

THE GUARDIAN.

"HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD."

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POETRY.

THE SABBATH DAWN.

BY JAMES GRAHAME.

How still the morning of the hallowed day
Mute is the voice of rural labor; hushed
The ploughboy's whistle and the milkmaid's song

The scythe lies glittering in the dewy wreath
Of teded grass, mingled with fading flowers,
That yesternorn bloomed, waving in the breeze.
Sounds the most faint attract the ear; the hum
Of early bee, the trickling of the dew;
The distant bleating midway up the hill.
Calmness sits throned on you unmoving cloud.
To him who wanders o'er the upland leas,
The blackbird's note comes mellower from the dale.

And sweeter from the sky the gladsome lark,
Warbles his heaven-turned song; the lulling brook
Murmurs more gently down the deep-worn glen;
While from yon lonely roof, whose curling smoke
O'er mounts the mist, is heard at intervals
The voice of psalms, the simple song of praise.

Missionary Intelligence.

DR. DUFF'S SPEECH, IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, ON THURSDAY, MAY 24.

[Concluded.]

If the Lord will, my unaltered and unalterable purpose is, to return to the scene of my former labours. In adhering so determinedly to this resolution, I am not unaware of the misconstruction and uncharitable insinuations to which, in certain quarters my conduct has been subjected. Now, though in myself I feel and confess that I am nothing, yea, "less than nothing and vanity," I must, for the sake of "magnifying my office," be permitted to assert and vindicate the integrity of my actuating motives. I would return to the land of my adoption not because in the gross and carnalising judgment of some worldlings, I could not do better at home. No; if the earnest and reiterated entreaties of friends, if the most alluring offers, on the part of some of "the mighty and the noble," of the most tempting invitations to spheres of honour and responsibility from not a few of the Christian people of this land could have availed aught, I might, in the low vulgar and drivelling sense of the expression have done better at home. I would go, not from the restless spirit of wild, roving adventure. If the animating principle had flown from that source, sure enough it ought by this time to have been cured in the case of one, who twice suffered shipwreck barely escaping with life—who, more than once, was well nigh foundered amid the gales and hurricanes of the deep—and who was thrice brought to the very brink of the grave, by the noxious influences of an unfriendly climate. I would go, not from any exaggerated estimate or ambitious longings after the pomp and luxuries of the East. No. Dire experience constrains me to say, that, for the enjoyment of real personal comfort, I would rather, infinitely rather, be the occupant of the poorest hut, with its homeliest fare, in the coldest and bleakest ravine that flanks the sides of Schiathallion or Ben Nevis, than be the possessor of the stately palace, with its royal appurtenances, in the plains of Bengal. I would go, not from any freaks of fancy respecting the strangeness of foreign lands, and the exciting novelty of labour among the dwellers there. There I have been already, and can only testify, that the state of the heathen is far too sad and awful a reality, to be a fitting theme for story or for song, unless it be one over which hell would rejoice and heaven weep.

I would go, not from any unpatriotic dislike of my native land, or misanthropic aversion towards its people or its institutions. No: for its very ruggedness, as the land of "the mountain and the flood," I cherish more than ordinary fondness. How could it be otherwise? Nestled and nursed, as it were from earliest infancy, among its wildest and sublimest scenes, no enjoyment half so exhilarating, as the attempt to out-rival the wild goat in clambering from crag to crag or to outstrip the ravens in soaring to their loftiest summits—no music half so sweet as the roar of the cataract among the heaving precipices of the solitary dell—no chariot and equipage half so much desired, as the buoyant wreaths of mist that curled their strange and fantastic shapes around the ragged peaks of the neighbouring hills. Hence a

fondness for the characteristic scenery of my native land, amounting almost to a passion—a passion which, like every other, it requires Divine grace to modify and subdue. For oft as I have strayed among gardens and groves, bestudded with the richest products of tropical climes, the involuntary ejaculation has ever been, "Give me thy woods, thy barren woods, poor Scotland!"

Towards its people I have always cherished the fondest attachment—an attachment vastly augmented by the circumstance, that from Pomona, the mainland of Orkney, to the Solway Firth, there is scarcely a city or district in which I could not point out one or more personal friends, in whose Christian society I have found refreshment and delight. Of all its institutions, sacred and civil, I have ever entertained an unbounded admiration—an admiration that has been immeasurably enhanced by the contrast which the want of them exhibits in other lands.

I would therefore go, not because I love Scotland less, but because, I humbly and devoutly trust, that, through the aid of Divine grace, I have been led to love my God and Saviour, and the advancement of his blessed cause on earth still more. I would go, because, with the Bible in my hands, I cannot see what special claim Scotland has upon me, as a minister of Christ, any more than any other land embraced within the folds of the everlasting covenant—because, with the Bible in my hands, I cannot see how a soul in Scotland can be intrinsically more precious, than a soul in Greenland, or Caffreland, or Hindustan, or any other region on earth—because, with the Bible in my hands, I cannot see that the bounds of the Church of Scotland are identical with the bounds of the Redeemer's kingdom; or that the Redeemer of Scotland, rather than that of any other realm, included in the emphatic and catholic designations of "all the world, and all nations." I would go because, with the Bible in my hands, I cannot see that the ministerial office was designed to be solely or even chiefly local and pastoral. No: in its very constitution it is essentially ubiquitous and evangelistic.

