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(EARNEST CALL TO DILIGENCE – CIRCUMSPECT WALKING.)

REVERENT AND MUCH RESPECTED, - Grace, mercy, and peace be to you. – I long to hear how your soul prospereth, and I expected you would have written to me. My earnest desire to you is, that you would seek the Lord and His face. I know that you are not ignorant that your daylight is going fast away, and your sun declining. I beseech you by the mercies of God, and by the wounds of your redeeming Lord, and your dreadful compearance before the awesome Judge of quick and dead, make your account clear and plain with your Judge and Lord, while ye have fair daylight, for your night is coming on. Therefore, I pray you, judge more of the worth of your soul, and know that if you are in Christ, and secure your own soul, you are blessed for ever. Few, few, yea very few, are saved. Grace is not casten down at every man's door; therefore speed yourself and others upon seeking Christ and salvation; and learn to overcome, in the bitterness of your soul, your sins in time. It is not easy to take heaven, as the word saith, "by violence." Keep your tongue from cursing and swearing; refrain from wrath and malice; forgive all men for Christ's sake, as you would have your Lord forgive you. I pray you, seeing your time is short, make speed in your journey to heaven, that you may secure a lodging to your soul against night.

Remember my love to your wife, William your son, and the rest of your children.

Grace be with you.

Yours, at all hours, in Christ

Aberdeen, Jan. 5, 1638.

SAMUEL RUTHERFORD

1. The contributor who furnishes this letter to the "Christian Instructor" says: "The paper is small and dingy, and the mode of folding is not exactly in modern style. But the wax and the impression on it are entire."

A GODLY MAN IS AN EVANGELICAL WEEPER

David sometimes sang with his harp, and sometimes the organ of his eye wept: 'I water my couch with my tears' (Psa. 6:6). Christ calls his spouse his 'dove' (Song 2:4). The dove is a weeping creature. Grace dissolves and liquefies the soul, causing a spiritual thaw. The sorrow of the heart runs out at the eye (Psa. 31:9).

The Rabbis report that the same night on which Israel departed from Egypt towards Canaan, all the idols of Egypt were broken down by lightning and earthquake. So at that very time at which men go forth from their natural condition towards heaven, all the idols of sin in the heart must be broken down by repentance. A melting heart is the chief branch of the covenant of grace (Ezek. 36:26), and the product of the Spirit: 'I will pour upon the house of David the spirit of grace, and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him' (Zech. 12:10).

Question: But why is a godly man a weeper? Is not sin pardoned, which is the ground of joy? Has he not had a transforming work upon his heart? Why, then, does he weep?

Answer: A godly man finds enough reasons for weeping:

1. *He weeps for indwelling sin*, the law in his members (Rom. 7:23), the outbursts and first risings of sin. This nature is a poisoned fountain. A regenerate person grieves that he carries that about him which is enmity to God; his heart is like a wide sea in which there are innumerable creeping things (Psa. 104:25) - vain, sinful thoughts. A child of God laments hidden wickedness; he has more evil in him than he knows of. There are those windings in his heart which he cannot trace, an unknown world of sin: 'Who can understand his errors?' (Psa. 19:12).

2. *A godly man weeps for clinging corruption*. If he could get rid of sin, there would be some comfort, but he cannot shake off this viper. Sin

cleaves to him like leprosy to the wall (Lev. 14:39). Though a child of God forsakes his sin, yet sin will not forsake him. 'Concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season' (Dan. 7:12). So though the dominion of sin is taken away, yet its life is prolonged for a season; and while sin lives, it molests. The Persians were daily enemies to the Romans and would invade their frontiers. So sin 'wars against the soul' (1 Pet. 2:11). And there is no cessation of arms till death. Will not this cause tears?

3. *A child of God weeps that he is sometimes overcome by the prevalence of corruption:* 'The evil which I would not, that I do' (Rom. 7:19). Paul was like a man carried downstream. How often a saint is overpowered by pride and passion! When David had sinned, he steeped his soul in the brinish tears of repentance. It cannot but grieve a regenerate person to think he should be so foolish as, after he has felt the smart of sin, still to put this fire in his bosom again.

