

# Arthur T. Pierson: A Sketch of his Life and Work

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## Chapter 1—Early Years and Ministry

ARTHUR TAPPAN PIERSON was one of God's choicest gifts to the Church of Christ during the latter part of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. He was a preacher by nature as well as by training. One would just as soon have expected the lark to cease from singing its joyous song amid the spacious heights as to think that Dr. Pierson could live without preaching. Like the ancient prophets who came straight from communion with God to declare the words He had given them to utter, he stood up with all the majesty of the Divine messenger, and, without faltering or apology, made known the whole truth as it is contained in the revealed Word of God. As we knew him in later years, there was something stern and severe in the appearance and manner of the tall, lithe figure, but behind the seemingly forbidding exterior there beat a heart of pity and love for those who were estranged from God and whom he was ever seeking to win back to the Father's fold. If he was severe in his denunciation of sin, his heart bled for the sinner. To him it was an enigma how men and women could continue in the path of wrongdoing and reject the Saviour's offer of mercy.

It has been said that Dr. Pierson's birth-place was curiously suggestive of his career, for it was in a house in Chatham-street, New York, built over an arched entrance to the chapel where Chas. G. Finney was preaching, and which had been known as the Chatham Street Theatre. The year of his birth, 1837, was the same as that of James Spurgeon, D. L. Moody, and John Wanamaker, with all of whom he was strangely associated in after years. Brought up in the centre of Christian surroundings, his heart was early inclined towards the Saviour, and he had not to pass through long years of agonising doubt and sin before finding peace. When a lad in New York, an awful

scourge of cholera visited the city, and after the pestilence had departed, it was remarked by the pastor of the church of which he was then a member that, although hundreds and thousands within a short distance of the church had fallen victims of the awful disease, not one solitary church member of all that large communion had sickened or died. Such a wonderful occurrence as this made a lasting impression on the young and receptive mind of the future preacher, and when speaking of it in later years he used to say that while God does not assure us that any suffering essential to the maturing of the spiritual life and education for service would be spared us, even though we were His children, He did say to us that if we were abiding in Him, such scourges and such judgments, as represent the recompense that God administers to wicked and rebellious souls, shall not come near us, and that we need "not be afraid of the terror by night, nor the arrow that flieth by day."

Deciding in early life to serve God in the holy ministry, Dr. Pierson underwent the necessary scholastic preparations, and in 1857 graduated from Hamilton College. These days of study sowed the seed of that methodical habit of thought and practice which ever afterwards characterised the distinguished preacher. Some men cease to study whenever the doors of the University close behind them. Dr. Pierson was a diligent student up to the very end of his life, and there is no doubt that the thorough training of his youthful years laid the foundations upon which he was subsequently able to build enduring monuments of research and industry.

Possessing a mind upon which impressions were easily formed, the young student was influenced by the men with whom he was brought into contact and by the circle in which he moved. Just as the cholera scourge already noted made an ineffaceable mark upon his memory, so did some of the incidents of his years at college sink deeply into his mind and influence the current of his life. "In my college life," he used to recall, "there were two young men who were mightily moved by the Spirit of God on the same night. They walked down to the chaplain's house, intending to go in and converse with him, and then in prayer to surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ. When they got to the gate, one said to the other, 'Jim, I think I won't go in,' and he resisted all persuasions, and parted at the gate. The man that went in and surrendered to Christ that night is one of the mightiest ministers of Christ in America to-day. The one that parted with him at the gate went into drink, into gambling and sensuality, went down to Cuba, and was identified there with some rebellion, where he was shot, and died in the midst of his sins. They parted for eternity at the gateway of the chaplain's house, and each man's future depended on the decision made at that moment."

In 1860 Dr. Pierson was ordained in the Thirteenth-street Presbyterian Church, New York City, and in the same year he was married. Thus last year (1910) were celebrated both the jubilee of his ministry and his golden wedding—a double event that brought to Dr. and Mrs. Pierson many heart-felt congratulations from friends all over the world.

Dr. Pierson's first pastorate was at Binghamton, and ministeries at Waterford ; Fort Street Church, Detroit; Second Church, Indianapolis, and the Bethany Church, Philadelphia, followed. To that anecdotal style of preaching, which is such a characteristic of our American brethren, we are indebted for many glimpses into the experiences of those early days of service in the Master's cause.

"I began my ministry with the confident impression that the Church is destined to convert the world in this age," Dr. Pierson has confessed. "I endeavoured to do my part in this work of world transformation, and I preached with all enthusiasm, ardour, and conviction, expecting to see my whole congregation converted. It was not; here and there one was gathered out, and so it has continued all through the years of my ministry. I have rejoiced in seeing God's Spirit working, and converting many souls under my preaching, but I have never yet seen a whole congregation brought to Christ, and if any of my brethren have it must be a very exceptional case. Who would not be glad to take a pilgrimage to see a field where every hearer is also a believer, or a whole community has been transformed into a true church?"

There is, perhaps, just a note of disappointment in this confession, but that is pardonable when we remember the enthusiasm that fills the soul of the young preacher with high ideas, and whose heart is so much on fire with holy passion that he cannot understand how anyone can possibly turn a deaf ear to the glorious invitation of the Gospel.

This was not the only direction, however, in which the icy chill of disappointment fell upon the warmth of passionate zeal. In one of the congregations to which he ministered he was continually beset by opposition from some who claimed to be children of God, led on by worldly-minded men outside the church membership entirely. Of this experience Dr. Pierson could never speak without a sense of awe, for Divine chastisements were visited upon that band of opposers, and the lesson which Dr. Pierson learned from that trial was this, "It showed me the sacredness of the office of a Christian minister, and how we need not defend ourselves, but commit our defence unto the Lord God Almighty."

Another remarkable illustration of how, when we cultivate spiritual insight and spiritual instinct, we can depend upon God to interpose for

us, is given as follows in Dr. Pierson's own striking words:—

"I was once in a church where there was a deadly feud between certain members and officers, and it was so bitter that the opposing parties would not even sit on the same side in the prayer-meeting room. After eighteen months of strenuous endeavours to heal the sore and get the contention out of the way, I said to the Lord, 'Thou hast put me here, and Thou art bound by Thy promise to stand by me. Now I have sought to remedy this difficulty, and I cannot, and I find this conflict facing me every way, and these antagonists have arrayed themselves against each other like hostile forces; now, Lord, either heal the breach, or remove out of the way the real offenders.' *And from the day that I offered that prayer not one of those offenders ever darkened that church door.* I speak of it in solemnity. I feel very solemn about it, but I want the witness to go to your hearts that the mighty God is on the side of any man who seeks to be filled with the Holy Ghost, to cultivate the insight into the Word, and the instincts of a spiritual man, and so to administer everything in the interests of God."

Of a different character was the following experience:— "In my own life I was long inclined, from a training in business methods, and an undue confidence in my own sagacity, to undertake to manage matters myself. I learnt a better way; and from that time have found no difficulty confronting me in my ministry for which there has not been found a Divine solution. I took charge of a church at one time, which was composed, for the most part, of the poorer and working classes, which had a terrible debt of £10,000 resting upon it. Feeling such a debt to be a reproach to Christ, I undertook, in the name of God, to raise it by voluntary offerings. It seemed to human eyes a hopeless task; but, by the grace of God, it was accomplished inside of three years without friction, without disturbance, without oppressive taxation."

From this Dr. Pierson used to commend to his brethren in the ministry that, in each Church of Jesus Christ, the minister should seek to associate with himself the most godly, devout, and holy men and women, in united prayer for great spiritual blessings; that one of their number should be appointed a secretary, and that every subject deferentially presented before God in united prayer should be recorded, with the promise upon which the request was based, and the date when such prayer began to be made. Then, so fast as the petitions were granted, the answers should be with equal fidelity recorded, so that this Prayer Union (which might be a very small circle) within the Church of Christ, should demonstrate for mutual growth in faith and courage in waiting upon God how faithful God is in hearing and answering the prayers of His people.

Prayer with him was not a mere repetition of empty words, but the lifting up of the whole heart to God—the presenting of every need, not in the vain hope of its being heard, but in the fullest confidence of its being answered. Like his dear friend, George Müller, in whose work he was so deeply interested, and whose life of faith he so beautifully portrayed in his biography of the orphans' friend, he had learned to lean upon God, and he knew that all the treasures of the Father's storehouse were at his disposal. Such an attitude as that laughs at "impossibilities," for with God human extremity is but the opportunity for Divine aid and deliverance.

From what has already been said, it is obvious that Dr. Pierson was conscientious in discharging all the duties of the ministry, and that in him the business and the spiritual elements were beautifully and successfully blended. He never was, as some men profess to be, so deeply engrossed in heavenly matters as to be oblivious to the claims of earth; with him the two were inseparably related, and while he laboured in a power not his own, and sought the guidance of the Spirit in every detail, he was wise enough to understand that human preparation and organisation have a place in the economy of God's work, and that to neglect them is an evidence not of intense spirituality but of laziness and indifference.

For example, Dr. Pierson believed and said that a great lack in our church life is that of complete organisation. "We knew well a prominent pastor in one of the Western cities who was perpetually urging his people to engage in beneficent activities, but who was so utterly deficient in devising and dividing labour that, when approached after his own discourses by those who were ready to engage in work for Christ, he was absolutely unable to direct them in what way to bestow their activities. Fortunately the economy of all well-organised churches does not leave the pastor to do this work of organisation alone. He has his eldership, or his board of deacons, or his committee men, to assist him in the forming and perfecting of this mechanism of church activity, and he should associate with himself the largest number of wise, sagacious, active men and women in the congregation as the pastor's working council. They should with him develop modes of activity, and apportion work to every man, woman, and child willing to engage in it. I have found it of great personal value to me, in the pastorate of American churches, to unite the trustees, elders, and deacons in such a pastor's council, and with them to mature the methods of work to be recommended to the congregation for their adoption. Such a plan has a higher value in this, that each member of such a board of councillors represents a coterie of personal friends and acquaintances in the congregation, over whom he has more or less

influence, and whom he can induce personally to take part in the organised work of the congregation."

This attention to detail and this regard for the proper working of the machinery associated with church life and work, were marks of that well-ordered mind that believed in doing everything as perfectly as possible. In his plan there was no room for the sloth, no place for the dilettante; the labourers in the great vineyard must have zeal for service and be whole-hearted in their devotion. And what he expected from others in exactitude and merit of service, he gladly rendered himself. Dr. Pierson was thorough in method. He made rules for himself before he had been very long in the ministry, and he obeyed them with unflinching faithfulness. He worked on a system. He prepared for emergencies. At the beginning of his ministerial life, foreseeing that demands would be frequently made upon him for public lectures and addresses, on general occasions, he framed several discourses on popular and useful themes, and was accustomed to use them from time to time, making such changes in the elaboration of the various departments and illustrations of thought as his own mental growth and increasing intelligence or the surrounding circumstances might allow; and he found these to be exceedingly useful to him, being oftentimes called upon with very little or no notice. These lay in the mind and memory as the general foundation for addresses for which no special preparation could be made, and prevented his ever appearing before an audience without being able to present a definite message.

