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ALONE.

BY ROBERT PAUL, ESQ.,

"*Thou art God alone.*"—*Ps.* lxxxvi. 10.

What a sublime idea has the devout psalmist concentrated and conveyed in these few short words!—the highest idea by far which can enter into and possess the human mind. For the thought of God is the greatest of all thoughts. Yet what are words? They are the only vehicle of thought, it is true; yet so limited and imperfect is the human language, that it wants all power of expressing even the poor and narrow conceptions which we form of that which is infinite,—and that God *alone* is! How impossible is it to clothe in speech the highest risings of the human mind on this the profoundest of all subjects! How utterly inadequate to the reality! We think of time,—we think of eternity; and to the latter we apply terms which belongs only to the former. Time has successive periods; eternity has no periods,—there is no succession. We say that God was from eternity,—or, as if to give a fuller meaning, from all, or before all eternity, and throughout all eternity; words these which imply a beginning and end, and therefore a limit; and so we find that we are giving utterance to a solecism, a contradiction, there being no from, no before, no throughout applicable to eternity; the primitive and only proper idea we can have of which being the existence of God.

"Thou art God alone." Thou art God in eternity alone! This form of expression perhaps harmonises best with that great name, which, setting us de at once every notion of time, which is successive; and annihilating the whole past and future, which, as to God, are not; involves in it some idea of an ever-existing, everlasting present,—the great name which God has appropriated to himself, "I AM THAT I AM."

What has been created, and is therefore finite, can never comprehend the infinite. Yet in every man's mind there is something by which he can perceive that God in eternity must have been alone,—for there can only be One Eternal. Infinite unity in eternity is inseparable from any approach we can make to a right conception of God. But what a thought is this! The only notion which we can have of eternity is that of something which never can be filled,—and yet God filleth it! We are bewildered by this vast idea of God,—existing throughout unbegun, dateless eras,—in eternity—*alone*.

Every being is an effect, a product, a result, except God. All other things have been formed, have had an origin, a beginning. They are also, or may be made, instrumental causes. But God is the primitive cause, as well as the ultimate end of all. He is not an effect,—not even the effect of his own creative power. He did not originate himself,—he never was originated. He is the uncreated Creator, the unoriginated origin, the effective cause of all things,—yet himself underived, never caused. Everything that exists sprung from nothing, save God. He never sprung, he never began to be,—a Being never brought into being. He is not only what he must ever be, but what he never but was. The idea of duration has no meaning with reference to God. It implies beginning, length, end, which are definite and comprehensible, and therefore unsuitable to the idea of the infinite and eternal One.

"Thou art God *alone*,"—the sole Creator. There cannot be more than one Creator, there *must* be one only. There may be what men call gods; but they must have been created, and are therefore subordinate. Polytheism is an absurdity, it is self-destructive, and in utter antagonism with every primitive idea which can be formed of God. Two or more Creators! two or more Infinities!—all reason and sense fly out against such a notion. And this one great Creator may, each day, each moment (as we denominate periods of time), be creating and again creating, and ever anew creating, myriads of worlds,—peopling, preserving, regulating them all; and yet, so to speak, be as much at leisure as ever. For all this is involved in the idea of an infinite cause, one infinite God. "There is but one God, and none other but he." "The proclamation of God's unity," (to quote the language of another,) "by the voice of Christ, was first heard throughout the land of Judea; but the sound was by-and by wafted far beyond it. It echoed among the hoary idolatries of the world, and shook them to their foundations. The echo has not died away,—it is heard now,—it shall yet be heard above the clamour and hubbub of all rival faiths, and shall drown every other voice: One God,—the supreme object of reverence and love, of worship and obedience,—only one."