4. *A godly heart grieves that he can be no more holy.* It troubles him that he shoots so short of the rule and standard which God has set. 'I should', says he, 'love the Lord with all my heart. But how defective my love is! How far short I come of what I should be, no, of what I might have been! What can I see in my life but either blanks or blots?'

5. *A godly man sometimes weeps out of the sense of God's love.* Gold is the best and most solid of all the metals, yet it is soonest melted in the fire. Gracious hearts, which are golden hearts, are the soonest melted into tears by the fire of God's love. I once knew a holy man, who was walking in his garden and shedding plenty of tears when a friend came on him accidentally and asked him why he wept. He broke forth into this pathetic expression: 'Oh the love of Christ, the love of Christ!' Thus have we seen the cloud melted into water by the sunbeams.

6. *A godly person weeps because the sins he commits are in some sense worse than the sins of other men.* The sin of a justified person is very odious:

(i) Because he acts contrary to his own principles. He sins not only against the rule, but against his principles, against his knowledge, vows, prayers hopes, experiences. He knows how dear sin will cost him, yet he adventures upon the forbidden fruit.

(ii) The sin of a justified person is odious, because it is a sin of unkindness (1 Kings 11:9). Peter's denying of Christ was a sin against love. Christ had enrolled him among the apostles. He had taken him up into the Mount of Transfiguration and shown him the glory of heaven in a vision. Yet after all this signal mercy, it was base ingratitude that he should deny Christ. This made him go out and 'weep bitterly' (Matt. 26:75). He baptized himself, as it were, in his own tears. The sins of the godly go nearest to God's heart. Others' sins anger God; these grieve him. The sins of the wicked pierce Christ's sides, the sins of the godly wound his heart. The unkindness of a spouse goes nearest to the heart of her husband.

(iii) The sin of a justified person is odious, because it reflects more dishonour upon God: 'By this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme' (2 Sam. 12:14). The sins of God's people put black spots on the face of religion. Thus we see what cause there is why a child of God should weep even after conversion. 'Can whoever sows such things refrain from tears?'

Now this sorrow of a godly man for sin is not a despairing sorrow. He does not mourn without hope. 'Iniquities prevail against me' (Psa. 65:3) - there is the holy soul weeping. 'As for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away' - there is faith triumphing.

Divine sorrow is excellent. There is as much difference between the sorrow of a godly man and one who is wicked as between the water of a spring which is clear and sweet, and the water of the sea which is salt and brackish. A godly man's sorrow has these three qualifications:

(a) It is inward. It is a sorrow of soul. Hypocrites 'disfigure their faces' (Matt. 6:16). Godly sorrow goes deep. It is a 'pricking at the heart' (Acts 2:37). True sorrow is a spiritual martyrdom, therefore called 'soul affliction' (Lev. 23:29).

(b) Godly sorrow is ingenuous. It is more for the evil that is in sin than the evil which follows after. It is more for the spot than the sting. Hypocrites weep for sin only as it brings affliction. I have read of a fountain that never sends out streams except on the evening before a famine. Hypocrites never send forth the streams of their tears except when God's judgments are approaching.

(c) Godly sorrow is influential. It makes the heart better: 'by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better' (Eccles. 7:3). Divine tears not only wet but wash; they purge out the love of sin.

Use 1: How far from being godly are those who scarcely ever shed a tear for sin! If they lose a near relation, they weep; but though they are in danger of losing God and their souls, they do not weep. How few know what it is to be in an agony for sin or what a broken heart means! Their eyes are not like the 'fishpools in Heshbon' full of water (Song 7:4), but rather like the mountains of Gilboa, which had no dew upon them (2 Sam. 1:21). It was a greater plague for Pharaoh to have his heart turned into stone than to have his rivers turned into blood. Others, if they sometimes shed a tear, are still never the better. They go on in wickedness, and do not drown their sins in their tears.