It was this same regard for careful method and precision that accustomed him, during the later years of his pastorate, to carry about with him a book for permanent record, in which he put down, in cipher, all the facts which affected the personal and family life of his congregation, which he was able in any way to ascertain. For instance, he would inquire where the members of each family were born; whether there were any special besetting sins in the children, known to the parents; whether any children had been specially consecrated to God from birth, etc. He would inquire and record about those who had died in the family circle; their ages and circumstances; and about members of the family living in other parts; about aged grandparents and their infirmities; about members of the household who belonged to other churches and communions; about those who had any physical infirmities or deformities—in a word, ascertain, as far as he could, facts of the family history. This enabled him to pray intelligently for his people; and before he repeated a call, he would look over his memoranda, so as to be enabled to converse intelligently and sympathetically; and he found that this method of getting at the inmost history of his people was an invaluable source of power to him in

reaching their souls.

There we have a glimpse of the ardent soul-winner who did not regard his pulpit ministrations as the only way of reaching the hearts and consciences of the people, but who made use of every means in his power to come into the closest personal contact with all whom he desired to influence. His was a high sense of duty and of responsibility, and nobly did he fulfil every function of his holy office.

## **Chapter 2—At the Metropolitan Tabernacle**

THE combination of circumstances associated with Dr. Pierson's ministry at the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London leaves no doubt whatever that he occupied the pulpit by Divine appointment. It was no easy task to step into the breach occasioned by the illness, and subsequently by the death, of that prince of preachers, Mr. C. H. Spurgeon, but the man who is commissioned to undertake a duty forgets himself in the discharge of his task.

So it was with Dr. Pierson. There was no pulpit in all the world so renowned as that from which Mr. Spurgeon week after week and year after year delivered the wonderful sermons that found their way literally by the million into every quarter of the globe, and to step into the fierce light that beat upon the Tabernacle and all its affairs was an ordeal from which almost any man would have, shrunk. But Dr. Pierson, looking away from himself and only at the Master whom he served, shouldered the responsibilities of the Tabernacle ministry, and marched forward in full dependence upon the Spirit of God.

He was not entirely a stranger to the congregation when, towards the close of 1891, he began his temporary ministry in London. Two years earlier he had preached at the Tabernacle, and the impression made upon his mind on the occasion of that last visit is reflected in the article which appeared shortly afterwards in the pages of his own magazine, "The Missionary Review of the World."

"This Metropolitan Tabernacle is a *house of prayer* most emphatically," Dr. Pierson writes. "Here are numerous rooms, under and around the great audience-room, where for almost forty years this one servant of God has held forth the Word of Life; and in these rooms prayer is almost ceaselessly going up. When one meeting is not in progress, another is. This is a hive of bees, where there are comparatively few drones. There are prayer meetings before preaching, and others after preaching; Evangelistic Associations, Zenana Societies, and all sorts of work for God find here a centre, and all are consecrated by prayer. Before the preacher goes upon the

platform to address these thousands, the officers of this great church meet him and each other for prayer as to the service; and one feels upborne on these strong arms of prayer while preaching. No marvel that Mr. Spurgeon's ministry has been so blessed. He himself attributes it mainly to the prevailing prayers of his people. Why may not the whole Church of God learn something from the Metropolitan Tabernacle of London as to the power of simple Gospel preaching backed by believing supplication?

"Referring to this great church, one cannot forget also this divine mission as a standing protest against the secularising of the house of God by the attractions of worldly art and aestheticism. Here is nothing to divert the mind from the simplicity of worship and the Gospel; no attempt at elaborate architecture, furniture, garniture. A precentor leads congregational song without even the help of a cornet; prayer and praise, and the reading of the Word of God, with plain putting of Gospel truth—these have been Mr. Spurgeon's lifelong 'means of grace and weapons of war.

"This lesson has, in my opinion, a bearing on all work for Christ, at home and abroad. Our reliance is too much *on the charms of this world*, in drawing souls to the Gospel and to the Saviour. The Holy Spirit will not tolerate our idols. If we will have artistic and secular types of music, substituting unsanctified art for simple praise; if we will have elaborate ritual in place of simple, believing prayer, if we will have eloquent lectures in place of simple, earnest Gospel preaching, we must not wonder if no shekinah fires burn in our sanctuaries. If Ahaz is allowed to displace God's plain altar by the carved, idolatrous altar from Damascus, we need not be surprised if God withdraws His power. Perhaps the reason why the work of God abroad shows more sign of His presence and power than our sanctuary services at home is in part this, that our foreign mission work has never been embarrassed as yet by those elaborate attempts at aesthetic attractions which turn many of our home churches into concert-halls and lecture-saloons, and costly club-houses. May God grant us to learn, once for all, that nothing in our mission work can make up for Holy Spirit power, and that Holy Spirit power itself makes up for the lack of all else. If the angel troubles the pool, there is healing in the waters; but if God's angel comes not down, all the doctors in Jerusalem, with all the drugs in creation, cannot impart healing virtue."

In 1891 Mr. Spurgeon was laid aside by illness, the heavy duties at the Tabernacle overcoming at last his physical strength, and necessitating a respite from the strain of his busy ministry. Ordered abroad by his medical advisers, he was naturally anxious that his congregation should not suffer by his absence, and the problem of a capable



substitute was much in his thoughts. Early in the month of August he remembered that Dr. Pierson had kindly offered to come to London at any time when his services might be required, and writing to his friend he inquired whether his engagements would permit of his coming to England. The very next morning, to show how the hand of the Lord was working in the matter, a loving letter was received from Dr. Pierson in which, among other helpful words, were the following: "If by coming across the sea I could now serve you, I would cheerfully do all in my power." To this a reply was at once sent, and the return mail brought the following confirmation of the belief that the proposal was of the Lord:—

"My beloved in the Lord, dearest Spurgeon,—Your most loving letter of August 7th has just reached me, forwarded from my city address. Please do not 'Reverend' or 'Doctor' me! I am not as reverend as you are, for I am only fifty-four, and you are a little more venerable; and, as to the doctoring, you unhappily need it more than I. Now, henceforth let me be plain Pastor Pierson!

"As to the contents of your letter, I fell on my knees—there was in all this a touch of the supernatural, and I was overawed.

"First of all, I was unexpectedly called to preach in the Tabernacle, Dec. 6, 1889; and never had I felt such divine uplifting; the atmosphere of prayer and of the Holy Ghost was there, and those blessed men of prayer all about me, and the conscious demand of the congregation for the plain Word of God, with no chaff of science and art and human wisdom, falsely so-called; I felt that such a congregation and environment evoked the best there was in me, and that such eloquent hearing would make any man mighty to preach. And so it pained me to be unable to comply with after-appeals by letter and telegram asking me to preach again, for I felt that nowhere on earth would I so gladly hold forth the Word of Life. And then my deep love for Pastor Spurgeon, nourished through many years, and increasing day by day, led me to feel it a divine joy to do anything to help you, for no man on earth has ever had more of my love and sympathy than you. Every utterance of tongue or pen has an echo in my heart, and especially in this *Greatest Fight in the World*.

"Well, now-listen; for the first time, I think, since I began to preach at twenty years of age, I am entirely free of all positive engagements from October 1st; my last appointment to preach, thus far, is September 27. By some strange leading I have been made to keep clear of all embarrassing promises and pledges; and though it will upset all my supposed and presumed course, I cannot offer at present any insuperable barrier to my coming and preaching for you, from

about the middle of October, indefinitely. I know not what I may be able to cable you, for I feel that I must write fully on a subject so grave. It is of supreme consequence for me only to *do the will of God*, and that can be known only in answer to believing prayer. My counsel is, that you call your deacons together, and, after earnest prayer, ascertain by their unanimous voice what is the divine mind. I am making this matter one of fasting and prayer; and if your mind, and theirs, and my own, are led in the same direction, I will accept it as a token of God's will, and come with joy to you.

"My hesitation is due, not so much to the necessary doubt investing such a manifest interruption of my ordinary work, which, like other men's, runs in the ruts of habit; but I cannot but hesitate for clear signs of the divine will, before daring to take up a work so vast, and of issues possibly so momentous. To enter such a field, and there labour at this critical time, when the whole people have been chastened, and the soil is mellow and ready for the sowing,—I simply *dare not*, unless I am thrust into it and anointed anew for the work by the Master Himself."

Three days after writing the above, Dr. Pierson cabled:—Acts xvi. 9, 10. The passage runs thus—"And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the Gospel unto them."

In due course, the deacons met, and unanimously agreed to the proposal; it was afterwards approved by the elders; and on final details being arranged, October 25th was fixed as the date of Dr. Pierson's first services at the Tabernacle. "We trust"—said the official organ of the Tabernacle at the time—"that his coming will indeed be like Paul's mission to Macedonia, and that not only will believers be edified and strengthened, but that many under his ministry may be brought out of darkness into light."

Believing that blessing received is in proportion to the faith expecting it, Dr. Pierson entered upon his work in London with every confidence of a harvest season. To this belief he gave utterance in some of the first words spoken by him from the Tabernacle pulpit. "Do you expect a blessing?" he asked. "Then you will prepare your heart for it. May I say that I expect a blessing? I never would have come those three thousand miles across the stormy Atlantic, and have left all the work in America that was at my hands, to preach in this Tabernacle, had I not been confident that God called me, and meant, through this poor

ministry of mine, to second the glorious testimony of Pastor Spurgeon, and that I should come to a prepared people. And I want solemnly to say that, if we do not have a blessing, it will be our own fault; for God is great and rich in mercy, and the Holy Ghost is even now hovering over this assembly like a dove at a window; and if we will open the window the Holy Dove will come in."

This expectation was realised from the very beginning. Mr. Spurgeon, before his departure for Mentone, had spoken of the rest of heart which he enjoyed in leaving Tabernacle affairs in the hands of "our beloved brother, Dr. Pierson," adding those significant words:—"It was according to the wonder-working way of God to have such a man in reserve while we were laid aside. No one could be more competent, or more suitable; no one could display a more unselfish desire to serve the cause of God, or a more loving concern to help a brother in his hour of need. It is marvellous how greatly we coincide in thought and feeling: the two ministries have dovetailed into each other, and we are indeed one." And so the ministry, begun amid such mutual love and confidence, and in an atmosphere warm with prayer, was wonderfully marked by the Divine favour. In undiminished crowds the people flocked to the house of God, and the joy of reaping gladdened the heart of the preacher from over the sea.

Meantime, while every department of the Tabernacle was maintaining its activities under the guiding hand of Dr. Pierson, the beloved pastor was resting by the sunny shore of the Mediterranean, gradually gaining strength and, as far as human eye could see, getting ready for a resumption of his labours in the centre of London's teeming millions. He hoped to be "home in February." And he was, in a much more real sense than was supposed by any of those who heard the words, for with the coming of that month there flashed across the world the sad intelligence that, on January 31st, 1892, C. H. Spurgeon had gone to his reward.