"By himself" did Jehovah swear (Heb vi. 13) "because he could swear by no greater," no equal, no other. "Know therefore, and consider in thine heart, that the Lord he is God in Heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else."—(Deut. iv. 39.) "None else!" and therefore incomprehensible by any but himself! We are as able to take up the sea in a shell, or to contain the earth in the palm of our hand, as to comprehend the full idea of God. The most perfect knowledge that we can have of him is, that he cannot be perfectly known by us; for all that we come to know is, that there is something still in God beyond our knowledge,—that he is infinite and incomprehensible. "We can have no direct notions or apprehensions of divine essence, or its properties," says Dr. Owen. "Such knowledge is too wonderful for us. In our present state, God is to us as he was to Moses under all the external manifestations of his glory,—in thick darkness. All the rational conceptions of the minds of men are swallowed up and lost when they would exercise themselves directly on that which is absolutely immense, eternal, infinite. When we say it is so, we know not what we say, but only that it is not otherwise. What we deny of God we know in some measure, but what we affirm we know not; only we declare what we believe and adore. We have no means, no corporeal, no intellectual instrument or power, for the comprehension of him. Nor hath any other creature. For, as Chrysostom says, that which is God not only have not the prophets seen, but neither the angels nor the archangels. If thou wilt inquire of them, thou shalt learn nothing of the substance of God, but only hear them say, 'Glory to God on high;' if thou askest the cherubim and seraphim, thou shalt only hear the praise of holiness, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full his glory.'"

"Thou art God alone!" There is greater depth still in these words than we have yet reached. It is said of God that "He dwelleth in light which no man can approach;" by which is meant not only that God is in himself incomprehensible, but that he is concealed in light which is as if inaccessible; the glory in which he resides allows not of our coming near to it. "God," says one, "is an understanding never to be understood, a word never to be spoken." "I am like a man," says another, when he attempted to search into the nature of God, "digging into a deep spring. I stand here, and the water rises upon me; and I stand there, and the water still rises upon me. This is knowledge, I see, which passeth around me."

"Thou art God alone!" There is perhaps a simpler meaning in these words, which may be expressed in the devout acknowledgment of Augustine,—"Lord, thou hast made us for thyself, and our heart is restless till it resteth in thee!" or in the saying of Vinet, "God has never ceased to be the want of the human race;" or yet again in the words of Professor Butler, "What is all ancient learning but the ever varied expression of one mighty want, one consuming hunger of the heart for that which the Desire of all nations came to give." Yes, God is the sole want; and most men, at one time or another, come to know and feel it to be so. "My heart and my flesh faileth;"—such is the confession of every sentient and finite being, the universal cry of helpless human nature. "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation," not only "of the sons of God," but of God himself: It is after God that the mind strains, and pants, and longs, and after some knowledge of him, when it feels the void within, and of all else without. And when it comes to know how by Him the void can be filled, then this is its language, "O God, my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee,"—for *thee alone!*

There is yet a closer meaning in the acknowledgment, "Thou art God alone," which some have found for themselves, and which they express when they individually say, "Thou art my God alone!" A substitute can be found for every thing that has been created, but for the uncreated God there is no substitute. Each loss in nature may be repaired, every vacancy supplied. There is a *something else* which can come into the place of, or be a compensation for every thing that we are without, or that may have been forfeited or lost. But, O thou who knowest God as thy God! is there any thing that can come to thee, can be sufficient for thee, in the place of God? The things of earth come and go,—they move, and shift, and change,—they pass away, and in some way or other their place is filled again. But for the want of thy God,—O thou who knowest what God is to thee, canst thou do without him? Is he not thy God alone? And is not this thy constant language, thy daily cry, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth whom I desire beside thee?" On earth, nothing properly is had—everything is only desired. But in heaven nothing will be desired, everything will then be had, found, and enjoyed in God—in God alone.

"If," as was written by a heavenly-minded man, now departed,—"If there be any lesson more important than another, any lesson that education for eternity more peremptorily demands than another, or that meetness for heaven will not dispense with on any terms, it is this,—that God is all to us, and a sufficient all. While other things are immeasurably subordinate and comparatively naught, this is a lesson clear to unprejudiced reason as the sun's meridian splendour, yet a most difficult lesson to many, and seldom learned without a succession of many most painful and piercing inflictions. We confide in health, and sickness must cure us of the presumption. We trust in riches, but either they flee away, or we are rendered incapable of enjoying them. We seek happiness in friends, and form a mistaken estimate of their power to please or satisfy our souls, till some great disappointment or bereaving providence demonstrates the vanity of our expectations, and weans us from our fond confidings. We prosper, and are at ease; our plans succeed, and we need not go to God for well being, we have something besides God.—

"Has thou indeed, O mistaken man!—hast thou something besides God? That deceit must be destroyed, or it will destroy thee! To think that we have something besides God—something to be our portion, our happiness, our rest—is such a mistake in judgment, such an error in the knowledge of things, such a refusal or lessening of our dependence on the Almighty, that we must learn other views, or perish in the mental delusion which we have conceived.

