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"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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Poetry.

The Incorrutable.

No joy is true, save that which hath no end
No life is true, save that which liveth ever;
No health is sound, save that which God doth send
No love is real, save that which changeth never.

Heaven were no heaven, if its dear light could fade,
If its fair glory could hereafter wane;
If its sweet skies could suffer stain or shade,
Or its soft breezes waft one note of pain.

But now, its beauty is forever vernal;
Its glory is the glory of its King,
Undying, incorrutable, eternal;
And ever new the song its dwellers sing.

O heaven of heavens, how true thy life must be;
O home of God, how excellent thy light!
O long, long Summer of eternity,
Bright noon of angels, ever clear and bright.
—Bonar.

Under the Leaves.

Of have I walked these woodland paths
In sadness, not foreknowing,
That underneath the withered leaves,
The flowers of spring were growing.

To-day the winds have swept away
Those wrecks of autumn splendor,
And here the fair Arbutus-flowers
Are springing, fresh and tender.

O prophet flowers, with lips of bloom,
Surpassing in their beauty,
The pearly tints of ocean shells,
Ye teach me Faith and Duty.

Walk life's dark way, ye seem to say,
In faith and hope, foreknowing
That where man sees but withered leaves,
God sees the fair flowers growing.
—Leighton.

Selections.

The earnest Minister.

BY REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER.

Before us lies the life of John Angell James, that man whose name is made up of two apostles vinctured by an angel." Opposite the title-page is that broad beaming countenance that we once looked upon reverently as it rose before a crowded audience in the town-hall of Birmingham. No one could mistake that face. Robert Hall declared that it was the most remarkable one he ever saw, and he was sure that Mr. James would be the first man recognized at the Resurrection. One thing is very certain, that multitudes will there recognize him as their faithful spiritual teacher, who first led them to the cross of Christ. He will then stand in the foremost rank of that throng who wear the crown of rejoicing that is conferred upon the earnest minister.

After reading carefully the biography before us, we are persuaded that here lay the secret of that influence that carried his name throughout Christendom. John Angell James was not a profound theologian. He was not an acute controversialist. He wrote no commentaries. He untied no knotty questions of exegesis. He made no discoveries in philosophy. Yet it is probable that he numbered more readers, more hearers, and more converts to Jesus Christ, than any English preacher of this century. And this enviable distinction he won by simply following the straight single path of preaching the Gospel of Christ with all his might and main. "I set out in my ministry," he says, "with the idea of usefulness so deeply imprinted on my heart that I could never lose sight of it long together; and I mean usefulness of one kind—that is, the direct conversion of souls.

This aim, thus early adopted, became the master passion of his life. For fifty years Mr. James laboured in the same busy city, amid the whirling of the wheels and the jingling of the money-changers. What for? He built a chapel that would hold well-nigh two thousand auditors. What for? Simply that he might gather as many of his busy neighbors as possible to hear him preach Jesus Christ. He wrote a little volume of which a half-million copies have already been

issued, and which has been translated into the tongues of Holland, France, Germany, Russia, and Italy. Its one sole object was to direct the anxious inquirer to the blessed Saviour. It was written originally for a group of young men and women whom Mr. James was meeting every week, and for whose salvation he felt an intense concern. And so through the whole of that half century of holy toil, the one undying inspiration of his life was to bring sinners to the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. "If you perish," he said to his hearers in his farewell letter found after his death, "your blood will not be upon me. Your ruin will lie at your own door. I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God."

In reading the life of James we are reminded of the devoted John Welsh, who used to keep a plaid upon his bed that he might wrap himself in it when he rose during the night for prayer. Sometimes his wife found him on the floor weeping. When she complained, he would say, "Oh! woman, I have the souls of three thousand to answer for, and I know not how it is with many of them." Here was the earnest minister who felt his momentous responsibility during the week while preparing his heaven-commanded message to dying men. It haunts him in the silent watches of the night. It rises with him at the waking of the morn. It breathes itself out in the fervid utterance of the closet.