Throughout the dark and trying days that followed, Dr. Pierson stood like a giant, strong in faith, and preaching the steadying and inspiring messages that were needed in the hours of crisis. "During the life of the great pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle," one of the officials has said to me, "there were many who were filled with apprehension as to what would happen after his decease, for his master hand guided and controlled, not only the great Church, but the important institutions connected with it, and when he was called to his rest, the Church was staggered and bewildered by the calamity. Loyally and faithfully, Dr. Pierson stepped into the breach and gave himself unreservedly in the service of the Church; throughout the ordeal of the funeral and memorial services, without faltering, he maintained the great work,

until time began to heal the sense of bereavement and distraction, and thus he guided the great ship into smoother water."

The memory of Dr. Pierson's faith, courage, and healing ministry during that period of sorrow and bereavement is still gratefully cherished at the Tabernacle. If, after the congregation worshipping there began to accustom itself to its altered circumstances, there were some who forgot their debt to him, and attributed unworthy motives to disinterested service, it was but a modern illustration of the experience of the "poor wise man" recorded in the Book of Ecclesiastes. Into the unhappy episodes I need not enter, but I have it on the authority of one well acquainted with all the circumstances, that Dr. Pierson made "efforts to restore harmony to an extent that many might consider derogatory in his fervent desire that the cause of Christ might not suffer disrepute by real or imaginary disunion within its borders."

At the Tabernacle and elsewhere there were many who would have liked to see Dr. Pierson succeed Mr. Spurgeon in the permanent pastorate of the Church, but that was not God's purpose for His servant. And so, the mission which had brought him to London having been fulfilled, he resumed other duties, with twenty years of glorious service still ahead.

### **Chapter 3—The Work of Later Years**

THOUGH Dr. Pierson occupied no settled pastorate during the closing twenty years of his life, his ministry was world-wide in its scope, in large measure through his books, and he left his impress on many departments of religious work. In no field, perhaps, did he labour with deeper earnestness than in that of foreign missions. The tremendous need of the mission field ever loomed up before him with pathetic appeal; he saw vast areas of the world's surface untouched by the saving presence of the missionary, and his heart yearned with a passionate earnestness to send the Gospel to the great multitudes who sat in the gloomy darkness of heathenism. Voice and pen were devoted to furthering the interests of the cause of Christ in foreign lands, and not only did he seek to awaken the interest in the Church, but he gave that which is often hardest to give, his own children to missionary labours, one of them dying at her post in India, another sacrificing his health in the tropics of Central America; a third has laboured among the Indians in the South-west of America; a fourth assists her husband in Christian settlement work in one of the large cities in the United States, while the eldest son was associated with his father in the conduct of his missionary magazine.

This intense interest in the cause of missions was not a plant of late growth. For twenty-five years he was editor of *The Missionary Review of the World*, and one of his own countrymen has declared that "it is generally conceded that there is no living writer on Christian missions the equal of Dr. Arthur T. Pierson, in fulness of knowledge, in enthusiasm and earnestness of spirit, and in charm and power of treatment." Before he left America in 1891, to enter upon the temporary pastorate of the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London, he prepared a "Solemn League and Covenant" in order to create a fresh concern in the cause of missions and to lead to a practical support of them.

That "League and Covenant" was in the following practical terms:—

"Who of God's people are ready to join in an agreement of prayer to carry out some such solemn confession of duty, faith, and privilege as the following?

"We, the undersigned, deeply feeling the reproach and dishonour of the Church of Christ in the long neglect of the perishing millions of our race, and the selfish hoarding and spending of money which has been committed to disciples as stewards; and painfully conscious that unbelief has led to the still worse neglect of believing prayer in behalf of a world's evangelisation, do, in the name of Jesus, declare our deep conviction that it is the duty and privilege of the disciples of Christ to bear the Gospel message to the whole race of man with all possible promptness; that every believer is responsible before God for the carrying out of our Lord's last command; that the avenues of self-indulgence should be closed, that we may have the more to give to those that need; that we ourselves should be ready to go wherever we are sent, and to send others where we may not go; that our children should be consecrated, from the first, unto God's service, and encouraged to cherish the spirit of missions. And we are especially impressed that daily and believing prayer should be offered for the speedy evangelisation of this world and the coming of the kingdom of God. We believe it is the privilege of all true believers to implore God for the speedy outpourings of His Spirit in a world-wide Pentecost of power.

"And in this faith we do solemnly undertake, in holy agreement before God, however widely separated from each other, to meet each other at the throne of grace in the early morning hours of each day in earnest and importunate prayer."

Again and again he uttered warnings to the Church of Christ, pointing out its duty with regard to missionary work in foreign parts, and no

one could listen to his clarion calls without realising how real was the passion that stirred his soul. As recently as August last, 1910, in spite of the weakness that was then leaving its mark upon the faithful servant, he spoke at the Northfield Conference on "The Incredible Facts of Modern Missions," emphasising in that address the fact that God is working a great work in our day and calling upon Christian men and women to recognise His working and rise to their responsibility.

"If," he added, "the Church fails Him in these days, He will cast it aside and raise up another people to do His will, as He did with the Israelites at Kadesh-Barnea, that was so near the land of promise that it is not quite certain whether it was inside the border. In a few hours they could have entered and taken possession; but because they were afraid to face the giant sons of Anak, and were so unbelieving and hard-hearted that they were even going to stone Caleb for encouraging them to go forward, God turned them back into the desert for thirty-nine years, till they all left their carcasses in the wilderness. If the Church of God in this generation does not arise to the work of the world's evangelisation, He will cast us aside and raise up another generation to do His will."

Then he closed with this appeal, showing how even to the last he was striving to awaken the individual and the Church to a real sense of their responsibility to the unevangelised world:—

"Thousands and millions of people have not yet seen a missionary nor heard the first proclamation of the Gospel. This assembly room has in it as many as equal one-eighth of the missionary forces in the world that the Christian Church sends unto heathen and papal countries. We do not know what consecration is or what giving is. I want to see the day when people beget and bear and rear children for the mission field; when they restrict their expenses for the sake of having more to give; when believers limit their indulgences, forego fine houses, collections of art and of books, and all forms of needless outlay for temporal things for the sake of the spiritual welfare of a lost race. I beseech you, take this matter into new consideration before Almighty God, and do not sleep until you have communed with the Wonder Worker of our day, and have solemnly asked Him, 'Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?'"

With such a fire as this glowing perpetually in his breast, one can readily understand how eagerly he welcomed the awakening of college students to the cause of foreign missions in 1886, when the Student Volunteer Movement was founded at Mount Hermon. Much of the inspiration of this movement was derived from Dr. Pierson himself,

who was in attendance upon the conference at Northfield, and was associated with the small group of men, including Robert Wilder and John Forman, who inaugurated the world-wide enterprise. During the earlier years of the movement Dr. Pierson was present and took part in nearly all their leading conferences both in this country and in America.

No review of Dr. Pierson's life, however lengthy, could do anything like justice to his labours on behalf of missions, but it is worth recalling the fact that in 1888, at the great London Missionary Conference, he delivered a memorable address, giving a general survey of modern missions, in the course of which he pressed home the thought that in connection with this enterprise the greatest need was the need of a revival of faith in the supernatural. In the month of July that same year, in association with his fellow-countryman, the late Dr. A. J. Gordon, of Boston, he addressed a series of meetings in Edinburgh; and this was followed by a campaign in which these two honoured brethren visited quite a number of centres in Scotland, speaking everywhere on missions with much acceptance.

With another branch of Christian activity in this country Dr. Pierson was intimately associated—the Müller Orphanage at Bristol. His association with that wonderful man of God began during one of Mr. Müller's preaching tours in the United States, Dr. Pierson at that time being minister at a church in Philadelphia. Close and prolonged seasons of prayer and Bible reading which they had together bound them to one another in affectionate relationships, and the ties then formed were only broken when, in 1898, Mr. Müller was called to his reward. Dr. Pierson was a frequent visitor at the Bristol Homes, and in the two biographies, "George Muller, of Bristol," and "James Wright, of Bristol," he paid tribute to the devoted services of those two men of God on behalf of the homeless and the destitute orphans.

All who had the privilege of being acquainted with Dr. Pierson in his home life speak of the beautiful devotion of husband to wife and of wife to husband. Joined together in marriage in 1860, they enjoyed half a century of unbroken happiness, the growing years but drawing them into closer unity of heart and spirit and rendering their married life the perfect ideal of what all true marriage should be. Last summer they celebrated their golden wedding—celebrated it quietly and happily at beautiful Northfield, redolent with memories of D. L. Moody and the centre to-day of Bible conferences and schools that have made, and are making, their mark upon the religious life and thought of the world. The Rev. J. Stuart Holden was privileged to join with Mr. and Mrs. W. R. Moody in an otherwise almost entirely family gathering, and he says that never shall he forget the happiness

of that summer afternoon. "With sparkling wit, striking epigram, and interesting reminiscence, the Doctor entertained and amused us all, and his tender and almost patriarchal greeting and blessing of his guests was like a benediction."

To the "beloved friends, everywhere," of Mrs. Pierson and himself there was sent "with grateful affection," a little souvenir of the happy event, couched in the following terms:

"Our Golden jubilee was quietly kept with the family circle at `Heerrnhut,' our Northfield summer home.

"We had issued no announcements or invitations, wishing to avoid all publicity, for obvious reasons; but, notwithstanding, we were the recipients of not a few generous gifts, and very many precious messages of love and salutation, by letter or telegram. Feeling unequal to the individual acknowledgement of all these acts of kindness, we ask our friends to accept this simple memorial of the occasion, and response to their congratulations as a personal tribute, with thanks for their gracious ministries of many years, and fervent prayers for their joyful gathering with us and all the Church of God at the Marriage Supper of the King."

Upon the inside pages of this memorial were reproduced portraits of Dr. and Mrs. Pierson at the time of their wedding, together with portraits taken just before their jubilee, and also the following lines in verse giving their testimony to the Lord's goodness during the half century they had been together in the sacred relationship of husband and wife:—

With fifty years of wedded Love and Life  
Our Father God has crowned us—Husband, Wife—  
With two sons and five daughters Home was blest,  
One only—dear "Louise"—yet called to rest,  
For all these golden years, and sunlit ways,  
We ask our friends to join our hymn of praise;  
No gifts we crave so much as priceless Love,  
And prayers in our behalf to God above;  
That, if awhile His grace prolongs our stay  
His pillar may direct our pilgrim way,  
Then bid us welcome to His Home on high,  
Where Love is throned and Joy can never die.  
Blessed indeed, from Sin and Death made free  
In Heaven to keep the Golden Jubilee!