"*Something besides God!* No. Any one who thinks so must be most unfit for heaven, for those who are there deem him to be their all. Neither angels nor saints in glory would say they have or need any thing besides God to make them blessed; nor are we prepared for that consummate felicity while such a thought remains with us.

"Alas! how much has often to be suffered ere this lesson be learnt by our reluctant hearts. We must have our creature vanities overthrown, our idols demolished, all that we looked to and leaned upon of this world's confidences and felicities, scattered and dispersed, ere we come to the knowledge of this great truth, that there is nothing indispensable or enduring but God our Maker—*God alone.*"

O Thou who art supreme! teach me supremely to adore Thee! O Thou who art above all, help me to honour Thee above all! O Thou who art God alone! Thou who hast placed within this breast of mine a spark of divine and deathless fire! let me rise above the love even of the holiest of all creatures, to the love of Thee—of Thee *alone*!

"What strange musings are these!" some one perhaps will say,—"remote from our daily concerns, and discordant with all the ordinary and proper objects of human pursuit."

Nay, but, O man!—as a reasonable creature, which thou art conscious of being,—as an immortal creature, which sometimes thou art afraid to think thou art (for men often tremble less at the idea of their mortality than of their immortality),—thou canst not escape, nor get away from God, or the thought of God! Thou hast very much to do with God,—thou hast to do with him chiefly, and above all others,—through eternity thy undying spirit will have everything to do with Him *alone!* Say, dost thou not, in the secrecy of thine heart, know that thus it must be?—dost thou not?

The Praying Widow.

BY REV. THOMAS RAINBRIDGE.

In early life, I was well acquainted with a pious woman, who was left a widow, with five children, four sons and a daughter. Though I was very young at the time, and though many years have since passed, I can never forget the affecting scene I witnessed at the death of her husband. I saw the family kneeling round the sick bed, while the mother commended the dying father to God in prayer; and when the sad moment of separation came, and it was whispered that he was gone, the daughter wept aloud in her grief, and the mother gave vent to her sorrow, in the language of one of Mr. C. Wesley's fine hymns—

"My company before is gone
And I am left alone with thee."

"The heart knoweth its own bitterness; but what can equal the anguish of that emotion, which first tells the mother she is a widow, and the children that they are fatherless?" They feel its pang once—to forget it no more forever.

The pious mother endeavored to train up her children in the fear of God. But notwithstanding her prayers and instructions, she saw, with deep regret, her sons leaving home one after another, and eagerly engaging in the pursuits of the world without religion. As her years increased, and her health declined, she felt that what more she could do to promote the salvation of her children, must be done quickly. She resolved to try the efficacy of prayer, and began to spend whole nights in pleading with God to work by his Spirit on the minds of her children. Her faith increased with the favor and frequency of her prayers. One night, especially, her soul was visited with such a manifestation of the divine presence, that she felt confiden the Lord was about to answer her prayers; and she was not mistaken, for the same night her youngest son, then about thirteen or fourteen years of age, was brought under conviction by hearing his mother praying for him at midnight. He sought the Lord in his youth, and has for many years been employed in preaching the gospel.

