

LIFE AND PORTRAITURE

of
CHRISTMAS EVANS

A New Translation from the Welsh
with a
Memoir of the Author

by

Joseph Cross

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CHAPTER SIX

MORE LABORS

CAERPHILLY

An invitation, which he received about this time, to take charge of the Baptist church in Caerphilly, Glamorganshire, South Wales, confirmed Mr. Evans in his determination to leave the scene of his recent trials. He set out alone, in his sixtieth year. The distance he had to travel was about two hundred miles. On the way, while dwelling on his past misfortunes, he found his heart melted within him, and drawn out in fervent prayer. His faith soon triumphed over his afflictions and his fears. He renewed his covenant with God, and went on his way rejoicing. This revival of his religious feelings had a powerful effect upon his ministry. He had not been long in Caerphilly, before the Spirit of God was poured copiously upon the people.

Previous to this time of refreshing, he had a remarkable dream, which he noted in his diary. He thought he was in the church at Caerphilly, and found many harps hanging about the pulpit, wrapped in coverings of green. Then, said he, "I will take down the harps of heaven in the place." In removing the covering, he found the Ark of the Covenant, inscribed with the name of the Lord God. Then he cried, Brethren, the Lord has come to us, according to His promise, and in answer to our prayers." In that very place, he shortly afterward had the satisfaction of receiving one hundred and forty converts into the church, as the fruit of his ministry.

While at Caerphilly, he entered into a second marriage. He remained there only two years. He says: "I never spent a short time in greater comfort, for the ark of God had appeared there, and the harps of one hundred and forty souls had been tuned to the song of redemption." Happy years no doubt they were, and gladly would Mr. Evans have ended his life in Caerphilly; but troubles arose between him and some of his parishioners, and, receiving a call from Cardiff, a neighboring town, he went to take charge of a church in that place.

ANOTHER COVENANT

Previous to his removal, and while he was meditating the matter, he made a new covenant with God. We extract again from his journal:

“While returning from a place called Tongwynlas over Caerphilly Mountain, the spirit of prayer descended very copiously upon me I wept for some hours, and heartily supplicated Jesus Christ, for the blessings here following. I found at this time a particular nearness to Christ, as if he were close by me, and my mind was filled with strong confidence that he attended to my requests, for the sake of the merits of his own name. This decided in favor of Cardiff.

1. *“Grant me the great favor of being led by thee, according to thy will — by the directions of thy providence and word, and the disposing of my own mind by thy Spirit, for the sake of thine infinitely precious blood. Amen. — C. E.*

2. *“Grant, if I am to leave Caerphilly, that the gale (of the Spirit's influence) and religious revival I had there may follow me to Cardiff, for the sake of thy great name. Amen. — C. E.*

3. *“Grant thy blessing upon bitter, things, to brighten, and quicken me more and more, and not to depress and render me more lifeless. Amen. — C. E.*

4. *“Suffer me not to be trodden under the proud feet of members, or deacons, for the sake of thy goodness. Amen. — C. E.*

5. *“Grant me the invaluable favor of being, in thine hand, the means of calling sinners unto thyself, and of edifying thy saints, wherever thou wilt send me, for the sake of thy name. Amen. — C. E.*

6. *“If I am to stay at Caerphilly, give me some tokens, as to Gideon of old, by removing the things that discourage me, and are in the way of the prosperity of religion in that church. Amen. — C. E.*

7. *“Grant, Lord of glory, and Head of thy church, that the Ark of the cause which is thine, in Anglesea and Caerphilly, may be sustained from idling into the hands of the Philistines. Do not reject it. Aid it speedily, and lift up the light of thy countenance upon it; and by thy Spirit, word, and providence, so operate as to carry things forward in the churches, and neighborhoods, in such a manner as will produce changes in officers, and measures that will accomplish a thorough improvement in the great cause, for the establishment of which in the world thou hast died; — and by scattering those that delight in war, and closing the mouths of those that occasion confusion. Amen. — C. E.*

8. *“Grant me way-tokens by the time I begin my journey to Liverpool and from thence to Anglesea, if it is thy will that I should go thither this year. Amen. — C. E.*

9. *“Grant me succor beneath the shadow of the sympathy that is in thee towards them who are tempted, and the unbounded power there is in thee to be the relief of such. Amen. — C. E.*

10. *“Accept of my thanksgiving a hundred millions of times, that thou hast not hitherto cast me from thine hand, as a darkened star, or a vessel in which there is no pleasure; and suffer not my life to be extended beyond my usefulness. Thanks, that thou hast not given me a prey to the teeth of any. Blessed be thy name. Amen. — C. E.*

11. *“For the sake of thine infinite merit, do not cast me, thy servant, under the feet of pride and injustice, of worldly greatness, riches, and selfish oppression of any men, but hide me in the secret of thy tabernacle from the strife of tongues. Amen. — C. E.*

12. *“Help me to wait silently and patiently upon thee, for the fulfillment of these things, and not become enraged, angry, and speak unadvisedly with my lips, like Moses, the servant of the Lord. Sustain my heart born sinking, to wait for fresh strength from Zion. Amen. — C. E.*

