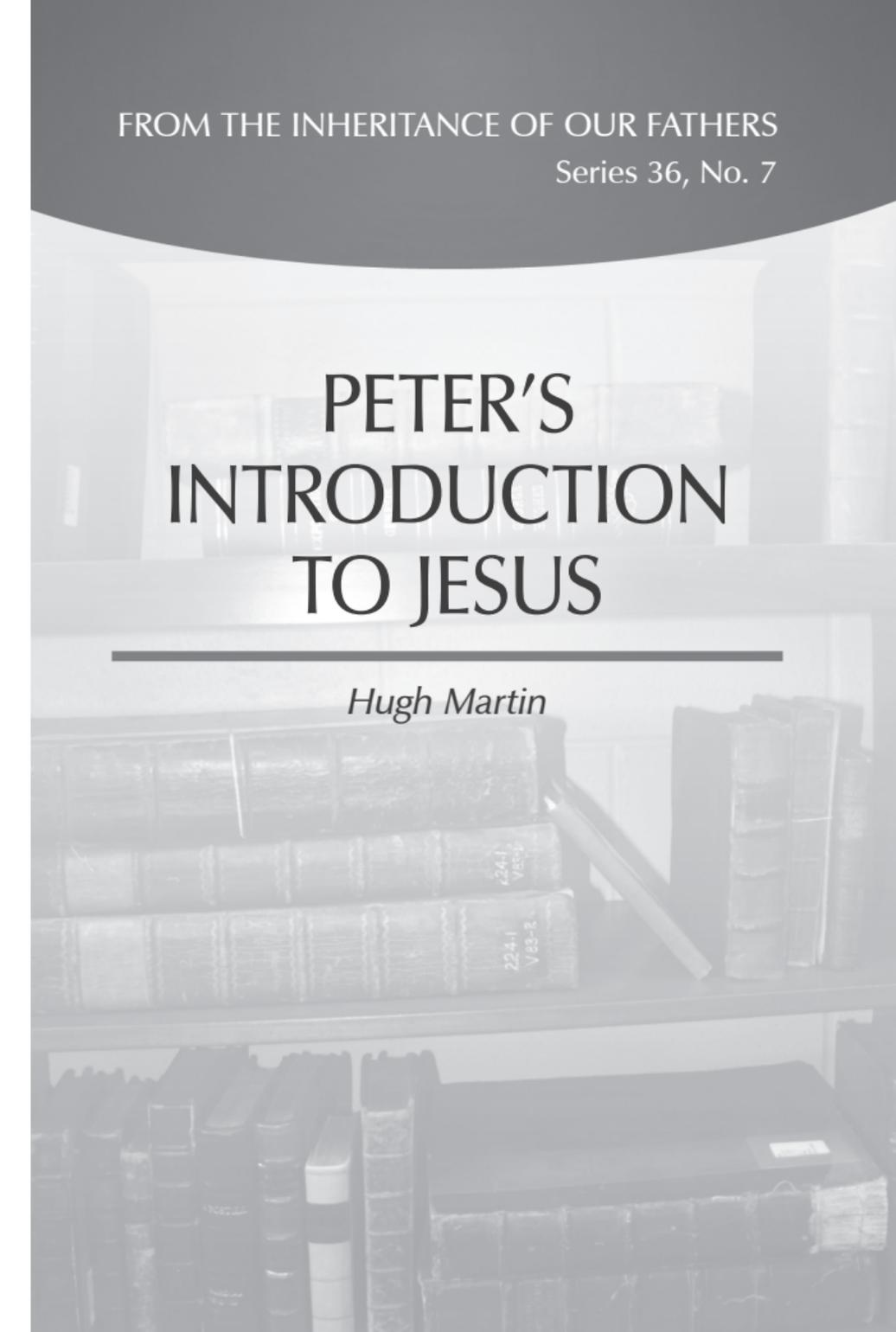


FROM THE INHERITANCE OF OUR FATHERS

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PETER'S INTRODUCTION TO JESUS

Hugh Martin



HUGH MARTIN

Hugh Martin (1822–1885) was a minister in the Free Church of Scotland. Born in Aberdeen, he received his early education at Marischal College, where he excelled in mathematics and graduated with a Master of Arts degree in 1839. After studying theology at King's College, Aberdeen, he sided with the evangelicals in the Disruption of 1843 and became a minister of the Free Church of Scotland in 1843. Serving as pastor at Panbride from 1844 to 1858, he then became the pastor of Greyfriars Free Church in Edinburgh from 1858 until his retirement (due to poor health) in 1865. He is remembered in large part for his commentary on Jonah and his defense of substitutionary atonement in his 1870 work, *The Atonement*. Receiving an honorary doctorate of divinity in 1872, he died at his home near Edinburgh in 1885.