Her oldest son, then living at a distance wrote home to inform his mother that the Spirit of God had been striving with him so powerfully, that he began to seek the Lord. He afterward became a useful preacher, and in early life went triumphantly to heaven. About the same time, her second son walked twenty-six miles, one day, to tell his mother what the Lord had done for his soul. The daughter also embraced religion, and has seen her own children walking in the fear of God. This praying mother then felt her joy to be full, and was ready to say, "Let me depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

But it is the affecting story of the third son which has called forth this narrative, hoping it may afford encouragement to some praying mother who may chance to read this article. This son, the mother thought, to be the most kind and amiable of all her children. He was placed under the care of a distinguished lawer, but unhappily fell a prey to temptation. Being possessed of those qualities of mind which made him an agreeable companion, he was induced to join parties of pleasure, and by the most imperceptible degrees fell a victim to occasional intemperance, and was led on from one degree of folly to another, till, at length, he, and a number of his young companions, enlisted as soldiers in the 48th regiment of British light infantry, and soon after joined Lord Wellington's army in Spain, then engaged in a sanguinary warfare with the French, where he and many of his young companions fell at the battle of Salamanca. When the sad tidings of his untimely death reached home, it nearly broke his mother's heart. She hastily concluded that she had been in vain praying for her son upward of twenty years, and that he had suddenly been cut off in his sin, and inevitably placed beyond the reach of mercy, and the possibility of hope. She refused to be comforted, and said with Jacob, "I will go down into the grave unto my son, mourning."—She often exclaimed, "O my son, hadst thou but known in thy day, the things that belonged unto thy peace! but now I fear they are forever hidden from thine eyes. This may well be called the bitterness of sorrow, the very gall of bitterness."

It pleased the Almighty, however, to condescend, in rather a remarkable way, to comfort the desolate mother. During one of her sleepless nights, (for she literally watered her couch with her tears,) she saw or thought she saw, her unfortunate son enter the room, and affectionately entreat her to sorrow no more on his account, for the Lord had given him a space to repent—that he had found mercy, and was saved. However the unbeliever may be disposed to smile at this as the mere phantom of imagination, it had the happiest effect on her mind. Her sorrow was turned into joy, and she never afterward doubted his salvation.

But what makes this incident still more remarkable is, that when the regiment returned from Spain, and all the circumstances were made known to the family, the youngest son, (now a minister in this country), anxious to learn all he could respecting the last hours of his unfortunate brother, hastened to the head-quarters of the regiment, to make inquiries respecting him. He found but one of the number alive who went with him, and was happy to learn, from him and others, what so exactly agreed with his mother's impressions; for, while many of his young companions were killed on the spot, he was spared seven weeks after he was wounded, and, while lying in the hospital, among the dying, his mother's prayers and instructions were brought to his remembrance, and that Spirit he had so often grieved, in answer to his mother's prayers, once more returned to produce conviction on his mind. This truly had "space for repentence;" and we know that God will appear in mercy to a contrite spirit.

When this youth left the companion of his brother, of whom he had obtained the above information, and found himself alone, he sat upon a stone by the road side to weep in astonishment to see how much the effectual, fervent prayers of his pious mother had availed in the belief of her ungodly son.

A Message to the Self-Righteous.

If you saw a beggar rejecting with disdain a garment both suitable and proudly glorying in his rags, would you not be ready to say, "The man is mad?" Well, this is just what you are doing; you are clinging to the filthy rags, of your own good works, while you reject with scorn the glorious obedience of Christ, by which alone sinners can be justified. We read in the Scripture of certain persons, who, being "*ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.*" Now, you are of this number; for you imagine, because you have done some good deeds—performed some works of charity—regularly attended Divine ordinances—and are outwardly decent and moral in your conduct—that, therefore, all must be well with you, and that there can be no danger of condemnation.

But alas! you are in a fatal error; for, unless you keep *whole law* of God, all this will avail you nothing, for "cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." Perhaps however, you say, "I know this, but what is wanting in my righteousness will be made up by Christ's." So you are to make the Saviour's obedience and sufferings stand for mere ciphers, till, by your own righteousness, you prefix the initial figure, and render them of value. You are to consider the glorious mediation of Christ as a mere pedestal, on which you will stand exalted, and justify yourself. Ah! friend there is more than folly in this; there is crime!—the awful crime of dishonouring Christ, undervaluing his work, and of trying to share with him the glory of being the author of salvation.

How different is your spirit from that of Paul. He was equalled by none in purity and love—in labours and sufferings; yet so far from confiding in his obedience as a fit object of Divine complacency or regard, he mentioned it merely to call it *loss* and *dung* in comparison with being found in Christ—"not having his own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Now, if he could not be saved by his righteousness, what infatuation is it to expect that you can be saved by yours?