Use 2: Let us strive for this divine characteristic: be weepers. This is 'a repentance not to be repented of' (2 Cor. 7:10). It is reported of Mr Bradford, the martyr, that he was of a melting spirit; he seldom sat down to his meal but some tears trickled down his cheeks. There are two lavers to wash away sin: blood and tears. The blood of Christ washes away the guilt of sin; tears wash away the filth. Repenting tears are precious. God puts them in his bottle (Psa. 56:8). They are beautifying. A tear in the eye adorns more than a ring on the finger. Oil makes the face shine (Psa. 104:15). Tears make the heart shine; tears are comforting. A sinner's mirth turns to melancholy. A saint's mourning turns to music. Repentance may be compared to myrrh, which though it is bitter to the taste, is comforting to the spirits. Repentance may be bitter to the fleshy part but it is most refreshing to the spiritual. Wax that melts is fit for the seal. A melting soul is fit to take the stamp of all heavenly blessing. Let us give

NEWS OF THE FELLOWSHIP

Our annual church fellowship barbecue was once again held on the manse lawn on a Friday evening (29th June). The Lord was gracious to us, providing a sunny evening in the midst of rainy days. This year about half of the fifty or so who attended were children and young people. The Rev. Dafydd Morris used the idea of communication to challenge us about our relationship with God. He had witnessed one woman on a train using two mobile phones at the same time, speaking with one and texting with the other. He maintained that man's fixation with such communication was a reflection of their separation and inability to communicate with God. They are "cut off" by virtue of their sin. Mr. Morris then drew attention to some of the great statements about Jesus Christ in the Bible. In this way God communicates with us.

We are thankful to Mr. and Mrs. Coulson for arranging the food and preparation.

Mr. Pfeiffer is thankful for the prayer of the Fellowship as he from time to time preaches elsewhere. On the Lord's Day 27th May he preached at Llandrindod Evangelical Church. On the previous Friday evening he preached in Cornwall on the Doctrine of the Atonement. On Friday evening 22nd June he ministered to a small company of believers who met at Orange Street, Central London.

We are thankful for the faithful ministry that we receive in his absence. Pastor Jeremy Brooks from Ramsay, Cambridgeshire ministered for the first time here at Peniel Green in May. He is involved in the "Christian Worship" hymnbook project with Mr. Pfeiffer. The Rev. H. Clement ministered on the 5th, Rev. D.P. Morris the 12th and Rev. R.B. Higham on the 19th of August.

We will include, God willing, a report of our Church Fellowship outing in our next quarterly.

Mr. Pfeiffer will be shortly acting as a superintending co-ordinator for the work at Margam Road Evangelical Church. Please pray for this work. Faithful men will be asked to conduct preaching services on the Lord's Day afternoons and at the Thursday afternoon Bible Study.

Our half-yearly missionary support has been sent to the following :-

The Protestant Alliance
Mr. Andrew Birch (Spain)
Mr. Davis Koziol (Poland)
Mr. Antonio De Noya (Italy)
The Protestant Truth Society

Mrs. Marge Norris is sending an amount in instalments at present to "Mission without Borders" to alleviate suffering in Bulgaria.

Sunday School Outing



Saturday, 7th July, dawned bright, sunny and warm – one of the very few hot days in July! The day of our Sunday School outing had arrived and 35 of us met the coach at 9:30 am. outside the chapel for our outing to Folly Farm. Before we set off, Mr. Pfeiffer prayed for the Lord's protection throughout the day.

We had an extremely happy day together: feeding the young animals, playing on the adventure playground, Go-Kart racing, a tractor ride down the fields and having fun on the Victorian rides.

Tired and contented children fell fast asleep on the way home in the coach. Please pray for the work of the Sunday School, especially as we knock doors in the neighbourhood at the end of August, seeking to invite children to Sunday School.

DO YOU GO TO THE PRAYER-MEETING?

By Horatius Bonar (1846)

Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name (Malachi 3:16).

These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication (Acts 1:14).

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is (Hebrews 10:25).