The fiftieth anniversary of Dr. Pierson's ordination to the ministry



falling in the same year, it occurred to some of his friends that it was a fitting time to undertake some form of a memorial to him, and it was proposed that a Missionary Bible Lectureship should be founded. The occasion seemed appropriate also for making a missionary tour that had long been in contemplation, and in Dr. Pierson's own magazine the following details were given:

"After receiving many pressing invitations to visit the Orient, and bear testimony to the truth, the Editor-in-chief has now made plans for a trip to the mission fields of Asia, returning by Egypt and the Mediterranean. He expects to sail from Vancouver on October 19th on the *Empress of Japan*, and plans to reach London in time for the Keswick Convention in July, 1911. The itinerary, so far as complete, embraces Japan, Korea, China, Siam, India, Burma, and Ceylon, and probably Egypt. Arrangements are being made for services with the missionaries and English-speaking Christians in India during January and February, 1911. The editor will also be ready, as far as is desired and possible, to meet with missionaries in other lands. He expects to be in Japan and Korea in November; in Manchuria and China in December; in Siam, Burma, and then India, from about January 1st to March 1st, and in Egypt from March 15th to April 15th, approximately.

"The purpose of this tour is to accomplish several ends: First, to glean information at first hand about the actual state and needs of the mission fields; second, to encourage and stimulate the missionaries and native churches; third, to strengthen faith in the inspired Word of God and loyalty to our divine Redeemer; and, finally, in every way to build up the cause of Bible study and missionary enterprise."

The tour began according to arrangement, but it was not to end as planned. The voyage, to begin with, was exceedingly rough, and in his weak state of health Dr. Pierson suffered severely in consequence. Mr. Ralph Walker, who sailed from British Columbia with Dr. Pierson and his wife and daughter, tells me that even before the voyage began he was much impressed by his friend's weakness and frailty, and thought him totally unfit to endure the fatigues and inconveniences of Eastern life. At first he maintained his strength, but as they got into a colder climate and the sea grew rough, he became utterly prostrate, and twice on going to his cabin Mr. Walker found him so prostrate that he was not sure whether he was alive or not. But when one day's comparative calm and sunshine broke the weariness of the storm, it brought with it new life and hope, and Dr. Pierson walked the deck with his friend till the latter was quite tired out.

Again and again, Dr. Pierson's splendid spirit overcame his bodily

weakness, and when he reached Japan his courage and zeal often led him to speak to the students and others with a power which he ever exercised in his witness for the Master. But in Korea he found the conditions far from favourable, the intense cold, combined with the lack of heating arrangements in the houses, causing him much suffering and adding to the weakness which became more marked as the days went by. And yet, his letters to his friends in this country were for a time bright and hopeful. He expected to reach London about the month of April and offered to occupy once more the pulpit at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, should the Church still be without a pastor.

Later letters, however, gave rise to much anxiety amongst his friends. When last in England, two years earlier, Dr. Pierson had seemed considerably weaker than usual. Up till then his years had sat lightly upon him, but at the Keswick Convention of 1909 he appeared to be tired and worn out; and as the news of his illness reached us from Korea there stole into many hearts the fear, justified by events, that never again would we see the loved form or listen to the voice that had so often in years gone by thrilled and inspired us with its message.

Writing to the Rev. Evan H. Hopkins towards the end of the year, and addressing him as "My Beloved Friend and Brother," he said, "You will see from this letter that I am about as far from my home as I can ever be on earth. As soon as my health is sufficiently restored, after a very tempestuous sea voyage, I expect to press on to Shanghai and thence to Calcutta and so on, to London, where, if God spares my life, I hope to meet you about April 1st and have much to say to you when we meet, which I cannot take time for now and have no strength to write or even to dictate. ...My heart goes out to you in special affection. There is no man in Great Britain whom I more long to see, and with whom I should consider it a greater privilege just now to have fellowship and conversation. If I am spared to again see you, I have countless matters of which to speak. After writing for forty years upon the subject of missions, and delivering countless addresses and reading almost countless books, I have had more impression made upon my mind by a few weeks in Japan and Korea than all the previous years have made, so great is the power of vision to produce impression...

"I have heard nothing up to this time about the 'Pierson Lectureship' which was proposed in connection with my jubilee; whether the amount was raised and the project realised I do not know; but in any case, I am trying to act as the first incumbent of the Lectureship, and up to the limits of my strength am making addresses wherever I go along the Keswick lines. Will you commend me to God in your daily prayer, remembering me to Mrs. Hopkins with peculiar affection and

to all the brethren?"

To this typewritten letter was added a postscript in the Doctor's own handwriting. "The itinerary I have been compelled to abandon" he wrote, "as my really critical illness here has delayed me by heart weakness, and for the present I have *suspended all plans*, quietly waiting further disclosures of the will of God. The doctors here advise me not to think of further shift until *balance* is restored. The suppressed sea-sickness broke up the 'compensation' for deficient heart action (which they say has been going on for years), and until this compensatory action is recovered further travel is out of question.

"It would be to me an unspeakable blessing if a few like-minded brethren who can prevail in prayer, could meet with you, definitely to ask in agreement for my recovery. Twelve years ago, after blood poisoning, a dozen brethren met at the house of James Wright, in Bristol, and spent two hours in prayer for me; and, since then, see what I have been able to accomplish! Another crisis has come, and things impossible with man are possible with God."

From this letter we see that Dr. Pierson's condition had become much worse, and that he himself realised the exceedingly critical nature of the illness. But hope was not yet abandoned, for "things impossible with man are possible with God." He knew that he was in God's hands, and there he was content to remain.

As soon as he was able to leave Korea, Dr. Pierson, abandoning the remainder of his tour, sailed for America, and reaching his own country he remained for a couple of months in the kindly atmosphere of the Pacific Coast at Los Angeles. The messages despatched to his friends from there were few in number and brief in their contents. They were written by his daughter and gave reports of the patient's progress. They were not very alarming, and neither were they reassuring; between the lines one could easily see that the life of the great preacher and teacher was hanging in the balance. Then came the news of the sufferer's journey home to Brooklyn. The very fact of his having faced the long distance by rail seemed to suggest some improvement in his condition, but a cabled message in the daily newspapers of June 5th, stating that the honoured servant of God had entered into his rest two days earlier, intimated to all who knew and loved him that his warfare on earth was over and that he had entered into the presence of the King.

The end when it came was really unexpected, for up till the closing week of his life he was doing editorial work, and on the night before his death the doctor and nurse both declared that he was better. But

early next morning it was seen that a serious change had taken place. The patient was unconscious and sinking. A telephone message summoning Mr. Delavan Pierson to his father's bedside was despatched with all speed, but before he had time to answer the call, at five minutes to eight o'clock, the aged servant of the Lord stopped breathing, and passed quietly away without regaining consciousness. The funeral services on Tuesday afternoon, June 6th, at which Dr. Speer and Dr. Jowett spoke, were of a truly remarkable character, the whole tone being of praise and victory. Many people said they had never attended such a funeral.

"Nothing is here for tears," said the aged Manoah when they brought to him the news that Samson was dead. And there is "nothing for tears" in the translation of Dr. Pierson: rather would we thank God for such a gift to His Church, and for a long life lived so well and nobly lived in the service of his Lord and Master.

#### **Chapter 4—Dr. Pierson's Keswick Ministry**

THOUGH Dr. Pierson's association with Keswick did not go back over very many years, it was chiefly through his connection with that movement that he was known in this country, and it was at Keswick, perhaps, more than anywhere else that he possessed his kingdom and occupied the sphere fitting his great gifts. There he dominated the Convention by his spiritual and intellectual powers, and thousands hung upon his words with an intense eagerness for instruction and help that was never disappointed.

It was comparatively late in life before he accepted the teaching for which the Convention stands. Throughout the whole of his ministerial career the Bible was to him the one Book that stood in splendid isolation above all others. With an enthusiasm that never lagged, and with an industry amazing in its completeness, he dug deeply in the Divine quarry, bringing to light its valuable metals and ever finding some new and wondrous gem that had escaped the eye of his fellow-workers in the same precious field. In this way he obtained a unique mastery of the sacred writings, but yet with all his wonderful and almost unequalled acquaintance with the Divine treasury, there were certain truths which he had failed to appropriate experimentally, and thus, while giving intellectual assent to them, he was without that intimate personal acquaintance which is absolutely essential to him who would lead others into the full measure of blessing.

To the Rev. Prebendary Webb-Peploe I am indebted for some light concerning Dr. Pierson's introduction to some doctrines which he

afterwards proclaimed with such zeal and earnestness. Attending, by invitation of Mr. D. L. Moody, the Northfield Convention in America, in 1895, Prebendary Webb-Peploe there met Dr. Pierson for the first time, and as they sat side by side on the platform while the meetings were in progress, the two eminent Bible teachers became intimately acquainted, and had much personal intercourse during all the time they were together at the Conference.

"Dr. Pierson was not speaking much, if at all, at that Convention," Prebendary Webb-Peploe said to me in describing that first meeting-time at Northfield, "so that I did not then discern or enter into his wonderful power as an expositor of the Word of God, nor did I then know how, in the wonderful providence of God, my own poor words were used by the Lord for the spiritual help of my learned brother, but, on three different occasions in public meetings in England, I afterwards heard him say that in August, 1895, the Lord graciously opened his eyes to see the spiritual force and power of truths which he had theoretically known for many years, but the blessing and power of which he had not personally received, and it was through his friend Mr. Webb-Peploe that this light was given."

This crisis in Dr. Pierson's spiritual experience left its mark upon all his subsequent ministry. A new note of entreaty characterised his preaching, and he emphasised, as he had never done before, the necessity of complete consecration on the part of Christians. Following upon this experience, it was not long before he came into close touch with Keswick, and very soon he was standing upon its platform and leading others into the paths of personal holiness where lie the richest blessings which God has to bestow upon His children.

Dr. Pierson's first visit to Keswick was in the year 1897, and regarding that convention I find the following reference in the LIFE OF FAITH:—"One of the most deeply interesting meetings was the Testimony Meeting, held on Friday afternoon in the Tent, and presided over by Mr. Hopkins. Personal testimonies were given by the Rev. Francis Paynter, Rev. Mr. Roscoe (Uganda), and Dr. A. T. Pierson. As Dr. Elder Cumming remarked in prayer, it must have cost our brethren a great deal to give those testimonies. Dr. Pierson told how he had been led through a series of experiences which had transformed his character and his life. Many eyes on the platform, as well as in the general audience, were filled with tears as Dr. Pierson gave this testimony to the grace of God."

In the pages of the LIFE OF FAITH, Dr. Pierson described "Keswick as seen near at Hand." "It was," he said, "a satisfaction, after watching this spiritual movement for twenty years from without, to have a

providential opportunity to observe and study it from within; and the visit of 1897 has been productive of gratifying results." Very sympathetically indeed did Dr. Pierson write about what he had seen and heard during that memorable time in his experience, and he left Keswick, "where the Creator has fashioned such an amphitheatre of grandeur," with the impression that, apart from all its material advantages, "Keswick Conventions have no real rival, and as gatherings for the promotion of practical holiness in living, and power in serving, we have yet seen nothing on either side of the water that furnishes any proper parallel."

