

Miscellaneous.

THE BROTHERS DAVID AND JOHN BRAINERD.

April 9, 1846, David Brainerd [reduced by cough and hemorrhages, leaving his beloved Indians, and returning to New England to die] appears to have occupied himself in the Presbytery of New York, then holding its sessions in Newark. He spent also the forenoon of the 10th in Presbyterial business; and in the afternoon of that day returning to Elizabethtown, he says: "I found my brother John there. Spent some time in conversation with him; was exceedingly weak and out-done."

The meeting and conversation of these brothers must, in truth, strike the reader as deeply solemn—almost sublime. The elder had been an exile for Christ among savages, dwelt in a forest hovel, pillowed his head on the hard ground, fed often on parched corn, been lost sometimes in the wilderness, sometimes maligned and slandered by the enemies of God and man. He had toiled and suffered until the energies of nature itself failed, and he was sinking to an early grave. The younger brother, twenty-seven years of age, of good family, easy circumstances, and finished education, had been "sent for," and with a wonderful abnegation of self and the world, with a martyr-love to Christ and unwavering submission to duty, he had come to assume the labors which had crushed an elder brother.

"The Correspondents," says President Edwards, "had sent for John to take David's place." What a cool, matter-of-fact mode of summoning a moral martyr to leave home, kindred, and comfort, and bury himself among the Indians in the wilderness! They pay here a noble tribute to the piety and philanthropy of John Brainerd. They say, substantially, that he only needed a call of duty to any work, however obscure, difficult, and perilous, and he would say, as he did say, "Here am I." May I be permitted to suggest here that, in thus promptly responding to the call of duty, young Brainerd exhibited the true spirit of a gospel ministry? In the Roman Church, and in some Protestant denominations, young men are sent to their fields of labor by authority. One element of the power by which Loyola almost subdued the world to the Papal yoke was found in the fact that he held the authority by which he could "say to this man, Go, and he goeth." He could distribute talent, learning, physical and moral energy, where they would most tell for the glory and enlargement of the Church.

The Episcopal Methodist Church, in its annual assignment of men to fields of labor, has had the benefit of the same authority, and used it with great efficacy for noble purposes.

The Presbyterian and Congregational policy has been different. It has limited the authority and responsibility of the Church as a governing body over its ministry, and implied a higher confidence in the individual, while it imposed greater personal obligations to learn and follow duty.

In our religious economy we have honored our ministers by assuming for them such a baptism of the Spirit of Christ as would lead them to all diligence in ascertaining their personal duty, and all needful self-denial and fidelity in performing it. We have assumed that the love of ease, comfort, popularity, wealth, and high literary and social advantages, has no controlling place in the purposes and determinations of men who have professedly consecrated their all to the service of God. Hence we have no outward directions or constraint; no episcopal authority to distribute the talent, learning, and piety of the ministry where it will be most effective. Our system is not like a vast machine moved by some central spring of mighty energy controlling its entire action. It finds a better illustration in the movements of the orbs of heaven; where each planet turns on its own axis and wheels in its own orbit by an inherent impulse imparted by the finger of God. In short, the Church assumes that her youthful sons, fresh from their sacred studies, with burnished intellects, with sanctified hearts, with manly courage, noble fortitude, and holy zeal, will not selfishly and coldly stipulate for eminent places, positions, and emoluments; will not hang idly around cities and seminaries, waiting for eligible churches; will not, in ambitious selfishness and social exclusiveness, imagine themselves too precious to be thrown away in quiet towns among plain people.

It is to be feared that the sons of the Church have often lacked those high endowments of the Holy Spirit which would have fitted them to select their appropriate field and work. Some secular motive, some vision of worldly advantage, some compromise with conscience, has with links of iron held them back from rugged fields, but fields to which they were adapted, and in which they might have reaped glorious harvests. The world owes a special obligation to the pioneer husbandman who makes the desert blossom.