You have, then, but one alternative—either to rely entirely on the righteousness of Christ, and be saved, or on your own and, perish forever. Remember in your salvation Christ must be all in all, or nothing.

Now the labor of my hands
Can fulfil thy law's demands;
Could my zeal no respite know—
Could my tears forever flow—
All for sin could not atone,
Thou must save and Thou alone.
Rev. R. Macdonald.

A True Christian Lady.

Jeremy Taylor thus describes Frances, Countess of Carberry, who died in 1650:—

"If we consider her person, she was in the flower of her age; of a temperate, plain, and natural diet, without curiosity or an intemperate palate. She spent less time in dressing than many servants; her recreations were little and seldom, her reading much. She was of a most noble and charitable soul, a great lover of honorable actions, and as great a despiser of base things; hugely loving to oblige others, and very unwilling to be in arrear to any upon the stock of courtesies and liberality: so free in all acts of favor, that she would not stay to hear herself thanked, as being unwilling that what good went from her to a needful or an obliged person should ever return to her again. She was an excellent friend, and hugely dear to very many, especially to the best and most discerning persons; to all that conversed with her, and could understand her great worth and sweetness. If we look on her as a wife, she was chaste and loving, faithful and discreet, humble and pleasant, witty and complaint, rich and fair—and wanted nothing to the making her a principal and precedent to the best wives of the world but a long life and a full age.

"If we remember her as a mother, she was kind and severe, careful and prudent, very tender, and not at all fond; a greater lover of her children's souls than of their bodies, and one that would value them more by the strict rules of honor and proper worth, than by their relation to herself.

"Her servants found her prudent and fit to govern, and yet open-handed and apt to reward; a just exacter of their duty, and a great rewarder of their diligence.

"She was in her house a comfort to her dearest lord, a guide to her children, a rule to her servants, an example to all.

"But as she related to God in the offices of religion, she was even and constant, silent and devout, prudent and material. She loved what she now enjoys, and she feared what she never felt, and God did for her what she never did expect. Her fears went beyond all her evil; and yet the good which she hath received was, and is, and ever shall be, beyond all her hopes."

Star in a Little Daughters's Crown.

The Rev. Dr. Daniel Baker, of Texas, gave us the following beautiful fact:

"During a revival in ———, a sweet little girl named Sarah, went home full of what she had seen and heard; sitting at the table with the family, she asked her father, who had been to church, but was a very wicked man, whether he ever prayed. He did not like the question, and in a very angry manner, replied, "It is your mother, or your aunt Sally that put you up to that, my little girl." "No, papa," said the little creature, "the preacher said, all good people pray; and those who don't pray, ain't going to heaven. Pa, do you pray?" This was more than her father could stand, and in a rough way, he said, "Well, you and your mother, and your aunt Sally my go your way, and I will go mine." "Pa," said the little creature with sweet simplicity, "which way are you going? This question pierced his heart. It flashed upon him that he was in the way to death. He started from his chair, burst into tears, and immediately began to cry aloud for mercy. Within a few days he was a happy convert, and I believe will appear in heaven as a star in his little daughter's crown of rejoicing.

Letter from a Dying Wife to her Husband.

The following most touching fragment of a letter from a dying wife to her husband, was found by him some months after her death, between the leaves of a religious volume, which she was very fond of perusing. The letter, which was literally dim with tear marks, was written long before the husband was aware that the grasp of a fatal disease had fastened upon the lovely form of his wife, who died at the early age of nineteen:—

"When this shall reach your eye, dear George, some day when you are turning your eyes over the relics of the past, I shall have passed away forever, and the cold white stone will be keeping its lonely watch over the lips you have so often pressed, and the sod will be growing green that shall hide forever from your sight the dust of one who has so often nestled close to your warm heart. For many long and sleepless nights, when all beside my thoughts was at rest, I have wrestled with the consciousness of approaching death, until at last it has forced itself upon my mind; and although to you and to others it might now seem but the nervous imaginings of a girl, yet, dear George, it is so! Many weary hours have I passed in the endeavour to reconcile myself to leaving you, whom I love so well, and this bright world of sunshine and beauty; and hard indeed it is to struggle on silently and alone with the sure conviction that I am about to leave all forever, and go down alone into the dark valley! "But I know in whom I have believed," and leaning upon His arm "I fear no evil."