13. *“Help me to wait upon thee for the necessities of life; let thy mercy and goodness follow me while I live; and, as it hath pleased thee to honor me greatly, by the blessing thou hast vouchsafed upon the ministry through me, as an humble instrument, at Caerphilly, after the great storm had beaten upon me in Anglesea, like Job, grant that this honor may continue to follow me the remainder of my days, as thou didst unto thy servant Job. Amen. — C. E.*

14. *“Let this covenant abide like the covenant of salt, until I come to thee in the world of eternal light. I entreat aid to resign myself to thee, and to thy will. I beseech thee take my heart, and inscribe upon it a deep reverence of thyself, with an inscription that time and eternity cannot efface. Let the remainder of my sermons be taken by thee from my lips; and those which I write, let them be unto thee for praise. Unto thee I dedicate them. If there should be anything in them conducive to thy glory, and to the service of thy kingdom, do thou preserve it, and reveal it unto men; else, let it be like the drop of a bucket in the midst of the scorching heat of Africa. Grant that there may be a drop of that water which thou alone canst impart, and which springs up to eternal life, running through all my sermons. In this covenant, which probably is the last that will be written between me and thee on the earth, I commit myself, my wife, and the churches amongst whom I have preached, to the protection of thy grace, and the care of thy covenant Amen. — C. E.*

15. *“Let this covenant continue when I am in sickness or in health, or in any other circumstance; for thou hast overcome the world, fulfilled the law, finished justifying righteousness, and hast swallowed up death in victory, and all power in heaven and earth is in thine hand. For the sake of thy most precious blood and perfect righteousness, note this covenant with thine own blood in the court of the memorials of forgiving mercy: attach unto it thy name in which I believe; and here I, this day, set my unworthy name unto it, with my mortal hand. Amen.”*

Christmas Evans

Dated, Cardiff, April 24, 1829

CARDIFF

“After having entered into this covenant,” says Mr. Evans in his diary, “I came to Cardiff, heartily and unhesitatingly, like a merchant that should send his vessel to sea after it had been registered in the insurance office. I had nothing now to lose, for I had given myself up to the possession of Jesus, the Mediator of the New Testament, for time and for eternity; and so I have had to abide here in the secret of his tabernacle for these nine months.”

He removed to Cardiff in the autumn of 1828, and remained there two years and a half. During this time, he received into the church about eighty converts. He was much in secret prayer, and enjoyed intimate communion with his God. He not only retired for devotion several times every day, but ordinarily rose at midnight to call upon the Lord. But the whole period of his residence was not a cloudless day. Some unpleasant matters arose in the church, which caused him much sorrow, as is evident from the following entry in his diary.

“April 27, 1829. I earnestly entreat thee, blessed Jesus, for the sake of thine own name; to regard me in this request . . . Let things be ordered, Lord, that they may not be impediments and discouragements unto me, and a hindrance to the progress of religion. O, interpose between me and these obstacles, Lord, that I may have no occasion to dispute with any, and so embitter my spirit! Thy power is infinite, and thy wisdom is infallible. Stand thou between me and all contention that no ill effect come upon me. I flee to hide myself under the shadow of thy wings. Permit nothing to blunt the edge of my talents, my zeal, or my success, — nor corrupt the church. Grant me this for the sake of thine infinitely precious blood. Set thy name to this request in the court of heaven, and let Satan's party grow weaker and weaker, and the cause of truth and righteousness become like the house of David, and the house of David like the angel of the Lord. Deliver me, that my spirit be not irritated, and I speak unadvisedly with my lips, as Moses did. Hide me in thy pavilion from the strife of tongues . . . I am as it were on the verge of eternity; save and preserve me by thy boundless power. Amen, Amen, Amen. Lord, regard, behold, hear, and spare. — Christmas Evans.

Write this in thy book, O my Lord, and my God. Let none be disappointed that wait upon thee, gracious Lord. — Remember me.”

He adds in another passage:

“I have given my soul anew to Christ; my body; my talents; my influence in preaching; my name; my character as a man, as a Christian, and as a preacher of the gospel; my time, and the remnant of my opportunities; my success; my peace and comfort as a Christian and a minister. I have resigned all afresh into the hands of Christ. I have commended to his care, also, my wife, and all the circumstances of my family, and my friends and assistants in the work of the Lord, for whom I pray earnestly that they may be blessed, throughout Anglesea, Caernarvon, Caerphilly, and Cardiff and indeed in all the counties of Wales. There are many of them who were helpers to me in my day. “I will say, in the language of Paul, and I hope with affectionate emotions of love to Jesus Christ,

‘The Lord grant unto them that they may find mercy of the Lord in that day.’

“It is a great privilege to a minister to retain beloved friends, who have helped him with their prayers and sympathy. Bless those whom I have, and preserve the new race, the new generation of them that I have found in these parts.

“I committed to God, also, those who obstruct the progress of the cause here, and disturb the unity and brotherly love of the church. Let Christ, whose the church is, and let not me, remove every obstacle, either by changing and melting in the love of the gospel, or taking them somewhere else, where they shall not be a curse and an impediment to the cause — and by the means that shall seem fit in his sight. A word or a nod of thine shuts and opens heaven and earth, and all the locks of the land of Hades or the invisible state. For the sake of the blood of thy covenant, grant the above things unto me, thine unworthy servant.”

~ end of chapter 6 ~

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