The harder the soil, and the more abundant the weeds, the briars, and the thorns, the more needful the spade, the plough, and the strong hand of the laborer; and the more beautiful, by contrast, the waving grain over hill and valley.

We once introduced a young minister to a missionary congregation in the suburbs of a great city. The people were highly pleased with him, and invited him to settle among them. He came to consult me on the subject. As he was an unmarried man, he regarded the salary as adequate. He had no fault to find with the number, the attendance, the attention and interest, of the congregation. I urged him to give an affirmative answer. He hesitated. "I am afraid," said he, "it is not the place for me to develop myself,"—alluding to the plainness of the people. I replied: "It is an excellent place to develop the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, but I know not whether it is the place for you to develop yourself!"

He left the field, and has since "developed himself" by giving up the ministry. "He that exalteth himself shall be abased." The little congregation, under the patient labors of purer and better men, has also

"developed itself" into one of the most numerous, intelligent, affluent churches in the land. Are there not other young ministers corroding in idleness, rejecting difficult fields, and waiting for a place to "develop themselves"?

Exactly the opposite of this seems to have been the spirit of John Brainerd. He knew all that his dying brother had suffered in his hard field, but still volunteered in the true spirit of a martyr, to take that brother's place. David's whole record of their interview, at this period, is the following:—

"April 10.—Found my brother John there, and spent some time in conversation with him. April 11.—Assisted in examining my brother; by the New York Presbytery, for licensure. April 14.—This day my brother went to my place."

We doubt whether an interview stirring such thoughts, involving such heart-yearnings, ever had a record more brief. Its brevity is suggestive.

To the brothers, duty was everything; themselves, nothing. They met as soldiers meet on the battle-field. One who had fought in the front rank, long, bravely, and triumphantly, had fallen wounded, and was returning home to die. The other, still fresh, strong, hopeful, and urged by a spirit as daring and a fortitude as enduring, stood ready to take his dying brother's sword and shield, to fight in the same conflict, or fall, as God should ordain. Their interview may remind the reader of a scene at the battle of Marengo. Desaix, one of Napoleon's bravest and most trusted generals, had been mortally wounded, and lay dying on the plain. Napoleon, pressing the retreating Austrians, paused by the side of his fellow-officer, who was expiring, and said that he was sorry: "I am sorry not to stay longer to weep for him." "I am sorry," said Desaix, "that I have but one life to give for the glory of France."

The servants of a nobler Master, and engaged with a spirit as heroic in a better cause, the brothers at Newark and Elizabethtown, held a similar interview. The one must leave his dying brother for the field of duty; the other was regretting weakness, pain, and approaching death, only as they cut short his pious labors.—*Dr. T. Brainerd's Life of John Brainerd.*

OUR LORD'S GLORIFIED HUMANITY.

BY REV. W. WHITE, HADDINGTON.

The last book of Scripture is styled literally, "The Book of the unveiling of Jesus Christ." "Our life is hid with Christ in God." Christ is within the veil. We know not, and cannot know, by our own unaided faculties, what He is doing. This book, however, rolls back the curtain of invisibility as far, probably, as it can be drawn to mortals. By means of a symbolical vision, in the first chapter, we have a representation of our Lord's glorified person. In the subsequent chapters we are shown his stately steps of majesty; the great acts of his mediatorial dominion; the wonderful works of mercy and of judgment which, from his throne in heaven, he is to accomplish on earth, up till that period when he shall again revisit our planet, when he shall "come with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him."

The book bears on every page of it the broadest, brightest, most resplendent stamps of divinity. It is, to speak of it as a merely human work, to say that it is one grand rolling swell of sublimity. No, it is one grand continuous succession of voices from heaven—like the roll of thunder—like the noise of many waters—like the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, the noise of an host. The last book of Scripture, so thickly is it sown with allusions to all the previous parts of the Holy Oracles, that it reflects from its marvellous pages the glory of the whole: it not merely reflects them, it adds new lustre to the whole; it transfigures the Old Testament, making it all new—causing "its face to shine as the sun, and its raiment to glisten as the light,"—converting it all into a prophecy of the conflicts and conquests, the sufferings and glory of the New Testament church.