Do not blame me for keeping this from you. How could I subject you, of all others to such sorrow as I feel at parting, when time will so soon make it apparent to you? I could have wished to live, if only to be at your side when your time shall come, and pillowing your head upon my breast, wipe the death-damps from your brow, and usher your departing spirit into its Maker's presence embalmed in woman's holiest prayers. But it is not so to be—and I submit. Yours is the privilege of watching through long and dreary nights, for the spirit's final flight, and of transferring my sinking head from your breast to my Saviour's bosom! And you shall share my last thoughts; the last faint pressure of the hand, and the last feeble kiss shall be yours; and even when flesh and heart shall have failed me, my eye shall rest on yours until glazed by death; and our spirits shall hold one last fond communion, until gently fading from my view—the last of earth—you shall mingle with the first bright glimpses of the unfading glories of that better world, where partings are unknown.

Well do I know the spot, dear George, where you will lay me; often have we stood by the place, and as we watched the mellow sunset, as it glanced in quivering flashes through the leaves, and burnished the grassy mounds around us with stripes of burnished gold, each perhaps has thought that some day one of us would come alone, and whichever it might be, your name would be on the stone. But we loved the spot; and I know you'll love it none the less when you see the same quiet sunlight linger and play among the grass that grows over your Mary's grave. I know you'll go often alone there, when I am laid there, and my spirit will be with you then, and whispering among the waving branches, "I am not lost, but gone before!" —They loved in life, and now in death they are not divided. They sleep together in the beautiful cemetery near Troy, where we have stood by her grave at sunset, with the weeping husband, who has now rejoined her "in that world where sorrow is never known, and friends are never parted."—*Knick Knocks from an Editor's Table.*

London Correspondnce.

LONDON, Oct. 24, 1856.

To-morrow's mail will not carry out news of any peculiarly exciting interest; yet when was there a lack of something new to tell, where there were some one attainable, to hear and to tell it? The most startling thing that has happened within the last fortnight took place on Sunday evening, (19th inst.) in the Concert Hall of the Surrey Gardens, which had been hired by the friends of Rev. C. H. Spurgeon for a succession of Sunday evening services. This young minister—only twenty-three years old, and lately blest with twin-sons, is, as I must have informed you, the most popular preacher which London now boasts,—if popularity is embodied in crowds of admiring hearers. To a quaint and rather coarse style of address, he joins the anomaly of hyper-Calvinistic doctrines, interspersed with great boldness and fervor of appeal to the unconverted.

His own place of worship in New Park Street, near the Thames, has long been too small for the evening's congregation, and after using Exeter Hall for a time, it was resolved to use the new hall of the Surrey gardens, estimated to seat 10,000 persons, but really capable of entertaining not more than twice the number held by Exeter Hall, or between 5 or 6,000. The change of place drew drew together denser masses than ever, and before the service, besides the multitudes inside the building itself, thousands of others were in the gardens and adjoining streets. All went right till the close of the first prayer, when two persons in the body of the Hall was distinctly seen by Police Superintendant Lund, to rise and shout "fire! fire!!" The effect was electrical. A rush from the first gallery took place, the iron balustrade gave way, and at this point the chief injury occurred. At the same time the whole of the audience was in a state of tremendous excitement, only partially allayed by the vociferated assurances of the preacher and his officers that no ground of alarm exised. Singing was resorted to, but the oil of music did not quiet the perturbations of the people, and renewed panic broke out, accelerated by the want of tact shewn by Mr. Spurgeon in announcing as his text the words he had previously chosen—"The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked, but he blesseth the habitation of the just."—Prov. iii: 33. Nervous persons might be pardoned for feeling disturbed at this omenous conjunction of text and catastrophe, and the confusion was so great that the termination of the service became immediately imperative.

The extent of the calamity was not ascertained until all was over; and it now appears that eight persons, at least, have suffered the loss of life, while not fewer than 20 or 30 others are supposed to have been injured seriously, many of them, perhaps, beyond hope