The very commission by which, through the divinely-appointed ordinance of the Church, I am authorized to preach the Gospel at all, binds me to be ready to go forth to any one of "all nations," to which the glad tidings must be proclaimed. This general commission may, for substantial reasons, in the case of hundreds and thousands, particularly in a Christianised land, obtain a fixed, special, local, and pastoral destination. But such destination can never cancel or abrogate the fundamental obligation involved in the original commission. Hence the ineradicable impression, that if God in his providence beckon me, and the Church, in the rightful exercise of her spiritual authority, invite me to a particular sphere in any portion of the divinely-appointed field of labour which is "the world," I dare no more refuse, without forfeiting my commission in the eye of Heaven, what ever may be the easy and accommodating opinions of men, than a covenanted servant of her Britannic Majesty could, without incurring similar forfeiture, decline proceeding on public duty, to any one of the remotest colonies or dependencies of the empire.

Having with the Bible in my hands, formed such views as these of the nature and character of the ministerial commission, how could I stand up here this day, were I of the number of those who, thinking nothing, and caring less about the real and proper Bible field, coolly, and without the least consciousness of shame, confess that they are either comparatively idle, or not directly engaged in their Master's work, and satisfy themselves with petitioning Church Courts for their wisdom to devise some measure, whereby professional employment could be secured for them at home?

It thinks the voice of patriarchs, and prophets, and apostles, in one united and solemn peal, would be thus for ever ringing in my ears—What! No professional employment at home? Why, then, transfer your services to other parts of the field inferior to make such humiliating confessions—to advance such humble petitionings—when the real field, "the world," is all before you, and calls from every quarter are sounding in your ears, loud as the cries of perishing multitudes which no man can number? Why, by such waiting, and loitering, and petitioning to be hired, do ye provoke a special application to your case of one of your saviour's most pungent and penetrative parables? It is now eighteen hundred

years, since the morning of the Gospel dispensation dawned upon a benighted world, when the Lord of the vineyard first summoned the labourers to go into his vineyard, and now, when the day is far spent, yea, when it is about the eleventh hour, he cometh, and beholdeth you and many others standing idle in the market-place, and again he saith unto you, Why stand ye here all the day idle? Do you reply, Because no man hath hired us? What! no man? No philanthropist, no congregation, no Presbytery, no Synod, no Assembly? Go ye into my vineyard, and whatsoever your hand findeth to do, do it with all your might.

Now suppose that moved by such a gracious invitation, I and my fellow-loungers were each of us roused to reply, "Lord, here am I, send me;" but first resolved to take a survey of the vineyard. Suppose the larger portion of it by far were found still in a wilderness state, other portions here and there but partially reclaimed, and only one small corner that could be said at all to approximate to a state of perfect cultivation—suppose that the choicest spots of that corner were not without thorns and briars and other marks of a careless and relaxed husbandry—still, as compared with the rest of the vineyard a very paradise of beauty and fertility—what would be thought of us, the eleventh-hour labourers if instead of manfully resolving to put forth all our energies, and at once invade the wholly unbroken surface with its impenetrable jungle, we should waste our precious time in clamorously petitioning the occupiers of the already cultivated and most fertile corner, in their wisdom, to devise some measure whereby we could be employed and privileged to settle there too?

Or, if the Lord of the vineyard suddenly reappeared to take an account of our stewardship, what reply could we make that did not virtually, actually, and undisguisedly imply after all, it was our own ease, and comfort, and convenience we paramently sought for, and not the promotion of the interests of Him, whom we in words acknowledge as our Sovereign Lord and Master! To escape from the guilt and condemnation of such laggart, and disgraceful, and criminal wastes of the great vineyard; and I would go to India in preference to other portions thereof, simply, because at present the Lord has, in the overrulings of providence, opened up a larger and more effectual door, than in any other land, for proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation to scores of millions that never heard of a Saviour.

And seeing that Scotland, with its two and a-half or millions, has a supply of about twelve hundred ordained pastors connected with this National Church while the church is satisfied with sending forth only ten, to preach the Gospel to more than one hundred and thirty millions of fellow-subjects in the East, that are famishing for lack of knowledge—that is with sending forth less than the hundredth-part of what she retains at home, to minister the means of Gospel grace, and Gospel ordinances, to a population fifty times greater! I have tasked myself in vain, with the Bible in my hand, to discover one Scriptural argument why the little snug and comparatively well cultivated corner should have so many, and the great uncultivated waste so few! I judge no man in the baneful of unrighteous judgment. But, for myself, I lance of solemnly declare that, with such views pressing so overwhelmingly on my soul, I cannot, without being arraigned at the bar of conscience as a traitor to my God and Saviour—I cannot, while health and strength are supplied from above—I dare not be guilty of adding one more, however insignificant, to the swelling catalogue of hundreds at home, and thereby subtracting one, however insignificant, from the lean and scanty tablet of units abroad! By the blessing of God, therefore, I propose to return and join the little band that is before me, "bearing the burden and heat of the day." And, if ye will not augment our number, till one and another has successively fallen, oh, let us have at least your sympathies and your prayers! your prayers in the closet, your prayers at the family altar, your prayers in the assemblies and congregations of the people.

In the whole annals of time, I know only of one case wherein a being, in human form, could declare not in proud, cold, stoical apathy, but in lowly, yet calm, self-conscious independence, that he heeded not and would not, brook any manifestation of sympathy or entreaty in his behalf. It was when the man of sorrows, groaning and bleeding under the burden of an ignominious cross, was wending his weary way