

not this. Nathaniel was, thus, a broken-hearted man. The Lord, therefore, had been in spirit already in company with him, before Philip called him, for the yearning of an awakened soul are ever dear to Him. He tells him so—as He had afore announced by His Prophet. “Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit.” Isaiah lviii. 15.

And on His gracious salutation, and letting him know that He had thus known him, Nathaniel's soul is amazed. “Rabbi,” says he, “thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel.” This was revival to his heart.—The high and lofty One that made good another portion of that same oracle of the Prophet, “to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.”

Now, this case shows us the Lord's blessed dealings with an AWAKENED conscience, reviving and gladdening it, or making it a RELIEVED, DELIVERED CONSCIENCE. In the Samaritan, the conscience was still ASLEEP. It had to be roused, brought into God's presence with all its burden and guilt upon it.—The Lord, accordingly, forces her to discover herself. All the guilty secrets of her soul were dragged forth to the light. But she stands—though overwhelmed, and though nature, for a moment, set itself to weave a veil between herself and her sin, she remains in the light that had detected and exposed her; and that is the spring of her future blessedness—for the Lord quickly fills that place with the tokens of His grace, and no longer allows it to be merely the witness of her shame and guilt.

There is something in this mysterious Stranger that works on her spirit—and she names the name of “Messias” in His ear, as One that, in some sense, she was looking for. Then, the conscience having been already stirred, and now the heart was opened, the Saviour reveals Himself; the Stranger proves to be the Messias she had named, and she is blest and satisfied.

Here we see what the Lord will do with a conscience that needs to be aroused, if the sinner, in spite of shame and exposure, will still abide His presence. For it is, surely, the way of blessedness, to value CHRIST more than CHARACTER. We may say, in a sense,

all depends on that. She no longer hid herself, but told her neighbors that she had been thoroughly exposed.

In the case of the Pharisees, or the accusers of the adulteress, the conscience is BAD. A wicked purpose was filling their hearts all the time they were in the presence of Christ. What must He do with such a people? His presence shall be found intolerable to them. “Being convicted by their own conscience, they went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last.

What less could be done with such a shocking material? And so will it be by and by. All the wicked must perish from the presence of the Lord. Like smoke they shall be driven away. This was not the common way of Jesus; for He came not to judge but to save. “The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” But when these accusers of the sinner would fain have her at the fiery hill, and deal in law with her, then the Lord can turn the heat of that place against them, and give in them a sample of the day of doom, when the wicked shall perish from the presence of the Lord.

Unlike the poor Samaritan, they valued their character. Being exposed, they would not stand it. They would rather hide their sin, than have it published and borne away. For such Christ has died in vain. They frustrate the grace of God. They sin against their own souls.

Thus, the Lord Jesus is seen to deal with the conscience in different conditions. With the awakened conscience He deals in all grace, giving it, as the contrite heart, to know that He revives it, and dwells on high with it.—With the sinner who will still abide with Him, though under the pain of being exposed and made naked to his shame, He will deal till He relieve and satisfy him. With the wicked who practise their wickedness, and when exposed will leave Him, and rather keep their place and character among men, than reach the virtue of His presence, He shows that presence to be intolerable.

These are Nathaniel, the Samaritan, and the Pharisees. He dwells in the high and holy place with the contrite—leads the poor convicted one who will still tarry with Him along the path of light and life—consigns to the fiery hill and to separation from Himself, the wicked who rather practise their wicked-