

# Friends' Review.

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EDITED BY JAMES E. BHOADS.

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For Friends' Review.

## THE RECORD.

John I. 19.

Of merely human birth there had been none greater than John the Baptist. This is the Divine testimony, from the lips of our Master, and it becomes us therefore to scan closely the record of his life. We can trace something of the closely crowding events that filled it with memorable incident; we know his words of power that swayed the multitudes, like wind-swept reeds. Yet this is the record he renders, when questioned by the priests, "Who art thou?"

"I am the Voice, crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord.'" No touch of self is there; his very being is merged in the work of preparation for the coming of the Highest. He does not magnify his prophetic office, nor his austere labor. He does not dwell on the throngs his words have gathered. He tells them plainly, "There standeth one among you, mightier than I."

This forms the key-note of his power, denoting the absolute allegiance and humility of the man,—mightier than all selfish thought or the uttermost reach of human possibility. The words become a beacon-light, leading all souls to the One who stands near to baptize with the Holy Ghost, to enlighten the darkness of self and redeem from its bondage. Receiving the message of John we also may become witnesses for the power and its nearness; and share the herald service of the greatest among the prophets,—making straight the way of the Lord.

"Whom ye know not"—was spoken to the Pharisees and Chief Priests, and indeed to all the attendant throng who stood there, some ready to offer homage to the prophet; but these words are just as true of the busy, vexed, questioning world of to day; even true for those who have dimly discerned the mighty One in His nearness. It opens to them an ever widening vista of knowledge and strength, in which each soul may press forward, feeling that every day of loyal service will bring more enlightened knowledge of Him who is Emmanuel, God with us; mighty to save from self, its darkness and its ignorance, for selfishness is gross darkness.

The prophecy which John fulfilled in his life, and with which he answered those who questioned him, is taken from the closing chapters of Isaiah (Is. xl. and onward) which so transcend the general range of even the inspired writings, that they were by common consent among the Hebrews known

seed of a Divine life, and powerfully operating a total change in the judgment, dispositions and affections of the soul."

Again, in his Commentary on 1st John v. 8, Scott says, (p. 898.) "That which is born of God, that new and heavenly nature, which is communicated in regeneration, tends powerfully to God and holiness; and includes in its essence such a spiritual judgment and heavenly affections that those in whom it is found are made victorious over the world. *The seed remaineth in him*, and the Divine life, invigorated by the Holy Spirit."

"Again," (p. 890.) "For all who belong to Christ were born of God; and no one who was regenerate, lived in the commission of any allowed sin; because the incorruptible seed of the word, being made to live and grow in his heart by the Holy Spirit, remained in him; and rendered it impossible that he could sin with allowance and continuance."

So Cruden, on this passage, in the 1st Epistle of Peter:

"The word is called an incorruptible seed, because continuing still the same, and being immutable in itself, it changes and renews the hearts of those that by faith receive it," and "because it begets in the soul an *abiding life* which shall endure forever."

Perhaps enough has now been quoted to establish the correctness of the view always taken by our branch of the Church of Christ, that the life of the Lord Jesus Christ abides in the regenerate child of God, and is witnessed to, by the Holy Spirit, who quickens the dead soul and enables it to "hear the voice of the Son of God, and they who hear shall live." "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life"—He Himself declared. "In Him was life and the life was the light of men"—the Apostle John declared of Him.

"The entrance of thy *words* giveth light;" said the Psalmist, and again, "Ob send out thy light and thy *truth*, let them lead me."

"Now ye are clean through the *word* that I have spoken unto you"—our blessed Lord told His disciples; and He prayed His Father, "Sanctify them through thy truth—thy word is truth." The Apostle Paul declares that the Lord Jesus gave Himself for His church that he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water by the word."—(Ephesians v. 26.) Peter tells us that "This is the word, which by the Gospel is preached unto us"—(1st Peter i. 25); and the Apostle James exhorts his hearers to "Receive with meekness the engrafted (implanted) word which is able to save your souls." This life-giving

power of the word of the Lord, whether spoken by His own lips or by His anointed servants—or recorded in the Holy Scriptures—or whispered by His Holy Spirit,—regenerates the soul which receives it. And this eternal word abides with all its life-giving, vital power, in the heart of the true believer, and is not to be confounded with the Holy Spirit; who unfolds and applies it, having first prepared the soul to receive and comprehend it.

THOMAS KIMBER.

#### ALPINE ECHOES.

BY T. D. WITHERSPOON.

