

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 FIVE

NEW TROUBLES AND SORROWS

Here we pass over several years of Mr. Evans' history, during which nothing of very special interest occurred, except the agitation of the Fullerian controversy. This is a matter which requires only a passing notice in this brief memoir. We let it sleep in silence.

Mr. Evans was now nearly sixty years of age. Infirmary, the result of his arduous labors and numerous afflictions, began to prey upon his system. The several congregations under his care had hitherto constituted but one church. But the number of preaching places had now become too great for him, in his enfeebled state, to continue his pastoral visits and labors among them as he had done.

He therefore advised them to form themselves into separate churches, two or three stations uniting in one. This was the occasion of a dark and dreadful storm upon the apostle of Anglesea. Some of the churches refused the ministers he recommended, and called others whom he disapproved. Then arose a bitter party spirit, and a general contention, among the congregations. Mr. Evans was severely censured, and even assailed with the shafts of slander.

Many of his former friends forsook him, and some of those who professed to feel for him in his troubles did nothing for his vindication. The severity of these public calamities was increased by private afflictions. His beloved wife had “**gone the way of all the earth.**” He was himself brought very low by sickness, in which he nearly lost his only remaining eye, and seemed fast tending to his final home.

But though cast down, he was not destroyed.

“I wonder greatly,” says he, “that I did not sink into the grave under the weight of sorrows that came upon me in my old age, together with an accumulation of trials of all kinds; but the Lord sustained me.

“There was, in the midst of all, a strong persuasion in my mind, that there was yet much work for me to do for God in the world, as well as much to suffer, ere I died. If I only entered the pulpit, I felt raised as it were to Paradise — above my afflictions — until I forgot my adversity; yea, I felt my mountain strong, my mind was in such a heavenly frame, and as anxious as ever for the conversion of sinners. The truth appeared to me in its power like a hammer in its strength. The doctrine dropped as sweet as the honey, yea, sweeter than the honeycomb, and as comfortable as the best wine.

“I was now particularly wishful that all the ministers in Anglesea would join with me, according to the promise, **‘If two of you agree to ask the same things it shall be given unto you of my Father which is in heaven;’** for I had such confidence that then I would see prosperity attending the ministry, and that I should not die until I had finished my work. I said to a brother: “Brother, the doctrine, the confidence, and strength which I feel, will make some persons dance with joy yet in some parts of Wales.’ Yea, brother,’ said he, with tears flowing in streams from his eyes.

“Everything now contributed to remove me from Anglesea. The unbending disposition of those who were offended at me, and the ardor of my own spirit, believing that there was work for me to do in some other field of the harvest of the Son of man, and my having prayed earnestly for twelve months for the direction of Divine Providence, together with the visions of my head in the night seasons, appeared to unite together to lead in one direction. At length, the determination to leave Anglesea, afflicted as I was, preponderated. I was much like Jacob, leaving his father and his mother, going with his staff only over Jordan: so was I, leaving the church: I had prayed, yea, I had striven with God for its prosperity, and had labored nearly forty years with it — now leaving it — possessing nothing of this world's goods, save the horse upon which I rode, and a small amount of silver in my pocket; and scarcely could I say that these were mine.”

LEGAL PROSECUTION

During the above-mentioned tribulations he received an insulting letter, threatening him with a civil prosecution.

“They talk,” said he, “of casting me into a court of law, where I have never been, and hope I shall never go; but I will cast them first into the court of Jesus Christ, the source of law and authority.”

So saying, he retired to his chamber, and falling upon his knees, he wept and made supplication in the following pathetic strain:

“Blessed Lord! In thy merit I confide, and trust to be heard. Lord, some of my brethren have run wild; and forgetting their duty and obligations to their father in the gospel, they threaten me with the law of the land. Weaken, I beseech thee, their designs in this, as thou didst wither the arm of Jeroboam; and soften them, as thou didst soften the mind of Esau, and disarmed him of his warlike temper against thy servant Jacob, after the wrestling at Penuel.

“So disarm them, for I do not know the length of Satan's chain in this case, and in this unbrotherly attack. But thou canst shorten the chain as short as it may please thee.

“Lord, I anticipate them in point of law. They think of casting thine unworthy servant into the little courts here below; but I cast my cause into the High Court, in which thou, gracious Jesus, art the High Chancellor. Receive thou the cause of thine unworthy servant, and send them a writ or a notice immediately — sending into their conscience, and summoning them to consider what they are doing. O, frighten them with a summons from thy court, until they come and bow in contrition at thy feet; and take from their hands every revengeful weapon, and make them deliver up every gun of scandal, and every sword of bitter words, and every spear of slanderous expressions, and surrender them all at thy cross.

“Forgive them all their faults, and clothe them with white robes, and give them oil for their heads, and the organ, and the harp of ten strings, to sing, for the trampling of Satan under our feet by the God of peace.”

Having thus poured out his heart to God, he felt some confidence of security. But he was never satisfied in such cases without an inward assurance of acceptance and success. So he went again and again; and when, like Jesus, he had “**offered up many prayers, with strong crying and tears,**” like Jacob “**he had power with God, and prevailed.**”

“At the seventh time,” says he, “I came down in full confidence that Christ had taken my cause into his own hand, and would be my Saviour. I felt as cheerful and happy as Bunyan's Pilgrim, when his load fell off and rolled into the grave of Christ; or as Naaman, when he came up from the waters of Jordan, cured of his leprosy.”

It is scarcely necessary to add, the threat was never executed. The Throne of Grace is the good man's sure resort in every emergency. The Lord God “**hides him in his pavilion from the strife of tongues.**”

~ end of chapter 5 ~

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