But it is in the pulpit that an earnest ambassador of Jesus, like Angell James, or Welsh, or Pysön, or McCheyne, brings all the gathered years and emotions and inspirations and studies of the week to one converging and glowing focus of intensity. Whatever is most convincing in argument, or most winning in entreaty, or most thrilling in appeal, he seizes upon and appropriates to his mighty theme. He pleads. He warns. He invites. He points now to the yawning pit, red flames of wrath, and now to the cross red with the Saviour's blood. The grandeur of his theme possesses him. It leads him out of himself. Nay, he is no longer in this world, or of it. Its illusions have all passed away. He is surrounded by other and more solemn auditors. The light of eternity plays about him and reveals the tremendous point of the judgment scene. To his eye, the great consummation has already come! The Judge is descending. The books are opening. The heavens are passing away with a great noise. The angels are separating the vast multitudes to the right hand and to the left hand of the Judge; and among them he sees his own hearers. Some of them he sees crowned with the unfading crown; and some of them—appalling sight!—are driven off weeping to the gates of despair!

With such a spectacle before him, with the shrieks of his perishing neighbours ringing in his very ears, can any appeal be too importunate, can any entreaty be too earnest? Even if his overwhelming solicitude moves him to tears, he feels that it is better for him to weep here than for his hearers to weep in hell.

Thus fired was the Great Apostle when he made Felix tremble on his marble throne. Such was the irrepresible emotion of Whitefield when he preached until the plumes on duchesses' head-dresses shook with the agitation of their wearers, and even courtly Chesterfield cried out, in view of a sinner sinking into the pit, "Good God! the man is gone!" Such was the intense agony of Bunyan when he "went to his people as in chains, to preach to them in chains; and carried that fire in his own conscience that he persuaded them to beware of." Such was the heavenly earnestness of Samuel Rutherford when he exclaimed, "My witness is above, that your heavens would be two heavens to me, and the salvation of each of you as two salvations to me."

The Summerfields, the Spencers, and the Angell Jameses of this world will not dread to meet their auditors at the bar of God. For they ceased not to warn those auditors with tears and entreaties. But amid the vast assemblage at that tribunal, who will appear to have been guilty of a stranger folly than the unfaithful minister of Christ, who, with the Bible in his hands, yet forbore to warn men of their impending danger? That sinners were morally insane in this life, they will then confess of themselves. How they came to be guilty of such madness, they can com-

prehend. But how any man who know to what a hell they were rushing, should have neglected to warn them against it, will be enough to fill them with amazement and abhorrence. And as they turn away towards their prison-house of darkness, oh! how they will vent their terrible reproaches on faithless ministers as agents and accomplices in their eternal ruin.

The Universalist dying.

I was conversing with a highly esteemed Christian acquaintance, a lady somewhat advanced in life. We were speaking of Universalists, and I asked her if she had been engaged much in discussion with them, when she had been in their society. She replied that she never argued with them unless forced to do it, "and then," said she, "the only argument I use is the relation of my brother's history." She then gave me the following story, which, to me, was one of deep and solemn interest.

"My brother came home from the South, where he had been spending some time, to enjoy a visit with the members of the family. He was a strong Universalist, shrewd, and well booked up on all points relating to that doctrine. Few would venture to argue with him; he would almost always corner them, and overpower them, so that he was avoided by all. One afternoon, he told me of a ball, that was to be held that evening not far away, and asked me to go. We were both good dancers, and I had been with him much to parties, and joined in that amusement before my conscience became tender on the subject. I told him I could not go; I did not think it right.

"'Now,' said he, 'I hope you have not become so foolish as to deny yourself all the pleasures of life! Just go along, and throw away all those foolish notions.' He urged me, but I was firm, and refused to go.

"'Well, then, you will ride with me, won't you?'

"To this I agreed. "We got into the carriage, and rode nearly all the afternoon. Almost from the moment we left the gate, we began to talk on Universalism, and continued to talk till we came home. I could not move him in the least. He was confident in his creed, as if he had received a revelation direct from heaven to assure him of it.

"I said to him: you know our father was once a Universalist, but gave that belief up before he died, and besought us to avoid his errors and delusions.

"'Yes, I know that. When he was laid upon a sick bed, and his mind was as weak as his body, people came with one accord, and pitched into the business of distressing and alarming him. He had not, then, his thoughts calm and collected so as to argue with them, and thus they overpowered him, and destroyed his confidence in the doctrine he had always held. It is mean! It is contemptible! If any one should come to take advantage of me, in that way, lying on a sick bed, with mind and body alike weak, I would order him to leave the room.'