Peter's Introduction to Jesus

One of the two which heard John speak and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first finds his own brother Simon, and says unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jonah: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone. —JOHN 1:40–42

The passage before us introduces us to this most interesting man, being the first in which reference is made to him by the Evangelists. It does not contain much fitted to throw light upon his history or character. Its allusion to Peter is, in fact, singularly brief, almost mysterious—one might even say, in a sense, tantalizing. His brother Andrew “finds him,” and with the announcement, “We have found the Messiah,” he brings him to Jesus; while Jesus, looking steadily upon him, says,

in words which rather meet our curiosity than gratify it, "Thou art Simon the son of Jonah: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone." Such is our first introduction to Peter, and such his first introduction to the Lord. He is received with a short and striking remark—and his connection with the Son of God is begun, never more to end.

Part I

But let us go back a little upon the history, that we may better understand the circumstances which first brought Peter into contact with his Lord. On the day preceding that on which Peter was first introduced to Jesus, John the Baptist had very solemnly directed the attention of two of his followers to Jesus, assigning to him a name or title fitted to awaken their earnest inquiries. "John stood, and two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he said, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him

“speak, and they followed Jesus.” Such is the office of a preacher of Christ, and such his success, when in the discharge of his office he is successful. He points his hearers to Christ—to Christ the Sacrifice—the Lamb, in whom is to be found redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins. He urges the necessity of a personal acquaintance with Christ; a personal dealing with Him. Far from detaining the learner as his own disciple, to call him Master, the true preacher sends him to Christ as the only infallible teacher of the church. He speaks of the privilege which every sinner under the gospel lies, of going directly and personally to Christ for his own satisfaction and for his own soul. He recommends his admonition by representing Christ as the powerful and willing remover of all guilt, as the Lamb of God, shedding infinitely precious paschal-blood as a ransom for sin; so that “if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctified to the purifying of the flesh, much

more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered himself without spot unto God, purge the conscience from dead works to serve the living God.” Thus did John the Baptist faithfully direct his disciples to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world; coveting that very success which would thin the ranks of his own followers and transfer them individually and independently to Jesus. And on this occasion, he succeeded so well as to lose his two disciples, who, when they heard him speak, went and followed Jesus. Yet this was a joy to John, according to his own remark, “He must increase, but I must decrease.”

The opening interview between these two disciples and Jesus is given in terms so graceful and touching that to paraphrase the passage is almost to destroy it. To encourage their first movement towards Himself, “Jesus turned and saw them following, and said to them, what seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi (which is to say, being interpreted, Master),

where dwellest thou? Jesus said unto them, come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day; for it was about the tenth hour” (John 1:38).

Thus to the aching and inquiring heart, Jesus takes an early opportunity of saying, “What seekest thou?” (John 1:38). He would have the nature of the aching void more distinctly known and expressed. He would have the anxious inquiry shaped into more definite form. He would have the soul begin to understand itself, its sin, its need, its helplessness, its half-formed desire for what is good and true. He would have some opening of intercourse between Himself and the soul that is in any measure disposed to follow Him. He will draw out a confession of the newly formed wish—of the dawning tendency towards serious and single-minded search after truth and salvation. He will gently induce the soul to commit itself more deeply by an acknowledgment that its desire is towards Himself.

What true inquirer after Christ can be ignorant of this gentle and gracious bearing of the Savior towards those who seek him? Scarcely had you anxiously begun to set your face towards Zion, before Jesus began to ask, "Whom seekest thou?" Not these very words, of course, any more than by His audible voice, as to these two followers. But by the tender love to your soul which some Christian friend, rejoicing over your search after Christ, exhibited; by the affectionate interest of which you found yourself the object in the heart of such an one; by some singularly suitable and pointed message in the preaching of the gospel; by some graciously perplexing and painful providence, constraining you to feel that if you did not get Christ it would be all over with you now; by the way in which the Spirit and the Bride and the providence of Christ dealt with you; he was taking means of bringing out into clearer meaning and in truer force, the real inquiry, and causing you to know, and above all, causing you to confess

to Himself, what and whom you needed—what and whom you sought.

Oh, contrite, weary, timid soul, revolving many painful things about the guilty, godless past, and about the great and terrible future, “What seekest thou?” (John 1:38). What will answer your fears, calm your heart, cleanse your conscience, pour hope and lively vigor into your future, giving strength to meet its trials, however grievous, its demands, however great? Be not content with vague, and solemn, and indefinite wishfulness. Consider and say what will really meet your want. What do you seek? What means that slow fire that has begun to burn within? That craving sense of need? That thirst for living water? To whom does all this urge you onward? Is it not to Jesus? To him whose blood cleanses from all the sin that is past, whose grace is sufficient for all the solemnity that is to come? Oh, hesitate not to tell the Savior that it is after Him you are inquiring; that no passing interview will content you; that a prolonged abiding

with Him is what you crave, a personal and friendly acquaintance with Him as in His own home or holy habitation, an acknowledged right to wait upon Him, to dwell with Him as in His own dwelling-place. “Rabbi, where dwellest thou?” (John 1:38).