READER! is there a prayer-meeting in your neighbourhood? If there is, do you attend it? If you do not, have you good reasons for staying away? Perhaps there is one just by your door, or at least within a few minutes walk of your dwelling. Do you go to it? I have known people walk many miles every week to a prayer-meeting. They did not grudge the distance. The way seemed short and pleasant. No wonder: **they were in earnest about their souls!** And if you neglect or despise such meetings, it is to be feared that you are altogether unconcerned about eternity and the kingdom to come. If you were thirsty for the water of life, you would be glad of such opportunities of drawing it out of the wells of salvation.

I ask then again, DO YOU ATTEND THE PRAYER-MEETING? If not, what are your reasons? If they are good reasons, you need not be ashamed of them either before God or man, and they will serve you at the judgment-seat of Christ. If they are not, the sooner you give them up the better. Very soon the last sermon will be done, the last Sabbath will close, the last prayer-meeting will be over, the last message of salvation delivered, the last warning sounded, and the last invitation given! Then, what bitter regret and agonizing remorse! What will you think of your excuses then? Oh, you will give the wealth of worlds for another prayer meeting, another day of hope.

No more making light of such precious opportunities, nor scoffing at those who prized them! The follies and vanities of Earth are all over then; and invisible realities are seen to be all in all. Will the memory of your days and scenes of pleasure or sin be soothing to your soul when they have passed away like a vision of the night? Will the remembered hours of carnal levity, the idle word, the thoughtless jest, the gay smiles of companionship, the halls of gaiety, or the haunts of sin, (all of which you once preferred to the prayer-meeting), will these breathe comfort to your dying soul, or bear you up when giving in your account before the Judge of all? Laughter shall then be exchanged for burning tears; nights of **harmless** merriment for ages of endless woe. Oh, waste not then one precious hour, one precious moment! Thy eternity may hang on it! It may soon be too late to think of prayer. Up, sleeper, up! Turn, sinner, turn! Thy days are but an handbreadth—flee! oh, flee from the wrath to come!

Let me speak to you, with all kindness, about your reasons for not attending the prayer-meeting. Let us weigh them in the balances of the sanctuary; and may the Holy Spirit, in this respect, convince you of sin!

1. Do you not care for prayer-meetings?

Do you not like them? Do you count them a weariness, or do you call them fanaticism? Is this your reason? If so, can your soul be in a right state with God? Can that man be a child of God who dislikes either private or social prayer? Can there be real or living religion in that soul that does not relish such meetings? Is it not strange and sad that you should relish the things of the body, the things of time, – and yet turn away from the things of the soul, the things of eternity? Is it not awful that you should love the society of sinners, the friendship of the world; and yet dislike so much the companionship of saints, the fellowship of God? If you prefer worldly company or pleasure to a prayer-meeting, this shows beyond all doubt that you are not a child of God, or a follower of the Lamb.

2. Have you no time to attend prayer-meetings?

Is this your reason? Ah! think for a moment, is it really true that you have no time to spare for them? Can you say so honestly before God? Will you be able to plead this with the Judge in the great day of account? Do

you never attend other meetings which take up more of your time? Or do you not waste more time idly or in foolish company, than would be spent at the meeting? What! have you time to eat, and to drink, and make merry, **but none to pray!** Have you time for business, for company, for folly, for pleasure, for lusts, for sin, **but none for prayer!** Have you time for the shop, the market, the ball-room, the card-table, the public house, the political club, – **but none for the prayer-meeting!** You can spare days and weeks for the things of time, can you not spare **an hour** for the things of eternity?

3. Are you ashamed to go to a prayer-meeting?

Would your companions laugh at you? Is this your reason? What – ashamed to pray! Afraid to be laughed at! You are not ashamed to be seen in idle, foolish company, yet you are ashamed to be seen in the society of the people of God! You are not ashamed to saunter about the streets, nor to stand in the way of sinners, nor to sit in the seat of the scornful (Ps 1:1), yet you are ashamed to be seen at a meeting for prayer! Perhaps you are one of those who are not ashamed to be seen in a public house, – who are not ashamed to swear, nor to get drunk, – yet you are ashamed to attend a prayer-meeting! Ashamed of God's service, but not ashamed of the devil's! Ashamed to pray, but not ashamed to sin! Will God accept such an excuse at your hands in the day of reckoning? *Whosoever shall be ashamed of me...of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels* (Mk 8:38).