"So he continued to talk, and I saw how idle and useless were all my words. We came home. The eighth day after that talk, my brother died. Unbeknown to himself, he had contracted the yellow fever in New York, and soon the attack came on. I was away from home when he was seized, and did not dare to go and see him, knowing that I could not keep silence on the forbidden subject. The doctor was called,—a young man to whom he was much attached, and who was also a firm believer in Universalism. As he entered the room, my brother threw out his hand from the bed-clothes, eagerly stretching it towards him, and caught hold of his clothes as soon as he came within reach. He made most anxious inquiries about his disease. He was told that he had the yellow fever, and there was little hope of his recovery.

"'Doctor,' said he, 'pray for me!' clutching his garment tightly in his hand. 'I am a lost man! I have deceived myself, and deceived others; I argued my belief confidently, and felt great assurance while I talked, but when I came to lay my head on my pillow, at night, convictions would force themselves upon me that I was wrong, and there

was certainly a hell. I have encouraged you in the delusion: we have helped each other, and now you must kneel right down here, and pray for me. I shall not let you go till you do!' The doctor was forced to comply, and, kneeling down, prayed for his dying companion. That prayer was the beginning of the means that resulted in his own conversion.

"A message was sent to me that my brother wished to see me. How could I go? I remembered what he had lately told me, that he would order out of the room any one who should broach that subject to him on a sick bed. While I was delaying and hesitating a few moments, a carriage came in haste for me. My brother must see me without delay. I knew nothing of his feeling at the time, and went, not knowing what I should do. The doors of the house were open, so that he saw me from a further bedroom, as I entered the front-door. He stretched out his hand to me. When I came to him, he seized it and said, immediately, 'Pray for me! kneel down and pray.' I did so. Many persons came in, and he called on every one to pray for him. Pray for me everywhere, and all the time. You need not do it here, but in any place.' He made every one that came in promise to pray for him. I never saw such a house elsewhere. One day I had occasion to go up stairs to a meal room, and on my way, counted seven persons on their knees engaged in prayer. After a short time all Universalists ceased to come. Every one present seemed agonized. My brother prayed constantly. If ever there was a beggar at the Throne of Grace, he was one. But, up to the moment when consciousness left him, he had received no assurance of pardoned sin. The last words he said were, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.'

"This story is the argument I almost always use when I am assailed by a Universalist."—N. Y. Observer.

A place reserved.

"We have a place reserved for you and yours always."

Such were the cheering words in a recent letter from a beloved Christian friend, and they were sweetly suggestive of the following among other pleasant thoughts: "A place reserved!" O how comforting! But then I cannot go now; duty calls me here. Never mind, the place is ready. Perhaps I may have a call there to-morrow, or next week, or next month; perhaps not in a year. But the place I know, is reserved, because my friend's word is to be believed. How happy I feel in view of the fact! It lightens all my labor, and soothes pain when I am shut up in my sick room. That place reserved! How my heart leaps at the thought! I may be privileged to go to it, unexpectedly, soon; who knows? How happy would I be to go! To go with my loved ones, if I could go, but if not, to go alone, and let them come afterward. But the place is reserved, I may be sure of that; I look the letter over to find the words again. There they are, penned by her own hand; there can be no mistake.

If it gives me so much happiness to be assured of a place in the home of an earthly friend, how much more happiness should I experience from the assurance of a home in heaven. "I go to prepare a place for you," my best Friend has said. I have it from his own lips, and I know his word never fails, and of course he has done it, and the place is ready. O joy! joy! Let me carry the comfort of it through all my pilgrimage, and not go doubting or mourning, but rejoicing. Let me look forward to my removal to it with earnest longings and eager anticipations; faith will enable me to do this. I may overleap the disagreeables of the way and enjoy something of the blessedness of the end. A shorter road than that to the home of my earthly friend may take me to the place prepared in heaven.

Well, be it so. The way provided has been in infinite wisdom and must be best. I rejoice in it, and from this moment make the poet's language mine:

Come then, afflictions dreary,
Sharp sickness, pierce my breast;
You only bear the weary
More quickly home to rest.

—Advocate & Guardian.