

Gospel Standard Review of first edition

THE following interesting description of Mr. Warburton appeared in the Gospel Standard, June, 1857, in a review, by Mr. Philpot, of the first edition of the "Account of Mr. Warburton's Last Days"

God designed him for a great work in the church of Christ, and therefore abundantly and eminently qualified him for it. However at the time hidden from his eyes; his heavy trials in providence; his deep and long poverty; the sinkings of his own desponding mind; the continual embarrassments into which he was plunged; his dismal and gloomy forebodings of a still worse future; his fears of bringing a reproach on the cause of God; the temptations of Satan with which he was assailed; the hidings of the Lord's face; his quakings and tremblings lest he had run unsest; and the whole series of anxiety and distress through which he was called upon to pass; all, connected as they were with the manifestations of God's love and mercy to his soul, were mysteriously tending to make him what he eventually was, a minister to the suffering church of Christ, a feeder of the flock of slaughter. a feeling experimental man of God to the mourners in Zion, the broken in heart, and the contrite in spirit.

What Mr. Warburton might have been had his naturally strong and vigorous intellect been cultivated by a sound education in early boyhood and youth cannot now be said. But most probably, we might rather say most certainly, it would have spoiled him. We might have had Warburton the acute lawyer, or Warburton the learned divine; but we should not have had Warburton the preacher, Warburton the feeling and experimental minister, the tried and exercised man of God. That he might not be thus spoiled, God Himself took charge of his education by placing him in early youth, not in an academy for young gentlemen, nor in a classical and commercial establishment, but in the school of Christ. Moses was made his schoolmaster, and first caught hold of him in Bolton Church, where, instead of charming his ears with the tones of the new organ, he sounded in them such a terrible peal of death, hell, and judgment to come, that his pupil dropped down half dead at his feet. Here he learnt his A B C in experimental religion; here Moses shook over him for the first time the rod; here the first lesson set him, amidst many sighs and tears, was to learn to spell the first letter of that dreadful sentence, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." What school or college could have experimentally taught him what he first learned in Bolton church—that he was a sinner under the curse of God's righteous law? What laboured course of lectures, free library, or mechanics institute could have made him cry out, "God be merciful to me a sinner," all the way home, till his breastbone was sore?

Education is admirable in its way, excellent for a time state; but no education, classical, theological, moral, or religious, could have made, though it might have marred, a John Warburton, either as a Christian or a minister, or brought him with sighs and groans to the Redeemer's feet. And when peace and pardon first reached his heart, when rich, free, sovereign and superabounding grace poured salvation into his soul as he sat in Mr. Roby's chapel, he learned more in one moment what the love of God was, whence it came, and whither it led, what it could do, and what bliss and blessedness it could create, than all the doctors and proctors, pastors and masters, schoolmasters or scholars, lecturers or libraries, teachers or tutors, could have taught him in half a century. When fierce temptations assailed his soul, when hell rose up in arms, and Satan, enraged to see so apt a tool lost to his service and enlisted in God's, hurled his fiery darts thick and fast against him, he was still at school, still learning better and wiser lessons than the academy or the university could have taught him.

When dark clouds rested upon him in providence, when poverty and want knocked hard at his door, when little work and scanty wages, hard times and an increasing family plunged him into a sea of embarrassment and distress, he was still learning deep and blessed lessons, never taught at Cheshunt or learnt at Bradford.

When the clouds of darkness broke in showers on his head, when the Sun of Righteousness gleamed upon his path in providence and grace, when he could set up an Ebenezer here and a hill Mizar there; when he could "look from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lion's dens, from the mountains of the leopards," and see the valley beneath all flowing with milk and wine, what books or authors could have taught him there was such a God in Israel, or have raised up in his heart such faith, hope, and love towards Him? So with all his long experience of the ups and downs, ins and outs, joys and sorrows, risings and sinkings, feasting and fastings, smiles and tears, songs and sighs, mercies and miseries, heavens and hells of a living experience, what substitute could be found in human genius or human learning, for this course of heavenly instruction?

He was naturally gifted with much sound good sense, knew the weakness and wickedness of the human heart, and seeing how soon divisions arise in a church, and what havoc they make of its prosperity and peace, he at once, with his broad, weighty foot trampled upon the rising flame which other ministers of weaker and less determined minds, would let smoulder on, lest, in putting it out, they should burn their own fingers. Want of order and discipline is a prevailing evil in our churches; and when a pastor uses the authority which the Lord has given him to rule as well as feed the church, a cry is soon raised by those who are opposed to all

order and discipline that he is tyrannical and arbitrary. He might sometimes, when thwarted and opposed, speak sharply, and look angry; and there was something in his fine, portly person, commanding look and loud voice that struck terror into the timid and silenced the talkative, but a tenderer heart never beat before the throne of grace and at the footstool of mercy. There indeed he was a little child, a babe, a humble, broken-hearted sinner.