

God is "the God of peace!" Why, we might have been charged to tell you that God is "a man of war."—But no; we have to proclaim him to you as "the God of peace." He has a peaceful disposition towards you; and he has proved this by raising up Jesus Christ from the dead.

It is possible that *we* may have erred in telling you that this is your *privilege*, and not dwelling sufficiently upon it as your *duty*. It is your duty to believe; it is a great *crime* you are guilty of in not coming to God for the pardon of your sins, when he has told you so plainly and so repeatedly that he waits to bestow that pardon. You believe the word of your *fellow-men*: to-morrow you will take their word, perhaps, twenty times in the day, in the course of your business; but you will not take the word of God; you must behold something extraordinary, you must have some miracle performed, before you believe God! And is it not marvellous, most unreasonable? Will it not be infinitely better to take him at his word, and receive the blessing? Why, *part* of his word you do believe:—you do believe his *threatenings*! when he says that "the wicked man shall surely die," this you firmly believe. But another part of his word,—that very part which is most suited to your case,—you put away from you! You say that you are not ready yet; that you are not worthy yet! O the marvellous absurdity of this unbelief! Men under the influence of this vile principle will absolutely believe all but that which they are required to believe,—that which most of all concerns them to believe,—that "THIS IS A FAITHFUL SAYING, AND WORTHY OF ALL ACCEPTATION, THAT JESUS CHRIST CAME INTO THE WORLD TO SAVE SINNERS." I now proclaim it to you:—take it home to yourselves:—say,

"Who did for every sinner die,
Hath surely died for me."

For *me* he hath obtained that redemption which is of so much value; that, without which I must for ever have perished! "Sayest thou this?—Then *thou* art the very man for my Savior! *Thou* art the very man on whom he now looks down, on whom he now waits to be gracious!

I have already trespassed so unwarrantably upon your time, that I must leave you to apply this train of thought to other cases of unbelief which will present themselves readily to your mind. We may learn from this subject,

1. *The marvellous corruption of human nature, from whence all this unbelief originates.* If man was as he came out of the hands of his Maker, he would receive with simple, confiding love, all that he has said, and listen implicitly to all his assurances. Faith has its seat in the heart; and so has unbelief; hence we read of "an evil heart of unbelief." Man is very far gone from original righteousness. Now, as unbelief took us away from God, so

faith alone can bring us back to God, and prepare us for an ultimate admission into heaven. See also,

2. *The necessity of the agency of the Holy Spirit.* This is necessary, that faith may be inspired, and kept in exercise, and brought to maturity. If unbelief be in the heart by nature, it is not the nicest train of reasoning, it is not all the power of moral suasion, that can produce faith. True faith is *supernatural*; the apostle tells the Philippians that it had been "given them to believe in his name." You must believe: believing is your act; but it is an act of a heart renewed by the grace of the Holy Spirit; by the same almighty and efficacious power by which Christ was raised from the dead. Look at the case of infidels; other means are employed in abundance, but they remain infidels still; while others have been converted from infidelity in the absence of all human means. Look at the case of Saul of Tarsus; he was a most bigoted Pharisee, and a furious and determined persecutor; and he was not made into a sincere and humble Christian, and a zealous and successful preacher, by books, or by human argumentation. The miraculous light, and the voice from heaven, might arouse his attention, but it was by an immediate and direct interference of the Holy Spirit that the change was effected, and true faith was inspired. The conversion of Vanderkemp, also, is a case fully in point; a conversion scarcely less remarkable than that of the apostle Paul. From a German infidel, infidelity, perhaps, of the most specious and dangerous kind, Vanderkemp, without human interference, became a zealous Christian. I do not mean to say that good books, that wise and pious information, are to be despised; but I do mean to say, that the great fault is in men's hearts; and that it is necessary that the heart should be prepared by the operation of the Spirit, to receive the truth in the love of it. And that, though the mind may be prepared in some measure by knowledge, yet that true faith is the immediate effect of a direct influence of the Holy Spirit.

As to all the instances of unbelief we have specified, and as to all others which may occur, *go direct to God*; pray against your unbelief; beseech him to cure you of this dreadful infatuation.

And let the *disciples*—let those who are set to guide souls to Christ, let all the church say, "LORD, INCREASE OUR FAITH!"

Meeting of Synod.

(Concluded)

FOURTH SEDERUNT.

ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH,
New Glasgow, June 28, 1862.

The Synod met after devotional exercises conducted by Mr. McKay, and was constituted. Rev. Simon McGregor, Moderator.