A month or two later, in the columns of his own magazine, *The Missionary Review of the World*, Dr. Pierson entered more fully into his introduction to the movement with which he was subsequently so closely identified. There he stated that in April of that year (1897) an important convention was held in London, at which the leading Keswick teachers of the city and vicinity gave careful and candid expositions of the truth which they held and advocated, part of the purpose of this convention being to furnish, in the metropolis of the world, an authoritative statement of this teaching, correcting misapprehension, and bringing these precious and vitalising truths into touch with many who had never been at Keswick itself during the Convention week. The way was singularly and providentially opened for him to attend this London Convention, and then to remain in England, holding a series of meetings, until the Keswick gathering itself; "so that a visit of some four or five months had its beginning and ending in connection with these two memorable weeks, each of which was occupied with the advocacy of these grand truths of grace and godliness. The opportunity referred to was gladly embraced, for there were some doubts that only such personal attendance at Keswick meetings could dissipate, and there was a strong desire to 'spy out the land,' and find out what weak points, if any, there were in the teaching now inseparable from the name of Keswick."

We have already seen the effect of that visit, and we know what a warm place Keswick had in his heart from that time on.

To the very end of his life Keswick continued to be very near his heart, and he always regarded it as a special privilege to minister to the vast crowds which yearly visit the little town up among the Cumberland hills in order to find the spiritual power and blessing that are needed for the enrichment and worship of service.

How whole-heartedly he entered into the movement was evidenced in many ways, for he recognised in its teaching the cure for many of the ailments with which the Christian Church is afflicted. In his little

book, "The Story of Keswick," he laments the "present status of the Christian Church and the so-called Christian world," and the conclusion at which he arrives is this: "That to build up missions so that the structure shall risk no collapse, we must look well to the base—in the individual as well as the collective church life. We must press home on the believer the demand for personal holiness. The Word of God must be restored to its supreme place as the inspired, infallible testimony of God; the personality and power of the Holy Spirit, the indispensableness of Christ to human salvation, the universal priesthood of believers and the need of a simple and spiritual worship, the call to separation and self-denial for Christ and the neglected hope of the Lord's coming—these and like truths must be preached, taught, driven home to the conscience until God's people are brought into personal, living, loving sympathy with Himself."

That Dr. Pierson himself taught them with a conviction of purpose, and in the power of the Holy Spirit every one will admit. At many of the Conventions he was one of the stalwarts who had always a message for the hungry multitudes and who fed them out of God's own rich and abundant storehouse. One of the most memorable Conventions in which he took part was that of 1905, when all hearts were warmed and subdued by the mighty happenings in Wales, and when the spirit of prayer and expectancy laid its hold upon the assembled crowds. At the Wednesday evening meeting in the Skiddaw-street Tent Dr. Pierson spoke on "The Inbreathed Spirit," and in the impressive hush which settled upon the gathering it was felt that the Spirit who formed the subject of the address was Himself in the midst of the waiting people and was doing His convicting work.

Very touching and wonderfully powerful in its effect was the incident from his own experience which fell from the speaker's lips. He said: "I remember, as I stand here—it is twenty-seven years ago,—that once, in Michigan, I and my three children were in the water over half an hour, in instant peril of drowning. One of those children with me in the water was the beloved one who fell asleep in India a year ago last November. She was a little child; and when she came out of the water, and went home to her dear mother, who knew nothing about the peril until it was all over, she took pen and paper and, with trembling hand, wrote: 'God having saved me to-day from drowning, I give myself henceforth to Him.' When, in India, she had almost died two days before she actually departed, a companion said to her: 'Louise, you almost left us yesterday. If God had called you would you have been glad?' 'Oh! wouldn't I,' she replied. The Spirit had awakened such desires after God, that, when He called, she leaped like a tired child into her Father's arms. The thought of her, and of that escape from

imminent drowning twenty-seven years ago, almost overpowers me as I stand here. I cannot but feel that, as to you, my friends, I have risen from the dead. I have been spared twenty-seven years to make this address in Keswick to-night. I might have died then."

Such a testimony, as can readily be understood, had a melting effect upon the audience, and interrupting the address, the whole gathering broke into the singing of "Songs of praises I will ever give to Thee."

When this meeting ended, the spirit of prayer seemed to fall upon a large section of the audience, and many resolved to wait behind for an all-night prayer-meeting.

What happened at that remarkable season of waiting upon God was described the following evening by Dr. Pierson, who had been in control of the proceedings and had been deeply impressed by the whole character of the gathering. "Those present last night at the meeting, which lasted up to three o'clock in the morning, will have seen a Welsh evangelistic and prayer-meeting reproduced in Keswick," he remarked. "Those who were there will not need me to expatiate much upon the subject. It was the finest illustration of what I have seen in Keswick of the way of the Holy Ghost answering prayer to remove obstacles. When we proposed to meet in the tent for prayer it was obvious, within five minutes, that there was some disturbing element, of the nature of which we scarcely knew.

"Remarks were made, not charitable remarks, but accusative in their character, and violent, and sounded a little like the tone of anarchy, and they caused some distress and some dissatisfaction among those who were jealous that there should be harmony, and love, and concord. But there were a few godly men who gave themselves to prayer that God would graciously over-rule what we felt was a Satanic disturbance. After a while, being present myself, I felt a deep impulse that the Spirit would have me speak to that congregation. I ascended the platform, and said to them, when we were all feeling a desire to have an all-night meeting: 'There are a great many people in this vicinity, lodging in these houses. Some are partially invalided and weak in their nervous system, some aged; they all need sleep, and any boisterous exhibitions on our part will disturb them. If you are content to stay here till three o'clock in the morning, I will stay with you; only, let us not look on our own things, but on the things of others. If you will accord to that will you raise your hands?' Every hand went up, and from that time forward the devil was defeated and the Holy Ghost reigned in that assembly, and the obvious conditions of the *before* and *after* were as absolutely plain to my mind as the difference between midnight and dawn.



"What took place in that assembly?" he continued. "It was one of the most remarkable meetings I have ever seen in Keswick. In the first place, there were 368 written requests for prayer sent up for a definite purpose to the platform, and, I think, almost every one of those papers had from two to three requests upon it, so that we had upwards of a thousand requests for prayer, occupying one-and-a-half hours of time. Confessions of sin followed—all sorts, from all quarters, the tent meanwhile filling up respectably, with about seven or eight hundred people. Then came a marvellous experience, such as I have never seen before. I suggested that those who were ready, without any dependence upon feeling, to take God as a matter of faith, simply depending upon His promise, and standing upon His promise, should rise. One rose, and another, and yet another, till, to our amazement in the course of ten minutes, every man and woman in the tent was on his or her feet to take Almighty God as a God of fidelity, and claim His promise simply on the ground of faith.

"The hush of God came on all the assembly. In the midst of the assembly a man had come in who was in a state of drink. He found Christ in the meeting, went out of the meeting, brought in his wife with a nursing babe and her sister. They laboured with those two women to bring them to the knowledge of Christ. One man that was prayed for is a minister of a church in England, and when the statement was read he got up and said: 'You may change to praise, for I am here and have got blessing!' And so, when it came to be twenty-five minutes to three, it was suggested that then it would be a good time to acknowledge in praise what God had done for us; and just as we had had a marvellous witness of people rising to claim the power of God by faith, we had now another exhibition of people rising to testify in praise to God for blessing then and there received.

"Among others, a man who believed that he had committed the 'unpardonable' sin rose and told how his great burden had been rolled away on God. Thus, at that meeting we had a striking exhibition of how when everything is brought into accord with the Spirit, and all into harmony with each other in a Christian assembly, God at once begins marvellously to work for His own glory."

Nor were these the only memorable incidents in this remarkable Convention. At the closing meeting in Skiddaw Street Tent on Friday night, the Rev. E. W. Moore delivered a searching address on "The Ordeal by Fire," and instead of following with the message he had prepared, Dr. Pierson gave his testimony instead, "his heart and voice," as Mr. Head has said, "made tender by the spiritual enduement of the moment and the Pentecostal power which pervaded that gathering."

Others followed him in testimony, "evidencing that spirit of brokenness of heart and contrition of spirit which lead to humble confessions of sin to God, and, in many cases, of harboured wrong to fellow man."

Writing on board the steamship which took him to America a day or two after the Convention closed, and with all the impressions of that wonderful night of confession still fresh upon him, Dr. Pierson vividly described the never-to-be-forgotten events and scenes. "While Rev. E. W. Moore," he said, "was giving his address, from I Cor. iii. 11-15, on the Ordeal of Fire—dwelling with searching power on the necessity, not only of building on the right foundation, but with *purified materials*; and picturing the careless builder, fleeing from his burning house, losing all work and reward, and himself saved only as one who has barely escaped the flame—I felt God's refining fire going through me, revealing the wood, hay, and stubble, of work and motive. When I rose to speak, so humbling and overwhelming was this conviction, that, when called upon to 'lead in prayer and address' the meeting, it was quite involuntary that I should first of all make my confession. I did so, and asked others, who, like me, had felt conscious of God's direct dealing, to stand with me before God, as those who then and there besought Him to refine us now, that worthless material might not accumulate against the Coming Day of Fire. The invitation was so responded to that the *whole tent full of people* rose as one man! And while prayer was being offered, many voices joined in audible Amens. Not one word of the proposed address, carefully prepared for this closing meeting, was ever delivered. Even the subject was never indicated. It had been my intention to speak on 'Praying for the Holy Ghost.' As Prebendary Webb-Peploe well says, 'God had no need for the address, as He proposed giving an illustration of the theme instead.'

"The prayer was no sooner concluded than a spirit of penitent confession was already so manifest that it could not be restrained, and broke out in every quarter; and I stood there on my feet for about two hours and a-half witnessing the Holy Spirit's wondrous working. Scarcely any human guidance was needed. Christ was in the chair. A soldier confessed to desertion and theft, and left the tent to write out his confession; and some of us, later on, saw the letters he had written. A commander in the Navy grandly declared his purpose to make his ship a floating Bethel. Not less than fifty clergymen, evangelists, and leaders in Christian work, confessed to sin of avarice, ambition, appetite, lust of applause, neglect of the Word, of prayer, of souls; hundreds of other individual confessions of various sins of omission and commission followed, sometimes a half-dozen or more being on their feet at once."

Dr. Pierson's last visit to Keswick was two years ago—in 1909. On that occasion his friends were grieved to see the change that had come over him; he was much more feeble, and, while his spirit was as keen and enthusiastic as ever, it was obvious that his physical strength did not correspond with his mental alertness. He himself confessed that he was there against the advice of his doctor. One feared to give expression to the feeling that never again would the voice of the great preacher thrill the Convention multitudes, and yet all who heard him seemed to intuitively realise that he was delivering his valedictory addresses, and that the messages which he was then proclaiming were the last that would fall from his lips amid the beloved surroundings that knew him so well.