To John, the beloved disciple, was this revelation given. As the calm and tranquil water reflects from its pure depths the great lights of heaven, so John's calm, pure, liquid soul was a fit mirror to reflect those grand, figurative, symbolical lights which the Lord hath hung out in the firmament of this book, to guide and cheer his Church during the night of his absence.

The glorious dreamer got his pilgrim visions in the prison; and in exile John got his vision of a still more glorious marching of the Church through the wilderness, with the Lord at its head. "I John, who am also your brother and companion in tribulation and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." "Be where we may, if we are there for Christ, we may be there with Christ; Christ will be there with us; and his presence can turn every Patmos into the gate—the opened gate—of heaven.

It is also worthy of observation when he got this book: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day." On the Lord's day—the birthday of the first-begotten from the dead—the day which was the beginning of the new creation of God. In solitude—in a desert isle; where no Sabbath law was known—where, probably, the foot of a Sabbath observer, from the dawn of time, never once had trodden—without a civil law, without a church law, John in Patmos was a Sabbath law unto himself. Instinctively he celebrates the Lord's day. To describe the strength of the law of honor in some one's bosom, the poet said: "His eye, even turned on empty space, had beam'd with honor." And does it not show the sublime and glorious strength of the Lord's day principle in John's bosom, when he kept the Sabbath in the isle of Patmos? This example of the instinctive, living, controlling power of Sabbath observance in an apostle, who, in the east of his mind, was as far removed from ceremonialism as any mere man who ever lived, is worth a thousand other laws of external laws, coming down from the Lord's day to be observed. It shows that the Sabbath law was written on

the hearts of the apostles, and was a part of apostolic life as much as living by faith was.

We are also told how John kept the Sabbath: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day." The Holy Spirit dwells with, and is in, believers; but John was in the Spirit. His sense-life was hushed. His speculative reason had folded its wings, and was at rest, and was still. In holy silence he listened to the still small voice of God, and the spiritual life within him gathered up its powers, and passed out in spontaneous action, and gave itself unto the promptings and suggestions of the Spirit of God. He lived in the Spirit, and walked in the Spirit, and thought in the Spirit, and felt in the Spirit. "And if we would keep the Sabbath in the style in which John kept it, what noble Sabbaths they would be! what a delight! How holy of the Lord and honorable they would become! We would be as far removed from Pharisaism and formalism as heaven is from earth. We would have all the liberty and full play of mind, all the radiance and sunshines of soul, that men can desire, if we were "in the Spirit on the Lord's day."

And if we were always in the Spirit on the Lord's day, it would indeed make every Sabbath a feast—"a feast of fat things, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined." It would turn our water into wine; and it would make the wine in the sacramental cup like the "new wine, which, going down sweetly, makes even the lips of them that are asleep to speak."

On that Sabbath day John was not a preacher, but he was a hearer; and the sermon he heard was from the voice of Him who, when on earth, "spoke as never man spake," and who now spake from heaven so as never angel spake. Concerning the voice of God in nature, it is said: "The voice of the Lord is powerful, the voice of the Lord is full of majesty." John had heard the voice of God man in his humbled condition; and of all who heard him speak on earth, his voice had penetrated furthest into John's bosom. God had made John's heart a chosen vessel, fitted to receive into its mystic depths a more ample measure than any other, of the spiritual, the infinite, the divine. While Paul was the theologian of the church, John—John in this respect, even above Paul, and that is saying much—had a heart formed and tuned to receive and to express for all ages the maximum manifestations that have ever been made of God; so that he is well entitled to be called, as posterity has called him, "John the Divine."