4. Do you think it is being too religious?

Now let me ask you what you mean by *religious*? Does it not mean loving and serving God? And can a man love God too much? Can he serve him too constantly or devotedly? Was the apostle too religious when he said *whether...ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God* (1Cor 10:31)? Or was he too religious when he commanded us to pray always (Eph 6:18); to *pray without ceasing* (1Thes 5:17)? Was David too religious when he praised God *seven times a day* (Ps 119:164)? Are the angels and the redeemed saints in heaven too religious, who *serve him day and night in his temple* (Rev 7:15)? With such a feeling as you have about prayer-meetings, it is plain that there is far too much religion **in heaven for you ever to think of going to such a place, or even to**

wish to be there. The man that has no relish for a prayer-meeting could have no relish for heaven. He is utterly unfit to be there. He would be wretched there. An eternity of prayer and praise would be hell to a man who is wearied with an hour of a prayer-meeting on earth.

5. Are you better employed at home?

Can you honestly say so before God? If you can, I leave you to answer to God for the time thus spent at home or elsewhere. He will take a strict account of those hours. If you are one who reads your Bible and prays at home, I am sure you will not object to a meeting for prayer. If you are not, can you really say that you are better employed, or even half so well? Oh no. – You cannot be half so well employed as in preparing for eternity, in praying with God's people, in hearing of his dear Son – in making ready for the coming of the Lord.

Reader, are these your reasons? Then I ask you, are they sufficient? Does your conscience say they are? Or do you not see that the real reason is just your carnal mind, which is enmity against God (Rom 8:7)? You do not love to pray; therefore you do not like the prayer-meeting. You do not love God, and therefore you do not desire fellowship with him. You do not love his saints; therefore you do not wish to join them in prayer. You do not care about forgiveness of sin, and therefore you do not go to hear how in him *we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace* (Eph 1:7). You have no relish for the things of Christ, and therefore you do not desire to join his people in singing the new song: WORTHY IS THE LAMB THAT WAS SLAIN!

The end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer (1Peter 4:7).

Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving
(Colossians 4:2).

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit (Ephesians 6:18).

Diary

Lord's Days:

September

2nd	–	Pastor	–	Communion - p.m
9th	–	Rev. Maurice Roberts, Inverness		
16th	–	Pastor	–	Communion -a.m
23th	–	Pastor		
30th	–	Pastor		

October

7th	–	Pastor	–	Communion - p.m
14th	–	Pastor		
21st	–	Pastor	–	Communion - a.m
28nd	–	Pastor		

November

4th	–	Pastor	–	Communion - p.m
11th	–	Pastor		
18th	–	Pastor	–	Communion - a.m
25th	–	Rev. G. R. Burrows, Cradley Heath		

Dates to note:

Saturday 8th September	Preaching Service Rev. Maurice Roberts (Free Church of Scotland Continuing, Inverness)
Sunday 23rd September	After Church Fellowship Pietro Lorefice
Saturday 24th November	Church Fellowship Lunch Glyn Clydach Hotel (see Mr Edward Williams for details)

A Dying Saint and a Child - John Vaughan and his Friends

When they arrived at Pentre-mawr, Hugh Roberts had, owing to great exhaustion, retired to bed – one of those old-fashioned oak cupboard-beds, which were then universally used in farmhouses, and which may still be seen far inland in Wales. Kitty and her little son were asked into the room. They drew near the bed; when Hugh, who ever loved little children, having shaken hands with Kitty, patted the lad on his head, and asked him if he was going to be a preacher.

It was the first time the suggestion was made to him, and it was recalled after this with overpowering force; but now he replied, “No, I want to be an angel, and go with you.” Kitty blushed, and felt uneasy; but Hugh was touched and pleased; and putting his arm fondly round the child’s neck, said, “You are too young for that now, David, you’ll grow up yet to be a Christian man, I hope.”

“No, I am not too young to be an angel,” replied the little lad eagerly, “I am not too young, for my little brother has been with the angels long since, and” – here the child paused – “mother says you are going; and we’ll come, won’t we, mother?”