And this feeling seemed to be shared by Dr. Pierson himself. There was something infinitely pathetic in the personal remarks which he made at the close of his first address on "Foundation Truths in Holy Living"—something that seemed to indicate that the long fellowship was about to be broken, and that they must not part with the least shadow of misunderstanding between them. Speaking with manifest emotion, he said that before coming to the meeting that morning, that he might get right with God, he had made confession to God of a sin against Him which he would not mention to his audience, as it was quite sufficient that he had mentioned it with deep penitence to Him. But it had occurred to him that he had been guilty of a sin to his brethren. "In my zeal," he said, "to be true and genuine and sincere I have long neglected the cultivation of winning and attractive manners, and, no doubt, have been a stumbling-block to many souls; and I make that confession here this morning. We are told to speak the truth in love. Some of us maybe so zealous for the truth that we forget the love, or so zealous for the love that we forget the truth; and I want to say this morning that if anything in me has been repellent through undue frankness or brusqueness, I repent of it before God, and I acknowledge it with sorrow to you."

No one who listened to these words is ever likely to forget the effect which they produced, and when a minute later Dr. Pierson, having made his own confession, asked any to stand up if the Lord had shown them something in their life that must be rectified, Godward or manward, and to take an instant, visible, decisive step in the recognition of this fact, a large number rose to their feet and were commended to God in prayer by Mr. Hopkins.

Looking back upon this Convention one recalls with a subdued interest some of its happenings. The whole atmosphere of the place seemed suffused with the spirit of love in a degree even more pronounced than usual. Dr. Pierson's own words, too, had in them almost a note of

farewell; it seemed as if the thought of death were back of every word that he uttered, and he spoke with that intense earnestness which suggested the last word of a dying man to dying men. As a matter of fact, the very last address that he delivered had in it a reference to death. He was dealing, on the Friday, with the last of his "Foundation Truths in Holy Living," "Love" being the particular theme specially emphasised in his discourse. In burning phrase, and with a wooing tone that seemed irresistible in its power, he pleaded with his hearers for a complete surrender to the will of God. "If God wants you to go, say, to China," he remarked, "China is the nearest place on earth to Heaven for you. To do the will of God is the greatest possible delight, and wherever He sends you He will go with you, and whatever He gives you to do, He will give you His own Divine strength with which to do it, and in the exile and loneliness you will have the sweetest experience of God's presence that you ever had."

"Compensations do not wait for hereafter, blessed be God, they come even here," he went on to add. "I never take a step for God that I do not get my recompense even here, and the greater the self-denial involved, the greater the Divine compensation, even in this life. I have not any sympathy with those who get up in prayer meetings and talk about their crosses. I think we ought to be talking about our crowns, and not producing the impression upon an unbelieving and impenitent world, that the Christian life is a life of wailing, a yoke intolerable and chafing. His yoke is easy and His burden is light. It is the obedience of love that makes it so easy."

Then he spoke of the fear of death. "A great many people," he said, "all their lifetime are subject to bondage, through fear of death, and whenever disease comes and knocks at the door they are in terror. I am not one of those who look on death as a wonderful blessing. Death is my enemy. I understand that. Death is the penalty of sin. I understand that. But, if the Lord tarries, and I fall before death, God can transform the avenging demon into an introducing angel, and He knows how to bring me to His presence even through the experience of dying. What are you afraid of? Won't God be with you in the valley of the shadow of death, and in death itself? You shall fear no evil when your life is full-grown; all these fears and fancies cannot abide where perfect love abides."

These were among the last words he ever spoke from the Convention platform. As he passed with a friend from the tent to the house in which he was residing, his mind was full of the spirit of love in which the Convention had been bathed. "I have never seen anything like it in any place," he remarked. "The kindness of the Trustees is more than I can express. Here am I a Nonconformist, and most of the others clergy

of the Established Church of England. Everything has been done not only for my comfort and happiness, but they have done all they could to put me in the forefront and give me every honour. I feel very grateful to them all."

And so passed his last Convention, from which he took his departure with the strains of "God be with you till we meet again" ringing in his ears—the parting prayer of friends who had sat at his feet to be taught in spiritual things, who loved him with a deep and tender love, and who intuitively felt that the parting was to be until they met "at Jesus' feet." Never again at Keswick will be heard that voice which so often spoke in the Master's name and with Divine power behind it. The empty place will not easily be filled, but while God carries off His workmen He continues His work. Keswick's message to the Church and the individual is as much needed to-day, and though some of the voices which have faithfully declared it in times gone by are now joining in the everlasting chorus around the Throne, others are called to proclaim the truths and to stand in the front of the movement.

The memory of what Dr. Pierson was enabled to do at Keswick and elsewhere will not readily pass, and many will thank God, here and through all eternity, for his faithful and effective ministry.

## **Chapter 5—The Art of Illustration**

MR. MOODY used to say that a sermon without illustrations resembled a house without windows, and that our American brethren in the ministry are in full agreement with this dictum, is obvious from the manner in which they draw upon incidents in history and in their own experience to emphasise and illuminate the leading points in their sermons.

Dr. Pierson was no exception to the rule. None knew better than he how to take hold of some historical fact, and with striking effect harness it to his argument. There is a feeling in some quarters that the free use of illustrations is a sign of intellectual weakness, and that it is but a poor substitute for well-reasoned argument. That may be true in some degree of that type of sermon which is only a series of stories loosely strung together without any real connecting link, but the illustration of a sermon or an address was with Dr. Pierson an art acquired only after long and patient practice. No one could employ illustrations as Dr. Pierson did unless he had read widely and studied deeply. It was not from one realm of knowledge only that he drew those striking incidents that glittered in his address like gems of rare and wondrous beauty; his studies carried him into many fields, and

just as the busy bee gathers honey from this flower and from that, as it flits about in the summer sunlight, so did he with unceasing industry draw into his rich storehouse the food that was to pass out again illumined by the alchemy of his own genius.

Coming much in contact with all classes of people, Dr. Pierson had many experiences, and he frequently referred to them in his public deliverances, but only, of course, in so far as they illustrated some point and were likely to be of help to others. Such an incident as the following was often used to add impressiveness to the appeal of Scripture:—

"I knew a young man who was an infidel. He told me in conversation that he did not sympathise with my belief in God, he did not even believe in a future state. He said, 'When I die I am going to dust, and that will be the end of me.' He had a Christian mother, who had long prayed for him. One day he came home from his office about noon and said, 'Mother, I feel fatigued; I think I will lie down till supper is spread;' so he laid down and fell asleep. At one o'clock she spoke to him and said, 'We are ready to sit down at the table,' but she could not wake him. She shook him violently, but she could not rouse him. He was in a comatose state, and there was no perceptible pulse, and he sank lower and lower until his breathing also was scarcely perceptible. They sent at once for a physician, who came in, examined his pulse, listened to his heart, made a thorough examination, but said, 'I can do nothing for him; you will just be compelled to leave him as he is; he may come out of it, and he may not.' He went away. About five o'clock in the afternoon, as they were sitting round him, simply watching the last rays of flickering life, he opened his eyes, he looked round, he saw his mother, he stretched out his hand and took her hand; and he said, 'Mother, what you taught me is all true; there is a future life. I have been treading along the verge of another world, and been looking over into that other world; mother, it is all true.' He shut his eyes and died. God allowed him to come back from the other world just long enough to assure that mother who had trained him in the true faith, that he saw at the last his error and abandoned his infidelity, and then he passed away."

In pressing home the invitation of the Gospel, Dr. Pierson brought into play all his vivid, passionate power of appeal. Like Mr. Spurgeon, when speaking to an audience in which unconverted persons formed a large proportion, he was always afraid that some one might go away without fully comprehending the import of the message which he was delivering, without understanding that the salvation offered was without money and without price, and that it could be obtained by simple faith. He felt that it was a glorious Gospel he had to preach, and

lest its beauty should in any way be obscured he laboured with all his might to make the picture irresistible in its attractiveness, and to show Christ to others as He was to himself—the fairest among ten thousand and the altogether lovely. To support and emphasise his presentation of the Divine message, he selected his illustrations with scrupulous care, for while he knew that a great truth can be assisted in its mission by a timely and appropriate anecdote, he was also aware of the fact that its purpose may be hindered and defeated by a story without either point or application. Some of his finest illustrations are to be found in his Gospel utterances. The love of Jesus Christ was to him such a wonderful theme that he felt it demanded the very best of his gifts, and he laboured incessantly to make the Saviour so winsome that none could withstand the appeal of His love.

"There is something about the love of Jesus Christ that forbids not only description, but imitation," Dr. Pierson has said. "We can only now and then reflect a single beam from this Sun of Righteousness when we catch the inspiration of its unselfishness. We have been accustomed to say that a mother's love can never be counterfeited, but how much more the Saviour's love!" And to illustrate the wonderful love of Jesus Christ he would relate this story:—"I remember during the late American War there was a young soldier that was wounded very seriously, and very nigh fatally. He was borne to the hospital, and rapidly became delirious; but before that he had given the attending surgeon the name and address of his parents. The surgeon, fearing that the worst was near at hand, sent a telegraphic message to his mother, who lived not a great way off. She took the next train and came immediately down to where her son lay in this delirious state. The surgeon met her at the door of the hospital, and he said, 'Madam, you must not go in. Your son is hanging between life and death; the least excitement, even the excitement of meeting you, might turn the scale and prove fatal. You must not go in;' and there that mother stood in the vestibule of the hospital and looked through the door at her son lying on the cot, and for two or three hours of mortal agony, such as a mother only could experience, she yearned to go and sit by his bedside. Finally, she could no longer endure it, and she beckoned to the surgeon, and said, 'Doctor, just let me go and take that nurse's place. I won't say a word to him; I won't let him know that I am his mother; I will not even call him by name or put a kiss upon his brow, but I must go and sit by him; I shall die if I stay here.' 'Well,' said the doctor, 'Madam, you may go if you will solemnly promise me that you will not let him know who you are.' She promised. She went in and took the nurse's place. The poor boy was lying with his face towards the wall; by-and-by, in the fever of delirium, he turned round for a moment and groaned; and then as he turned back again towards the

wall, she reached out her hand and laid it on the fevered brow. 'Why,' he said, 'nurse, that is *just like my mother's hand*.' If it is impossible to counterfeit a mother's love, who shall counterfeit a Saviour's! Everything about it, all the tenderness of His ministry,—the precious words He spoke to such women as the woman of Samaria at the well, to the woman who was a sinner, in the house of Simon the leper, when she washed His feet with her tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head,—all the marvellous majesty and mercy of that ministry defy competition, defy counterfeiting, almost defy imitation. And when Jesus speaks it is the Father's voice, it is the voice of God; when He touches us, it is the touch of God."

Here we have the art of illustration at its highest point. It is an axiom with preachers and evangelists that nothing so appeals to any gathering, particularly to an audience of men, so forcibly as an allusion to mothers and their love, for no matter how much the heart may be steeled against elevating influences it seldom resists the memory of mother and home; at the whisper of the sacred name of mother the door swings open, and all further resistance is for ever conquered.

Dr. Pierson knew this, and in the incident just quoted, as well as in many others like it, he applied a dynamic that shattered the walls of opposition and left the way clear for the comforting and the healing balm of the Gospel.

