

church that day, and this visit to hear the noted preacher would, I fancied, satisfy the remaining particulars of parental respect in my bosom.

Mr. Morison's subject was "The work of the Spirit co-extensive with the work of Christ;" and with the first half of his sermon I was highly pleased. His doctrinal statements were what I always really believed, (although I was born and bred under the wing of the venerable Church of Scotland); but with his application my rebellious soul was at war. I saw how I stood—I defied the Spirit; and I sat in the house trembling with the awfully responsible nature of my position in view of the free and striving Spirit, which I undeniably believed was dealing mightily with my soul. Mr. Morison told the people that he was to hold an anxious meeting, and tell the anxious how they might enter into peace with God that night. Like a stricken coward, as I was, I slunk (oh, the meanness of it) into a pew, and heard the plain way of salvation laid open to me; but the devil had too much of my soul then, and I thought him the easier master at a glance; so I stifled my pungent convictions, and left the chapel an unreconciled rebel.

I felt very uneasy, and all the way home "peace with God—peace with God—how desirable? but, no, not now—again?—yes, when I reform a bit? This seems a good man of a preacher, and very earnest; but really I hardly think that God would in one night settle the long account I had with Him; the gentleman must be mistaken so far as my case goes"—were some of the strugglings of my half-alarmed soul. In a week or two, the giddy joke and the merry laugh took the place of all my convictions.

Passing along one day in the hurry of business, I met a former companion in folly, and, as we had not seen each other for some months, I received a pressing invitation to visit at the house at seven o'clock on the following Wednesday evening. "I'll not be in after seven," were the parting words of my thoughtless friend. Well, on the appointed night, I ran to Union Terrace, where my friend stayed, and, as I was fifteen minutes late, I thought I was to be disappointed in my meeting. I hastily knocked, and one of the family came to the door in tears. What is the matter? was my enquiry. "Oh, come in, Mr. Barbour, your friend dropped down dead at seven o'clock." Oh, God! how I did feel. My very heart beats hard as I relate it to you now. I had the courage to step in and look at the corpse; and then, in the confusion incidental to such an awful visitation, I departed and ran home and to my knees. I was in an awful state; I prayed for faith to please God; I wept, and stormed, and raved, and no faith came. (I had been told, as a settling point against Mr. M.'s views, that faith could only be given by God; and from this I concluded I was right in denying him in the church!)

I have leaped at the dead of the night, and rolled on my bed-room floor, and paced the room, and wept thousands of tears, and all to no purpose; no faith came. At last I actually blasphemed God for withholding it, and said, He sees well enough that the very inmost desire of my soul is to get this faith, and since He withholds it I don't care—He can strike me dead too. I want this gift of faith, and if I don't get it is now no fault of mine. I heard these last words in my ears continually, "I'll not be in after seven," and they gave me no rest. Mr. Morison's sermon troubled me greatly, and I would have given the world that he was

in Aberdeen again; but I was led to understand that the meetings closed with his departure, and so I never knew that such preaching was continued there. At last, on enquiry at W. Reid, I heard that you preached regularly in the chapel.

The following Lord's Day, in great distress, I went to the chapel, and heard you preach the Gospel. I saw things clearing fast away, and on the Monday evening I went to the meeting and heard you deliver a clear and simple exposition of 2 Cor. v. 20 to the end. The faith I saw was wanted from me; and through this golden string of Gospel truths I was led to peace with God; and I have ever looked to you with love, and now, at this great distance, and after the lapse of several trying years to me, I still look to you with much affection as my father in the Gospel, and ever, ever regret not calling on you and making known to you that you were the means of saving my soul.

What kept me from doing this I do not know, unless it was because I am naturally bashful; and then used to think that talking about experimental religion was a sure sign of hypocrisy or fanaticism, and that nobody but ministers and their personal friends ever should speak about the good God had done for their souls. I confess I had strange notions about Christ and His cause when I became converted. I never saw the use of Him before, and all the stories I had heard of Him and all His love now seemed useful to me—and then to think that unless I was a minister's friend I could not converse about Him seemed strange. So much for the coldness of Calvin's system of teaching. I thought my troubles were now at an end regarding my belief, and so they were in the most important quarter, for I had the consciousness of peace with God through the finished work of Christ; but I was most bitterly attacked by many intelligent friends who, being far better theologians than I, soon made use of their knowledge to my hurt. What? have you credited that "new view doctrine?" "Why, none but a parcel of senseless characters believe that—have you examined all their system?"—and so on they went.

Being of rather a philosophical turn of mind, I was easily enticed to search for "reasons why;" and gave myself up to the reading and study of the different writings on both sides of the question. I was then called from Aberdeen to my native town, as my mother was in a declining state of health, and I thought it well to be near her. I wrought at my business in Elgin (where I am known to brother F.) and carefully to the best of my ability examined the disputed points of doctrine; the result was a firm and unshaking and unshakable conviction of the truth of the doctrines of universal grace. Hearing of Oberlin as a place where one could be educated at a moderate expense, I determined within myself, and without informing one of all my friends or relatives, I resolved to go there and prepare myself for the Gospel ministry.

Providential visitations prevented me from leaving for Oberlin directly. My mother died in the peace of the Gospel; we had the house to break up, and after seeing my brothers take their several ways in business, I visited my only sister, who is married; and alone, and with slender means, I began my journey. I had occasion to visit London on my way, and hearing that Mr. Finney was preaching in Dr. Campbell's chapel, I went and heard him several times. In London I fell sick, and had to return to Scotland, and was delayed by this for about three months.