Kitty sat behind the child, and was greatly confused. She wished she had not told her child quite so much. Children were such tell-tales.

But Hugh was drawn more and more to the lad. It was a touching sight. Both extremes of life had met, and there was a touch of tender sympathy between them. The old man and the child – one looking into life full of wonderment; and the other looking out of it full of eager expectancy – were in one another’s embrace. The childhood innocence was linked to the childhood of life-long and matured trust. And Kitty looked on in bewilderment; and yet with delight. Her child she thought, would never be the same as if Hugh Roberts had not embraced him.

Suddenly she got up to confer with the servant as to whether Hugh had better have, just then, one of the little delicacies she had brought, glad meanwhile to leave him and the child together. She soon returned to induce Hugh to take a little nourishment; but all the while he and the child looked lovingly at each other.

At length Kitty, after many good wishes and offers of services, bade Hugh good-bye, and took her little son by the hand to go. But the little fellow gently resisted. He did not want to leave; but expressed his intention to go with Hugh to the angels, and to his little angel brother. It was the first time that a power mightier than his mother’s love had possessed the child; and Kitty noted it. The tears trickled down

her countenance as she looked at the eager face of her child, and then at the pale, etherealised, yet infinitely tender face of the aged saint.

Hugh observed all, and said to the little lad: "My blessing be upon thee, my child. May the Lord direct and uphold thee, and make thee a joy to thy father's and mother's heart." Then turning to Kitty he said: "Take care of him Kitty; let him be thy Samuel whom thou shalt consecrate to the service of God and His house and the Lord will accept thine offering, and fill thy life with brightness, and thy heart with peace."

Kitty thanked Hugh, and finally departed as the aged patriarch's blessing still rang in her ears, and thrilled her soul. Life to her would never be the same again, for having heard that blessing uttered over her child and herself. It was a benediction from an aged saint in the midst of death's river, ere he set his foot on the other side.

On the way home the little lad had many questions to ask his mother as to how Hugh Roberts would go to be with the angels. Would he have to go up by the same staircase as her friend Mary Price, who had so recently gone from Llanstephan? He wondered, too, how she got there that dark and stormy night. Did an angel fetch her; and did he bring a light with him? Would Hugh Roberts know the way, and be strong enough to walk it; or would Jesus come to meet him, and perhaps – here the child paused – carry him. How was it that none ever came back? Had they forgotten the way; or didn't they love their friends after they were gone; or did they love Jesus and the angels more, and didn't like to leave them?

These and many other questions, eagerly asked, and for which answers were as earnestly and impatiently demanded, well-nigh bewildered poor Kitty Vaughan. She answered her child as best she could, and once more looked tenderly into that little face, so full of eager inquiry, and into those eyes, through which an immortal spirit peeped out, and claimed relationship with all that was mysterious in life, and sacred in its closing scenes.

On her arrival at the smithy, the Sunday Schools being over, John and Shadrach were about to start for Pentre-mawr. Having heard from Kitty how Hugh was, and concluding that he must be fast nearing his hour of departure, they proceeded along the narrow road toward the old farmstead, which for more than fifty years had been closely associated with the name of Hugh Roberts. They soon arrived at the house, entered, and approached the cupboard-bed upon which he lay.

There was a heavenly look about the old saint, which greatly struck them as they entered the room, and met his glance. John spoke tenderly as he addressed him, and said: "Well, Hugh, Shadrach and I thought we would like to come and see you, for we guessed you would be alone."

“Thank you much”, responded Hugh, with his sweet dulcet voice, “I am alone now; although, thanks to Kitty Vaughan and her little son, I have been anything but alone this afternoon. I could not go to my Sunday School as usual; but I did not lose anything, for the little lad and I had sweet talk about angels; while Kitty – angel that she is – brought some of the good things you have at home, John, to tempt the failing appetite of an old man, who is not likely to want anything here much longer.” John was touched by this allusion to Kitty and his little son, and replied, “I am glad to hear it, Hugh. My little lad will have a nobler conception of the angels, for having seen a saint as ripe for heaven as you are.” There was no note of flattery in all this; but the emphasis of a powerful and solemn conviction.