In the presentation of Christ's offer of mercy he was equally effective. The very simplicity of the way of salvation, paradoxical as it may seem, is to many a stumbling block, for they cannot realise that the Divine gift is to be obtained on such easy terms; they think that they must do something to merit it, and thus they are led into all manner of vain attempts to win the favour of Christ in order to win His acceptance. Dr. Pierson was wont to say that "if you can put forth your hand to receive a gift, you are able to put forth your will and receive the gift of God, even Jesus Christ, as your Saviour." And with some such illustration as the following he would emphasise the simplicity of the transaction between God and man: "I heard an old lady who was starting on a railway journey from an American station, out of which many trains move, although in different directions. Not having travelled much on the rail cars, she got confused. The old lady I speak of was going up to Bay City, Michigan, and she was afraid that she was, perhaps, on the wrong train. She reached over, and showed her ticket to somebody in the seat immediately in front of her, and said, 'I want to go to Bay City. Is this the right train?' 'Yes, madam.' Still, she was not quite at ease, for she thought that perhaps this fellow-passenger might have got into the wrong train too; so she stepped



across the aisle of the car, and showed her ticket to another person, and was again told, 'Yes, madam, this is the right train.' But still the old lady was a little uncertain. In a few moments in came the guard; and she saw on his cap the conductor's ribbon, and she beckoned to him, and said, 'I want to go to Bay City; is this the right train?' 'Yes, madam, this is the right train.' And now she settled back in her seat, and was asleep before the train moved.

"That illustrates the simplicity of taking God at his word. She did nothing but just receive the testimony of that conductor. That is all; but that is faith. The Lord Jesus Christ says to you, 'I love you; I died for you. Do you believe? Will you receive the salvation that I bought for you with My own blood?' You need do no work; not even so much as to get up and turn round. You need not go and ask your fellow-man whether he has believed, and received, and been saved. All that you need to do is with all your heart to say, 'Dear Lord, I do take this salvation that Thou hast bought for me, and brought to me.' Simple, is it not? Yes, very simple: yet such receiving it is the soul of faith."

Nothing could exceed the simplicity of this method of explaining God's offer of salvation, and put so clearly it could not fail to reach hearts that were searching for the gift of gifts. In one of his last addresses at Keswick, Dr. Pierson admirably illustrated the manner of appropriating God's great gift by a reference to Baron Uxhill, of Russia, who, a little while before, had been travelling over the United States, gathering money to erect little chapels on his estate for his retainers. Baron Uxhill has put on record the testimony that when he was an infidel there came some commonplace, uneducated evangelists upon a neighbouring farm, and they wrought such wonderful results among the workmen that, although he cared nothing for Christ or the Christian faith, he said: "Come on my estate. Anything that will make drunken men sober, and indolent men industrious, and immoral men moral, and dishonest men honest, I want to have on my, estate." They came, and a wonderful transformation took place, so that that infidel, that agnostic actually built a little chapel for them to speak to the retainers on his estate. They asked him if he would not come and open the chapel, and he said: "I do not take any stock of what you are saying and doing, but still I will come." He went; they gave him a Bible, and asked him if he would not read it. He took it home with him, and began to read it, just to see what it contained. By-and-by he came to I Pet. ii. 24: "He bare our sins in His own body on the tree." He dropped on his knees, and lifted his heart to God, and said: "And *mine* also;" and those three little words brought the light of God into his soul.

Ever eager also to emphasise God's dealings in love and mercy with His children, Dr. Pierson employed many striking illustrations to

illumine and beautify the constant care which our Father exercises on behalf of His own. For example:—"Moses, in Deuteronomy, compares the Lord's dealings with His people to the eagle stirring up her nest; fluttering over her young; spreading abroad her wings; taking and bearing them on her wings (Deut. xxxii. ii). How beautiful that figure is! The eagle builds her eyrie far up on the rocky heights, and when the wings of her young are beginning to grow, so that the facilities for flying are supplied them, as they are apt to be too self-indulgent and over-fond of the soft lining of a warm resting place, the mother eagle plants a thorn in the side of the nest, so that, as the little ones nestle down against the cushion of ease, they are pricked by the thorn, and so get up and begin to move around. And then, if necessary, she actually crowds them out of the nest, pushes them along towards the edge of the cliff, and sometimes even off the edge; so that, as they begin to fall, they are compelled to use their wings, fluttering and trying to sustain themselves in the air. When they tumble over and over, in unsuccessful efforts, the mother eagle, watching them, sweeps down beneath them, and spreads abroad her great wings that measure sometimes twelve feet from tip to tip, and as the little fledgling is falling to apparent destruction, she receives it upon her maternal pinions, and bears it back again to the eyrie. Does not the Lord sometimes allow His children to *fall*, because He would teach them how to *fly*? But the Lord keeps watch over His little fledgling, and, as His disciple tumbles over and over in helpless approach to destruction, He sweeps down beneath, spreads abroad His great wings, and receives the penitent believer, and bears him back again to the height of conscious fellowship with. God."

As has already been said, Dr. Pierson was an ardent soul-winner, everything else in life being subordinated to the one great passion of his life—the doing of God's will and the bringing of men and women to the Saviour's feet. His was, indeed, a beautiful example of the surrendered life. He did not, as some men are inclined to do, put himself upon an eminence, and from his self-chosen elevation, issue his instructions to those in the ranks. He asked none to tread a path along which his own feet had never travelled. His command was not, "Go"; it was an invitation—"Come." Impressed with what one man can accomplish under the impulse of a mighty passion for souls, he was always pleading with Christians to give God the reins of their life in order that He might use them as He wished, for he knew that the holding back of anything from God stems the flow of the blessing and restricts the area of usefulness.

As an illustration of how God can use and bless the life consecrated to His service, he frequently told the following:—"Years ago, the region

about London Docks contained as large a heathen population as any district in Africa. Back of the huge warehouses were 'innumerable courts and alleys, filled with fog and dirt, and every horror of sight, sound and smell—a rendezvous for the lowest types of humanity.' The wealthy and influential class in this settlement were the rum-sellers and keepers of gambling-hells. Children were born, and grew to middle age on these precincts, who never heard the name of Christ, except in an oath. Thirty thousand souls were included in one parish here; but the clergyman never ventured out of the church to teach.

A young man, named Charles Lowder, belonging to an old English family, happened to pass through the district just after leaving Oxford. His classmates were going into politics, or the army, full of ambition and hope to make a name in the world; but Lowder heard 'a cry of mingled agony, suffering, laughter, and blasphemy coming from these depths that rang in his ears, go where he would.' He resolved to give up all other work in the world to help these people. He took a house in one of the lowest slums, and lived in it. 'It is only one of themselves that they will hear; not patronising visitors.' He preached every day in the streets, and for months was pelted with brick-bats, shot at, and driven back with curses. He had, unfortunately, no eloquence with which to reach them; he was a slow, stammering speaker, but bold, patient, and in earnest. Year after year he lived among them. Even the worst ruffian learned to respect the tall, thin curate, whom he saw stopping the worst street fights, facing mobs, or nursing the victims of Asiatic cholera.

"Mr. Lowder lived in London Docks for twenty-three years. Night schools and industrial schools were opened, and refuges for drunkards, discharged prisoners, and fallen women. A large church was built, and several mission chapels. His chief assistants were the men and women whom he had rescued from 'the paths that abut on hell.' A visitor to the church said, 'The congregation differs from others in that they are all in such deadly earnest.'

"Mr. Lowder broke down under his work, and rapidly grew into an old careworn man. He died in a village in the Tyrol, whither he had gone for a month's rest. He was brought back to the Docks, where he had worked so long. Across the bridge, where he had once been chased by a mob bent on his murder, his body was reverently carried, while the police were obliged to keep back the crowd of sobbing people, who pressed forward to get a glimpse of 'Father Lowder,' as they called him, 'No such a funeral,' said a London paper, 'has ever been seen in England.' The whole population of East London, turned out, stopping work for that day. The special trains run to Chislehurst were filled, and thousands followed on foot, miserable men and women whom he had

lifted up from barbarism to life and hope."

Impressive as they are to read, one can easily understand how much more powerful such illustrations as those quoted were when backed by the personality of the living preacher, and when every word was uttered with the stirring appeal of that voice which for fifty years rang with the grandest message ever given to man to declare. Dr. Pierson chose his illustrations as a surgeon selects the instruments necessary for an operation; every arrow in his quiver had its own special work to do, and that they reached their appointed mark was proved again and again.

For every gift there is ample scope in the service of the King, and when it is laid upon the altar the Lord accepts and blesses it.

## **Chapter 6—Characteristics of a Great Life**

"A HUMAN life, filled with the presence and power of God, is one of God's choicest gifts to His Church and to the world."

So wrote Dr. Pierson, as the introductory words to one of his biographies, and we may take his words and say that his own life, filled as it was with the presence and power of God, was indeed a choice gift to the Church and to the world. Endowed with natural abilities far above the ordinary, he consecrated them all to the service of God; laying them upon the altar, he gladly yielded them to his Divine Master, and was ever willing to spend and be spent in the cause to which his life was devoted. He considered it a rare honour to be used in the holy ministry. Others might talk of what they had sacrificed in the way of worldly possessions and positions in order to serve God in His Church, but the word "sacrifice" in such a relation as that had no place in his vocabulary; when he thought of the sufferings of his Lord he considered that none could ever do too much in the service of a Master who had given His life to bring rebel man to Himself.

Few men have been more earnest than Dr. Pierson in proclaiming the Good News of salvation. It was an earnestness that never seemed to be, relaxed, an earnestness that sometimes developed into a severity of manner and speech, and which, especially amongst those who did not know him personally, produced the impression that his nature was harsh and forbidding. "No doubt," says the Rev. J. B. Figgis, "his intellectual powers, his giant grasp of truth, his energy of expression, would have made him remarkable in any period of the Church's history; but the mellowing and soul-subduing power of sanctification, for which man has no credit, brought in traits of character of another

and gentler order, and without these the other faculties must have been somewhat rigid, if not stern. It was very touching to hear him speak on a certain occasion of his consciousness of fault, and the desire for grace to amend it, but without the truth for which our Cumberland Convention stands, intellectual eminence might easily have been linked with intellectual arrogance. Under the teaching of the Tent, the strong man bowed himself, and we have found him many times manifesting the simplicity and humility of a little child.

"His nature was exceedingly sensitive," Mr. Figgis adds. "Before a service one dared not speak to him unless he spoke to you, and after a service, nine times out of ten, one was awed into silence, and so was he. This 'one thing' he did, and everything was sacrificed to the one thing. I shall never forget how men of the strongest nature I ever knew were broken down under his appeals, and sat in the vestry after the service with the tears streaming down their cheeks."

There were depths in Dr. Pierson's nature not understood by the ordinary individual. "Those who knew him only by his public ministry and by his writings saw but one side of his character," writes the Rev. J. Stuart Holden, "but to those of us who were privileged to enter into the inner life of his heart and home there were revealed in that intercourse virtues and characteristics which set him far above ordinary men. To know him thus was to love him indeed, and rarely have I known one who like him opened and responded so readily to affection. Often austere and somewhat forbidding in manner when engaged in the high service of speaking and preaching, he was, however, in his personal friendships tender, sympathetic, and affectionate to an extraordinary degree. During many long journeys which I have taken in company with him by land and sea, and in the sharing of many common interests, both public and private, I have learned to know and love him as one in whom not only the gifts of the Spirit were conspicuous, but the graces also of the same Spirit were abundant."