"*A Hiding Place*."—Nothing can exceed the rugged grandeur of the St. Gothard Pass. Great masses of rock rise on either side of the narrow gorge as if to pierce the very heavens. As you make your zigzag course along the face of the cliff, you look down on one hand into the chasm, and it yawns as if the earth would disclose its centre. You look up on the other, and great snowdrifts overhang you as if ready to descend in avalanches, and cold glaciers confront you like serpents of ice ready with gaping mouths to creep down upon you. All about you are the evidences of the desolation which the avalanches have wrought. Here, for instance, you find a body of men engaged in clearing from the highway the debris of earth and stone with which a recent avalanche had covered it. Here again are the striated rocks, cut in grooves as with a stone mason's chisel by the sharp points of quartz imbedded in the crust of descending snow. Here and there along the thoroughfare is a rude cross of wood or stone erected to the memory of some unfortunate traveller, and having inscribed upon it the ominous words: "Here perished under an avalanche on such a day, such a one; pray for him."

That which more than all else attracted my attention in the midst of these marks of the desolating avalanche, was a number of little recesses or grottoes cut into the solid rock by the wayside, where the face of the cliff had been cut away on one side to form a roadbed. In each of these little grottoes was placed either a rude crucifix or a statue of the Virgin, so that at first I supposed them to be oratories or shrines of devotion, and wondered that so perilous a part of the roadside should be selected for this purpose. But on inquiring of the guide, I learned that these were places of refuge, constructed by the government for the purpose of affording shelter and safety to unfortunate travellers who found themselves unexpectedly in the path of the descending avalanche. When therefore the distant roar was heard on the

mountain-side above, the traveller had only to step into this "hiding-place" and he was safe. The great mass of snow swept over his head, obscuring for a while the light of day, and causing the solid rock about him to tremble, but bringing to him no peril, because he was safe in the munitions of rock.

How significant this "hiding-place" on the Alpine highway of that other one which God has provided for sinners, that marvellous one which he has cleft in the Rock of Ages. We walk day by day along a pathway swept by the avalanche. Temptations come down upon us in unguarded moments with overwhelming power, precipitating men suddenly to destruction. Great avalanches of sorrow sweep over us, burying our hearts and our hopes in the dust. The wrath of God shall one day come down like a desolating flood upon the earth. We have need of a hiding-place—a place of safe refuge in the trying hour. And just such a refuge has been provided for us. "A man," says the inspired prophet, "shall be as a hiding-place." It is but a matter as it were of a single step to be "found in Christ," but it is like the single step that takes the traveller into the hiding place in the Alps. He who takes it is safe. He who does not is lost. The man who is "found in Christ" when the avalanche of temptation sweeps down upon him, will be able, "having done all, to stand." The man who is found in Christ when the avalanche of sorrow comes will be "afflicted but not distressed, cast down but not destroyed." The man who is found in Christ when the besom of God's wrath shall sweep the world, shall find that "the eternal God is his refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." Reader, the avalanche will come! You can rear no breastwork that will impede its progress. You can construct no place of refuge from its power. There is but one security for you.

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in thee."

THE Legislature of South Carolina has passed a stringent anti-duelling law, carefully defining the crime and providing for its punishment, and thus another step has been taken in the progress from the rule of passion to that of reason, law and Christian principle. When will Christian nations forbid duelling with each other, and so fulfil the law of Christ?

SAID a noble mother, one full of peace from resting on the precious blood of Christ, "I am afraid too little is made of duty now,"

as she reviewed the life of one just removed, in whom the grace of pure obedience to the voice of the Good Shepherd had been very conspicuous.

#### OUR LONDON LETTER.

The meeting of Friends at *Birmingham* numbers about five hundred members. The town of John Bright and of Chamberlain, the Radical metropolis of the midland counties of England, is rather a stronghold of Friends, still more in influence than in numbers. At the principal meeting-house in Bull street a congregation of 350 or more meets on First-day mornings. The eye ranges over ranks of young and middle-aged men especially, for the women's side of the house is not so well filled. All this strength is not spent in vain. The Friends of Birmingham carry on a remarkably complete and successful system of school and mission work.

I had an opportunity recently of seeing something of this work. The teachers of the *Severn Street Adult School* meet together regularly for breakfast at seven o'clock on First-day mornings, to the number of over thirty. Some of these Friends are ministers or elders in the Society, some are advanced in life, but the majority are in their prime. Some are Town Councillors, and many of them are engaged in large business concerns during the week. At this time of year to walk a mile or two from one's home to breakfast at 7 a. m. on the day of rest, requires some energy and self-denial. After breakfast and reading, the teachers disperse to the several centres in the town where the work is carried on; some remain at *Severn Street*, in the large and commodious building which has lately been erected by subscription, and in which three or four classes are held; others go to the Board (government) school building, where the class rooms are hired for this purpose. Each class is superintended by a teacher, and consists of from 100 to 300 men. The school lasts two hours. For the first hour, one half of the class write their copies, and the other division receive their Bible lesson; for the latter purpose, the division is cut up into a number of sections, the largest of which, numbering 30 to 60 men, is led by the teacher, and the others, "elementary sections," containing each from 6 to 10 scholars less advanced, are led by older scholars of experience. The extent to which those who have been long in the school are made use of to help others is an important factor in the growth and prosperity of the work.

At the end of the first hour the classes