

"John, what's the matter?" said he after a pause. "Oh!" was the reply, "last night was the most awful night that ever I had in my life." "How?" "D'ye mind me coming one night with my wife to your meeting in Bull's Close?" "Yes, I do; but you never returned." "No, I did not; and that night, if I had had you at the door, I would have knocked you down, for you made me to be such a sinner that I was enraged at you. D'ye mind the words you spoke upon that night?—Your text," he went on to say, without waiting for a reply, and in a tone betokening the intensest agony, "your text came into my mind last night in my sleep, and I thought I heard you speaking to me. I saw myself to be the scarlet and crimson-dyed sinner—the very sinner you represented me; and I thought you pointed at me. Oh! my very heart is broken within me. Oh! what will become of me, if I die in this awful state?"

"Remember," said the missionary, "the words, 'Come now, and let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red as crimson, they shall be as wool.' How long is it since you heard me upon those words?" "It's now seven years." "Well, John, you see who it is that says 'Come now.' It is the Lord. He said seven years ago, 'Come now,'—and you would not come. And the Lord has come to you this last night and spoken Himself to you,—and He says that now, even now, if you be willing, at this very moment, He will do to you even as He hath said. Believe on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. Oh, cast yourself down at his feet and cry, 'Lord save me or I perish! God be merciful to me a sinner.'"

"The man," writes Mr. Paterson, "fled that very day into the refuge. The change was visible to all the neighbours. He lived for three years; and when he died, it was in the faith of the Lord Jesus. From being a proud sinner, he had become like a little child; his heart was truly broken. God's Word was his consolation to his dying day." "This was a case," he adds, "which gave me great encouragement to speak God's own Word to poor sinners. That portion of the Word of the Lord had lain in this man's heart for seven years, before he ever felt its power. 'This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.'"—*Ibid.*

LAY PREACHING.

"A hundred times it has been said," observes Isaac Taylor, in his work "Wesley and Methodism," "by those who would fain shew their liberality in getting up an apology for lay-preaching, that it is the lay-preacher's employment of a dialect colloquially understood by the mass of the people, and at the same time the low level of his ideas, that fit him for his office as their instructor. . . . But no; it is *concentration*, and not a low familiarity,—it is the elementary grandeur of first truths, that forcefully opens up a way into the human heart, whether cultured or rude. Whether it be the bearer and winner of academic honours, or the recently-washed mason or shoemaker,—the preacher who feels with power and *freshness* such truths, and who brings to bear upon the utterance of them some natural gifts, is always listened to by the mass of men. The "first-truths" uttered by Alexander Paterson were drawn fresh from the Word: in his mouth they never grew commonplace: homely as was the missionary's style, the truths retained their elementary grandeur; they touched the heart, they pierced the conscience, they held the sinner fast as a rebel of God, they drew him by the cords of love to the feet of the Sin-bearer.

And how did he maintain in his own soul the power and freshness of those first-truths? In his ploughman-days, he had always been accustomed to rise at three o'clock in the morning. After he came to Edinburgh, and down to the close of his life, he awoke regularly at the same hour, and gave himself to meditation and prayer. It was in these morning hours of Bible meditation and prayer, that the real battle with the enemy of souls was fought. In his closet, he was Moses on the top of the hill with the rod of God in his hand: in the closes and wynds, he was Joshua discomfiting Amalek in the plain.—*Memoirs of Alex. Paterson.*