To this may be added the testimony of Sir Robert Anderson, K.C.B., who writes to me:—"I have seldom known a more gracious man. An incident which lives in my memory will serve to exemplify this trait in his character. With profit and delight I attended the course of lectures he gave at Exeter Hall half-a-dozen years ago. Immediately at the close of his first lecture he turned to give me a hearty greeting. I told him how much his ministry helped me; and in response to a deprecatory remark, I repeated my words still more strongly. 'It was a rich pot of ointment you gave me to-night,' said I, 'and there was only one little fly in it.' 'And that was——?' he asked. 'The way you named the Lord again and again,' I replied. 'Why do you not speak of Him as His disciples always did, and not like the vagabond Jews in Acts?' 'My

bad training,' said he; 'I learned the habit in a theological college; keep reminding me of it.'

"The longer I thought over this incident, the more I felt rebuked by the grace with which he accepted my rebuke. We next met that night week at his second lecture; and the moment he pronounced the Benediction he turned again to greet me, and his first word was, as he grasped my hand, '*Wasn't I better to-night?*' Who could help loving such a man! Life is lonelier, and the world is emptier, now that he is gone."

While capable in private life of much light-hearted merriment, always enjoying fun with the relish of a school boy, it was only on rare occasions that he permitted himself to indulge in anything approaching humour when addressing an audience in public. There are many, I know, who assert that humour is just as much a gift of God as the other graces attributed to that source, and that it may quite legitimately be employed in His service. I am not prepared to dispute the point; I simply record the fact that Dr. Pierson was a man of another mould, that he purposely and determinedly set his face against everything suggestive of levity in the pulpit or on the platform, that he discouraged laughter in a sacred service, and that even applause was never welcome to him.

On one occasion, I am told by one who was present, he addressed, on a Sunday morning, the boys of the Stockwell Orphanage, giving them a lesson in natural history. He pointed out first the lion, ready at once to devour; then the wolf, waiting his chance; then the fox, crafty, not to be trusted; the eagle ready to swoop down and devour the lamb after carrying it away. Then, after asking the boys whether they ever entertained such a feeling, he put the blunt question: "Do you ever feel that you have a whole *menagerie* inside you?" Naturally, a titter of laughter went round the youthful audience, not altogether to the speaker's liking, for he at once remarked that in all the years he had been trying to serve God he always avoided anything like laughter in His sacred house. What he always felt was this: that one could not be too careful in sowing the word, and that if people were tempted to laugh, the devil's birds would swoop down and carry away the sacred seed.

A man's humility is often the standard of his greatness, and it was certainly so in Dr. Pierson's case. He was grateful beyond measure when he could be of help to any one, but such service was never made the ground of boasting, for he realised, as all right-minded men must realise, that being nothing in himself he could only be made a blessing to others through God. He deprecated praise for the same reason, though always in a pleasant spirit. When in Wales, some years ago, a

minister who had read many of his books and come under the spell of his spiritual influence and charming style journeyed some miles to hear him preach, and upon telling Dr. Pierson this at a subsequent interview, he good-humouredly remarked, "I am afraid the hare is not worth the hunt."

As has already been noted, Dr. Pierson was intimately associated with that wonderful man of prayer, George Müller and according to one of the doctor's friends, he had much of the same childlike faith and simplicity of character as the great founder of the Müller orphanages. An incident which comes to the recollection of this friend shows this childlike quality in Dr. Pierson to perfection. "I was," he says, "travelling in his company from New York some years ago. Dr. Pierson was greatly interested in the conversation on the train, with the result that when he dismounted at a station an irate passenger rushed after him, claiming a handbag which Dr. Pierson had taken absent-mindedly! We all chaffed him, but there was more to follow. When the next change of stations occurred Dr. Pierson stood on the platform continuing his conversation; but suddenly a lady darted up to him and snatched her umbrella from him! After these laughable incidents we threatened to report him to Exeter Hall."

This same simplicity was also marked in relation to money. Money in itself had no attraction for him. He told one of his friends that in the pastorate he filled before going to Philadelphia he had an income of about £2,000 a year. One day he remarked to his wife, "These are not healthy surroundings in which to bring up our children," and being convinced of that he resigned his office, accepting another at £500 a year. Another of his friends tells me that Dr. Pierson agreed to spend three weeks or a month with him in Switzerland one summer, and he made arrangements accordingly, but appeals for help in Christian work led the Doctor to shorten his holiday to a week in the Lake District, and further applications reduced this holiday to a day's walking excursion, which was not interrupted. The same friend had a similar experience with Dr. Pierson in the United States, and he mentions these incidents to illustrate the fact that he always sought first the Kingdom of God, that the cause of God was ever pre-eminent, and that he did not hesitate to sacrifice his own enjoyment—and incidentally the enjoyment of his friends—to the Master's service.

Wonderfully susceptible to Divine influences, Dr. Pierson was never happier than when in an atmosphere warm with the Divine presence. At the Llandrindod Convention, in 1903, he was conscious of unusual power, and he then predicted that Wales was on the eve of a spiritual awakening, this being about fifteen months, before the great Revival broke out.

In 1905 he visited several centres of the "fire zone," and a ministerial friend who accompanied him on that occasion says that wherever he went he added fuel to the flame.

Zealous as he was for the honour and the glory of God, and striving as he did to advance the Kingdom of his Lord, he was stirred to wrath by any and every effort to cast doubt on the Deity of Christ. Nothing could equal his scathing handling of those who belittled His Saviour. To see him stand upon a platform and to hear him deal with the modern heresies that seek to strip Christ of His Deity was to have a vision of the ancient days when the prophets of God stood up to declare the Divine message. I have seen him when it seemed as if for a moment or two he was without words to express the sorrow and anger that filled his heart. But presently the words would come—come in such a torrent of righteous invective as to hush one into a solemn awe, for if ever he spoke in words of living fire it was when the trend of the time compelled him to champion the truths that were under attack and upon which the whole structure of Christianity is built.

In so happened that early in 1907, just when the "New Theology" was making its vain bid for public favour, Dr. Pierson was due to deliver at Exeter Hall—for many years the leading place for religious gatherings in London, but now no longer in existence—another of those series of Bible lectures which never failed to draw large and appreciative audiences. Confident that some reference would be made to the question of the moment, a gathering that completely filled the historic building assembled in eager expectancy. Nor were they disappointed. "Men with their watering pots may try to put out the stars, but the stars shine on in celestial derision," said Dr. Pierson, in one of his opening sentences, as he proceeded to show the wonderful unity of the Bible, and to combat the theories of those who would tear from the Word of God its Divine character.

"I tell you," he declared, speaking with eloquent and stirring passion, "it is a very solemn thing to be living in these times when the Church Missionary Society in India sends a protest and appeal to the whole Christian world to say that this Higher Criticism is undermining the faith of the converts in India, and undermining the power of the churches in India, and begging that this demolition of Christian doctrine may cease—when one of your own greatest thinkers tells us that we are in a crisis to which there has been no parallel since the second century. I would to God that I had the brain of a Newton, the tongue of a Chrysostom, the heart of a Luther, and the martyr spirit of a Savonarola, I would like to go out and nail my theses to the doors of All Saints' Church and All Sinners' Synagogue, and wait, like Luther,



for any proper refutation to the theses that set forth the fact that this book is a mirror of God and a mirror of man. And before this great Exeter Hall is demolished, or passes into other hands for possible secular uses, I would to God there might be one more Œcumenical Council called in this hall, that from all over the world the scarred veterans of modern conflict might come, as the scarred veterans of the original persecutions came to the Council of Nice in 325, when the Emperor Constantine presided, and when the great doctrine of the Deity of Christ was defined. I would to God we might have one more Œcumenical Conference in this great Exeter Hall, and let us with unanimous voice show the modern Church and the unbelieving world that there are thousands and tens of thousands of believers that still believe in the inspiration of this Book and the Divinity of Christ, and who accept without hesitation the miraculous birth of Christ, the miraculous resurrection of Christ, and the all-sufficiency of His atoning blood. Let us rise to the greatness of the occasion and mightily unite for the imperilled truths of the only faith that has ever brought consolation to man in this life of preparation for the life to come."

A week or two after making this declaration, Dr. Pierson spoke at the two great meetings held in the Cannon Street Hotel to protest against the "New Theology" and the Higher Criticism. There again he rose to the occasion, never for a moment resorting to personalities, but handling the whole question in its effect both upon the Church of Christ and the unconverted world.

Of a peculiarly sensitive nature, Dr. Pierson was most appreciative of any kindness or attention shown to him or his. As an illustration of this trait in his character I may quote the words of a minister who writes me as follows: "Once after ministering for some months at Christ Church, Westminster Bridge Road, he came direct to Chester to preach for us. He and his had been loaded with presents, and evidently touched by the appreciation of his services. He seemed as proud of the gifts as a bride of her wedding present, and was as sensitive to the love and the goodwill behind them. Here is a specimen letter bearing out what is said of the great man's sweet appreciativeness of every little attention: 'My Dear Brother, My daughters have just arrived, and are full of enthusiasm over your most loving and considerate care of them and thoughtfulness for their comfort. All this we appreciate as truly as they. May I only say that if at any time before my return I can do you any service, you have only to say so and command me. My memories of your kind personal attentions to me are now enriched by similar consideration to my bairns, whom I charged to find you out in Chester. —Faithfully Yours, with much regard for the dear wife, Arthur T. Pierson.'"

To Dr. Pierson the home was, indeed, a sanctuary, and there he loved and was loved in return in a manner beautiful to behold. He had the joy of seeing all his children come to the Lord and engage in His work. He held, and held strongly, that to Christian parents is given the privilege of leading their children to the Saviour's feet and he was altogether without sympathy with the modern practice of sending boys and girls from home at an early age. On this subject he spoke with much emphasis at the Mildmay Conference in 1907. Such a practice he denounced as pernicious, vicious, and destructive. "I feel tremendously in earnest about it," he said. "I have seen over and over again young children of fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, and eighteen come home from schools and universities having cut loose from everything that their father and mother believed before them. All this they learned in boarding schools, and in colleges and universities, where oftentimes sceptical teachers are put in charge of the children." And then he added this personal touch to his address: "One of the foremost officers of one of my churches sent his boy to the university in the same year that I sent my daughter—who is now in Japan and has been there for seventeen years as a missionary—to the best Christian school that I knew. This man sent his boy to a university where he knew that one of the professors proclaimed atheism in his classes. His boy came back virtually an atheist, and my daughter came back consecrated to missions."

In his home, as everywhere else, Dr. Pierson put God first and sought to honour Him in all that He did.

That is the memory and the example he has left to us—a memory and an example well worth treasuring and emulating.

Copied by Stephen Ross for WholesomeWords.org from *Dr. Pierson and His Message* by J. Kennedy Maclean. London: Marshall Brothers, [1911].

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