“Ah,” responded Hugh, “I fear that it was but little of the saint that the little fellow saw in me; except it be that I have grown patriarchal enough to love little children with an intensity which I did not in my younger days, although I was always fond of them. I can now better understand the feelings of Jacob, when he blessed both the sons of Joseph, and exclaimed, ‘God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long, unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads.’ This is a time when one can link the past to the future – our fathers to our children – and feel that there is a glorious continuity in history, when the same faith joins together succeeding ages. All we can grasp of the future is to be found in our lads; and what they can grasp of the past is largely to be found in us. We bid them look to the past, and accept the blessings which come from it to them; while they, in their simple way, bid us look forward, and believe that it shall yet be well with the world.”

“Very true, Hugh,” responded Shadrach. “What wonderful feelings Simeon must have had when he held the Child Jesus in his arms, and said, ‘Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace.’”

“Ah, Shadrach, life could have no further attraction for Simeon after that,” exclaimed Hugh Roberts. “Once having had the Holy Child in his arms, any other experience to him would be a terrible ‘come down’. His motto was ‘See Christ, and die.’ Nothing but heaven could be tolerated by an old Testament saint after that. And I too, John, have the last few hours seen enough of Jesus not to desire to go back to farming; one glimpse of heaven spoils one for earth.”

“Let us read the story of Simeon and the Child Jesus, Hugh,” said John, as he opened the Bible; and then read very tenderly the story from Luke. (Luke ii 25-38.) “I once heard a very striking sermon about Simeon, by Rev. G. Griffiths, Rhymney,” added John. “He said among many excellent things that men as a rule, plead for the extension of the lease of life; but Simeon longed to surrender it. He did not wish to wait longer, to pollute his vision with anything after seeing Jesus Christ.

He had now seen enough to fit him for dying; then the preacher added with greater power, ‘No one has seen enough for dying till he has seen the Christ.’”

“Thank God,” exclaimed Hugh, “that’s true. It is wonderful how true religion pays, even in this life. It grows upon you wonderfully. Your last visions are your best; and it is marvellous how genuine faith bears a man up at last. For a time he has patiently to carry his cross; but by-and-bye the carrying is done for him – indeed, he *is* carried: he has simply to trust and wait.”

“That reminds me,” said Shadrach, “of what I heard Rev. John Evans, (Eglwysbach) once say. He spoke of the fishermen on the rivers of Wales, who still use the old British coracle; and said: “You have seen the fisherman carry his coracle mile after mile along the dusty road, or rugged by-way; but the moment he comes to the river the coracle carries him. So is it with true religion. My friends, carry it on the highway of life, and beneath the heat and burden of the day; by-and-by when you come to the River it shall carry you.”

“Oh, how gloriously true!” exclaimed Hugh Roberts. “That is precisely what it is doing for me now for I am fairly in the River, Shadrach; but Jesus upholds me; and that is enough. You, John, can pitch St Garmon; let us sing it to Islwyn’s hymn.

“Gwel uwchlaw cymylau amser,
O fy enaid: gwel y tir,
Lle mae’r awel fyth yn dyner,
Lle mae’r wybren fyth yn glir;
Hapus dyrfa
Sydd yn nofio yn ei hedd.”

(See above Time’s cloudy regions,
See, my soul, that land in green;
Where the air is ever balmy;
Where the sky is e’er serene.
Happy myriads
Who are buoyant in its peace).

“Yes, Hugh”, replied John, “that is one of the few I can pitch; but I fear the singing will try you.”

“No, my son,” responded the veteran, “I shall not do much of the singing, personally; I am always helped by hymn singing, especially when Islwyn’s hymn is sung to St. Garmon. They seem to be made for each other.”

“Yes,” said John, “and yet St. Garmon was composed for the well-known hymn of William Williams, of Pant-y-celyn. You know the circumstances?”

“No, I always thought that the hymn and tune were made for each other,” replied Hugh Roberts. “Tell us the circumstances, John.”

