

whase only recommendation is their gibin' an' sneerin' at gude folk an' gude things. That's the kind o' folk they ance were, an' I'm sure they were ony thing but the licht o' the warl'. It was as dark as pitch wi' themself's; it was mirk and dreary nicht wi' them, but they're licht noo. Jesus is the sun o' righteousness, the real sun, the richt sun, the sun o' the soul; an' He has gi'en them licht; His word has been a bricht burnin' lamp, an' His Speerit has been like oil. Every ane o' them is noo like the mune, an' image o' the sun, shinin' wi' licht an' beauty like dew-drops.

There's no ane o' the freens o' Jesus as bricht an' big a licht as he might be. Some o' them canna connect twa thochts thegither, either on religion or ony ither thing. Their minds are like the yard o' the sluggard, whare ye may fin' a lot o' sweet suellin', bonnie flowers growin, aside bunches o' nettles, and rag-weeds' and dockens; or like a thrifty wifes' rag pock, whaur there are a' kinds o' clouts, clippins' and parins' o' silk, satin, plaiden', an' packsheet. Their thochts are like the leaves blawin' frae the trees in October, after a nicht's snell frost, and no' the least like a regiment o' soldiers. When they are speakin' to ye, ye are like a man in a crood, swayed whyles to ae side and whyles to anither, gettin' a bash in the face noo, an' a clour atween the shouthers belyve. An' some o' them gang aff the straught sae aften, that ane is puzzled to say whether the licht or the darkness will bear the gree in the end. They're like Will-o'-the-wisp—Spunkie, as we used to ca' him—they got fou on a market nicht, or New Year's day; they fly like tinklers, and behave in sic ways that it seems natural to conclude that Jesus wad disown them. If they're munes ava, they're like the new mune, wi' a bit thread o' yellow licht roun' the edge o' the auld black mune; if wark's scarce an' the mills put on short time, or if it has been a late wat hair'st, an' bread an' meal are dear, or if a bairn dees i' the hoose, they yauner, an' greet, and compleen, as if they thoct the Almighty wadna be as gude as His word—the word o' promise sae rowth o' comfort. They dinna tak' him at His word, but are as suspicious as oor manager is wi' some o' the callants that he has fand oot tellin'

him lees owre an' owre again, or as the baker's wife is wi' some o' the unco' new lookin' half-croons that are whyles laid doon on her counter. I dinna say they've nae knowledge and nae faith, but I say it's far less than it should be; they're no like weel-made and fu'-grown men and women—they're like bairns; na, they're like Nature's playthings—Tam Thooms—that it wad be a gude sign if they were so uncommon as to be a show: puir, ill-thriven dwarfs.

But if the licht in a man is o' the richt kind, it grows aye mair and mair. Some lights gang oot in a moment, like the licht frae the blast o' a quarry, or a poacher's gun in a dark nicht; some gang flickerin' up and doon like the lights frae the ain warks aboon Coatbrigg or Airdrie, or the streamers that gliut athwart the lift; but the sun's licht is steady an' glowin; the hill-tops in the early mornin' are like the pinnacles o' the temple, or like bonnie wee islands in the sea;—by and by the hail face o' Nature is refreshed and the dew is drunk up frae her leafy locks. Noo the friends o' Jesus are like the licht o' the sun in this respect. They dinna stan' still; their saule ken mair aboot God and heevin than they ance did, and they dinna wander sae aften or sae far frae the richt road. There's something unco far ajee wi' them if they're nae better this year than they were last year. If they're no a bit wiser an' no a bit better, they may weel doot, an' ither folk may doot too, if they really are freens o' Jesus. Hoo can they think they're like the growing corn?—an' Jesus says a' his freens are like it. There's the sma' green braird in the day of conversion—a pile o' grass here, an' anither there—in twa or three weeks the clods are covered—in coorse o' time they bear awns, an' the tap pickles peep oot an' tell that we're gaun to get the appointed weeks o' harvest—and then, in the end, there's the stalk bendin' its head o' ripe corn in reverent worship o' the God o' the Seasons.

An' the freens an' followers o' Jesus gie licht to ither folk. Their Maister tells them they're no to be sae stupid or cruel as a man that wad licht a cannel and put a tub owre the tap o' it; e'en a wean nicht ken there wad be nae sens in doin' that; naebody but a daft body or a born ideweit wad ever think o' sic