And he was John the divine, not because there was anything more divine in himself than in his fellows, but because the heart of the God-man emptied itself more fully into the disciple who lay on his bosom than into any other. And what a shower, what a flood, what an ocean of divinity poured itself into his soul; on that spring-tide Sabbath day in the isle of Patmos! "Thou shalt hear a voice behind thee, it is one of the most sublime promises of Scripture. And as the light has its dawn and its progress toward noon, and as noon have their progression to midsummer noon, so passages of Scripture have their progressive progress in fulfillment, till they reach their grand climax—their midsummer noon. And the grand climacteric of that text, "Thou shalt hear a voice behind thee," had its accomplishment in Patmos: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet."

He heard a voice behind him—not before him, but behind him. His kind Lord would graduate his surprise by addressing himself at first to the ear, apart from the eye. "I heard a great voice behind me as of a trumpet; not the voice of a great trumpet, but a voice as of a great trumpet; a trumpet announcing the presence of the King; a trumpet summoning his soul to attention—a great voice as of a trumpet." It was the voice of the Almighty in the trumpet-voices of glorified humanity. It was a great voice which he heard—a voice greater than the tones of humanity, even as a trumpet is greater than the voice of mortal speech.

Among men, we often hear a great voice giving utterance to trivialities—a park of artillery in sound, but all powder and no shot. Great, however, as the phenomenal sound of this voice was, the substance which it announced surpassed the sound. When Jehovah said, "I am," He expressed more than all the apostles and prophets, and their expounders on earth, or than all the angels and archangels on earth, ever will utter to all eternity. So the very first words of the great voice in Patmos gave an utterance, in contemplating the depths of which the intellects of men and angels will be for ever drowned. "I heard a great voice behind me as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega; the first and the last." "We might dwell upon these words from dawn till noon, from noon till dewy eve—suns might set, and years might pass, and ages roll away, and time itself might end, and the great day of eternity might flow on in cycles of light, unmeasured by night and day—and yet, as the greatest of human minds, when dying, said he had been but like a child gathering shells on the seashore of creation, so ever there would we feel ourselves but children standing on the shore of this shoreless ocean, "Alpha and Omega; the first and the last."

It is God who speaks. From the depths of Deity, by human voice, he expresses God: "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last." It was God that spake; but while he had all the glory of God, he had also the feelings of man. Though he was "far above all principalities and powers, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, both in this world and in that which is to come," yet he took a deep interest in this earth. As before his incarnation, so after his ascension, "He rejoiced always in the habitable parts of the earth, and his delights were with the sons of men." And especially over his church did he watch with a grave and tender interest. And for her sake he has now come down to Patmos, to see his bow in the plow, to pour the sunlight of prophecy over the dark and stormy scenes of time, so that his people in every age might see the heavens, when at the darkest, spanned with the brilliant hues of the great arch of prophetic light.

After the announcement of his great name—or rather, after the declaration of his great, unbounded circle of being—he comes down from the infinite to finite; from the absolute to the relative; from that which heaven, even the heaven of heavens, cannot contain, to the local interests of the seven Asiatic churches. "And what thou seest write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia, unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea." And is there not something very refreshing—like streams from Lebanon—to hear him who uttered the great voice, which said, "I am Alpha and Omega," taking earthly names into his lips—saying, Ephesus, and Smyrna, and Sardis, and Thyatira, and Philadelphia, and Laodicea? There is, however, something more comforting than that. The great, good Shepherd "knoweth all his sheep, and calleth each one by his name." He has the name of every believer written on his heart, which is the true book of life, and which was symbolized by Aaron's breast-plate, engraved with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel.

DR. MILLER'S DUCK STORY.

