be maintained and flourished without culture. It is an assumption which leads to the disintegration of many a friendship. We forget that friendship is a flower, not a weed. It has to be tenderly cultivated, and demands our best thought and care. We cannot do what we like to a friend, nor can we say to him what we like. Friendship demands chivalry, respect, reverence.

A true faith can not more be separated from good works than the light of the candle from its heat. —Jonathan Edwards.