“The author of St Garmon,” responded John, “is Mr Edward Meredith Price. He composed the tune amid extraordinary circumstances. He was at that time engaged as a conductor of public psalmody at Dolau, Nantmel, Radnorshire. A missionary meeting was about to be held there, and Mr. Price was anxious to have a new tune for the well-known hymn of Williams, of Pant-y-celyn – ‘O’er the gloomy hills of darkness.’ He had spent some thought over the matter; but apparently in vain. One day, however, he was trimming the hedges on his farm close to a mountain stream, and near the spot where it leapt over the precipice in a wild cataract. As the wind played upon the falling waters, they sent forth rich and varied strains to the ear that was trained for their reception. Wafted by the passing breeze, they resolved themselves into an air which entered the soul of the rustic musician; and what had come as an inspiration to him – with such force that he assured me that he never composed the tune; but caught it from the passing breeze – has taken possession of us as a nation, so that now it is often sung in every chapel in Wales.”

John and Shadrach then joined in singing, and Hugh struck an occasional note; but ere they came to the close he had joined the heavenly cloisters, and had exchanged St. Garmon of the Hallelujah Chorus. He had passed away in song. The strains of St. Garmon had lifted him up so high, that he was caught in the eddies of the rapturous praises of the redeemed.

The two friends returned with slow steps and pensive spirits, and told the villagers of Hugh Roberts’ death. Kitty Vaughan was greatly affected by the strange, and yet attractive features, that death had presented to her, in the two instances in which she had so recently been brought face to face with it. In the first case it had been a sleep: in the last case, a song. What terror could it have, if it came in either form? Death to the saint after all, she concluded, had no terror, for it had no sting.

The day of Hugh Roberts’ funeral was one of universal mourning for many miles around. Hundreds came to pay him their last loving homage; and to the villagers in after days came the keen and growing consciousness that “he was not, for God took him.”

The epilogue: “... Joy of the Holy Ghost”.

There is a world of difference between the Christian and the unregenerate! As a Christian, and by definition meaning one who is “born again” of the Spirit of God, you are very, very special, and in so many ways. Dissent from this fact of Christian uniqueness is a fundamental denial of the work of Sovereign Grace. Has not the Everlasting Father “chosen” you, “separated” you, and “called” you to be His very precious child, even writing your name in Heaven?

Oh! how inestimably special you are, for your little body is the very abode of God, the Third Person of the Blessed Holy Trinity. He it is Who both brings with Him, and imparts to you, certain things of which the world knows absolutely nothing. One of the most wonderful and endearing of His communicable attributes, as the Apostle informs us, is the “... joy of the Holy Ghost” (1 Thessalonians 1:6).

Now this “joy”, beloved in Christ, you have! This is no speculative and imaginary exaggeration, for it is in very essence that segment of “the fruit of the spirit”, everlastingly tied to His “love”, (Galatians 5:22). But, you may say, ‘I don’t *feel* joy’! Ah, don’t be caught up with the spirit of the age, whereby carnal jollity, like the morning mist that soon evaporates, is constantly looked for. No, no, the “... joy of the Holy Ghost” is of deep unending permanence, for as Thomas Watson remarked, “*Divine joy is like a spring of water, which runs underground.*” (‘*A Body of Divinity*’ p.227.), which when it surfaces is pure, clear and fresh!

So allow this “joy” of joys bubble up in your heart; let it overspill to the complete satisfaction of your soul. But, you ask, how? Well, dear Christian, think! Think how uniquely special you are, even as the Prophet Isaiah thought of his profound and overwhelming uniqueness: “I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; **for** he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh *himself* with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth *herself* with her jewels” (Isaiah 61:10).

The Christian then is the most incredible of beings! In “the cross of Christ” sin, the hate of God, is removed and erased from the mind of God. In “the precious blood of Christ” the polluting stain of sin is washed clean. In the “obedience of Christ” the “filthy rags” of self-righteousness are removed and replaced by the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ. This is the JOY, unknown by the world!

Fading is the worldling’s pleasure,
All his boasted pomp and show;
Solid joys and lasting treasure
None but Zion’s children know.

Howell Green