The late Dr. Miller, of Princeton, as all his students will remember, abounded in anecdotes, which he related to his classes from year to year, to illustrate the points made in his lectures. One of them occurs to us, just now, as especially applicable to the new converts which have recently come into the churches within the bounds of our circulation: A celebrated judge in Virginia was, in his earlier years, skeptical as to the truth of the Bible, and especially as to the reality of experimental religion. He had a favorite servant who accompanied him in his travels round his circuit. As they passed from court-house to court-house, they frequently conversed on the subject of religion, the servant, Harry, venturing at times to remonstrate with his master against his infidelity. As the judge had confidence in Harry's honesty and sincerity, he asked him a great many questions as to how he felt and what he thought on various points. Amongst other things, Harry told his master that he was often very sorely tempted and tried by the devil. The judge asked Harry to explain to him how it happened that the devil attacked him (Harry) who was so pious a man, so sorely, whilst he allowed himself, who was an infidel and a sinner, to pass unnoticed and untempted. Harry asked, "Are you right sure, master, that he does let you pass without troubling you?" "Certainly I am," replied the judge; "I have no dealings with him at all. I do not even so much as know that there is any such being in existence as the devil. If there is any such being he never troubles me." "Well," said Harry, "I know that there is a devil, and that he tries me sorely at times." A day or two afterwards, when the judge had gotten through his docket, he concluded to go on a hunt for wild ducks on one of the streams which lay across his road homeward. Harry accompanied him. As they approached the river, they espied a flock of ducks quietly floating on its surface. The judge stealthily crept up the bank and fired upon them, killing two or three and wounding many others. He at once threw down his gun and made strenuous efforts, with the aid of clubs and stones, to secure the wounded ducks, whilst he permitted the dead ones to float on, for the time, unnoticed by him. Harry, as he sat on the seat of the carriage, watched his master's movements with deep interest, and when he returned, said to him: "Master, whilst you was splashin' in 'de water' after dem wounded ducks, and lettin' 'de dead ones float on, it jist come into my mind, why it is 'de devil troubles me so much, whilst he lets you alone. You are like 'de dead ducks; he's sure he's got you safe. I'm like dem wounded ones, tryin' to get away from him, and he's afraid I'll do it, so he makes all 'de fuss after me and jist lets you float down 'de stream. He knows he can get you at any time; but he knows it is not over never wild me: If you were to begin to flutter a little and show signs like you were agoin' to get away from him, he would make jist as big a splashin' after you as he does after me."

The illustration struck the learned judge with great force, and led him to reinvestigate the grounds of his skepticism, and through Harry's instrumentality, he was fully brought to sit with him at the feet of Jesus and to learn of him. The illustration is a homely one, but it sets forth a great truth in the experiences of those who set out in the Christian course. They must expect to be assailed by Satan as they never were before. If he fails of success in causing their fall by the use of one form of temptation he will try another. He is a cunning old fox: He has tried so long, and had so much to do with men, that he is now an adept in devising means to ruin them, and make them as miserable and degraded as himself. Young Christians, therefore, should not think it strange concerning the very trials which are to try them, as though some strange thing had happened to them, when they are assailed in new, and to them, hitherto unknown methods of assault. As long as the devil feels that sinners are safe, and that he is sure to get them at last, he allows them to float on quietly upon an untroubled current; but the moment they attempt to throw off his yoke, and to assert their independence of him, they must expect his wrath to wax exceeding hot, and his assaults to fall thick and fast upon their heads. They should not be ignorant of his devices. He goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.—*Pres. Herald.*

THE CRISIS.—During one of the battles on the Mississippi, General Pillow called out to a Captain Duncan, in his usual pompous, solemn manner, "Captain Duncan, fire—the crisis has come." Duncan, without saying a word, turned to his men, who were standing by, their guns already shot and primed and simply called out "Fire!" The men were slightly surprised at the order, there being no particular object within range, when an old, gray-headed Irish sergeant stepped up and said, "Pledge yer honor, what shall we fire at?" "Fire at the crisis," said Duncan, "didn't you hear the general say 'it had come'?"

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