And doubt not but He will entice and allure you by every kind, and gracious, and generous encouragement. He will affectionately provoke you to follow Him. He will invite you to enjoy in experience the full answer of all right inquiries. He will ask you to take nothing for granted on mere distant description but will draw you into personal experimental knowledge. He will bid you “come and see.” He will say, “Prove Me and see. Commit yourself to My guidance without misgiving, and I will give you full satisfaction without money and without price.” Taste and see that the Lord is gracious. Come and see. And you will do well to go and see where He dwells, and to “abide” with Him.

So did these inquirers; and as it was but

two hours to sunset, if they “made as if” they would have quickly left Him, we seem to gather that he “constrained” these two disciples, saying as it were, “Abide with me, for it is towards evening, and the day is far spent;” and they tarried with Him, exactly as two other disciples at a later date “constrained” Him, when He yielded and went in and supped with them; and “it came to pass that he was made known to them in breaking of bread” (Luke 24:28–32).

Doubtless on this earlier occasion also, though in a smaller measure, the hearts of the disciples “burned within them while he talked with them and opened unto them the Scriptures” (Luke 24:29)—as they were able to bear it. The conversation which sanctified that blessed evening is indeed not recorded; and if for a moment we forget the reverence which is due to the Spirit of God, by whose inspiration all Scripture is given, and is therefore absolutely perfect, we are almost tempted to regret that we have not received a

detailed account of the fellowship which they held with Jesus, and which constrained them the next day to exclaim with such decision and conviction, "We have found the Messiah." And no doubt this is, in a sense, a very natural desire. We long to be told how Jesus unbended and opened up His mind in the hours of confidential fellowship, with what converse He entertained them under the shelter of what was for a time His own roof, and under the shield of His own hospitality and hospitable invitation. We conceive that, in the circumstances, the intercourse with Jesus enjoyed by these men must have been peculiarly gratifying and delightful, fitted to make the liveliest impression on their minds, and fitted surely, we think, had it only been recorded, to have made a very lively impression on ours. And with thoughts like these we almost lament the evangelist's brevity and are scarcely reconciled to his having withheld the narrative of what passed between them.

Do you desire to know what passes

between Jesus and His people in the opening hours of that fellowship and friendly intercourse which, begun on earth, is made perfect in the heavens? And do you think the incident before us afforded an opportunity for giving such information which you almost grudge was not embraced? And is this desire to know what passes between Christ and His people when first they meet and repose mutually their confidence in each other—is it a real and earnest desire—no spurious and sentimental curiosity, but matter to you of a truly religious and personal inquiry? Then, if this passage has omitted to describe that evening's fellowship with Jesus, does it not at least point you to the sure and unfailing method of learning for your own soul what such fellowship must be? If you are left without the details of how He treated them, you are invited to personal experience of how He will deal with you. And concerning this very matter—on which we almost grudge that the passage has been silent—of

fully satisfying you, even by your own experience, the exhortation is, “Come and see.” Seek the Lord for yourself. Come and see.

“Rabbi, where dwellest thou?” (John 1:38). “Oh, that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat! I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments. I would know the words which he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me” (Job 23:3–5). “Master, where dwellest thou?” (John 1:38).

“Thus saith the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones” (Isa. 57:15). “Come and see” (John 1:39).

“They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. One of the two was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, we

have found the Messiah, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus” (John 1:39–42).

Andrew brought Simon to Jesus; and his desire to do so, and his success in attempting it, alike resulted from his having been with Jesus himself. He was himself overwhelmed with the grandeur of the discovery he had made. He could speak almost as one having authority, and not as the scribes—as having, at least, the authority that results from thorough conviction, from the full assurance of faith, the unwavering, unquailing assurance of that conviction which is grounded on personal experience. He believed not for John’s saying, “Behold the Lamb of God,” but because he had “heard him himself, and knew that this was indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.” He believed, and therefore he spoke. He spoke under the deep, and fresh, and fascinating impression of having verily found the Lord’s anointed One. It was not excitement. It was powerful impression—the spirit of love, and of power, and of a sound mind.

There was wonder in it, gratitude, and humility. It was the spirit of “What am I, or what is my father’s house, that to me this great secret should be revealed—that the Messiah should have drawn me near to Himself?”

Simon saw that Andrew was moved—deeply moved; yet wisely and well—in calm, strong, satisfying, full assurance for himself; in deep, true love for his brother; longing to share his assurance, his faith, his treasure, his joy, his Friend with him. And Simon was overpowered, and went with him, captive at his will; under the spell of a brother’s love, and zeal, and earnestness, and calm and steady faith.

It is very unlikely that Andrew often took the lead with Simon, or had ever exercised much influence over him until now. We cannot doubt that Peter was the leader of the two. But Andrew has a strange advantage over him today. Somehow he looks bowed down, like one overweighted with wonder; and yet he seems as if he were as greatly lifted up,

excelling himself by far. There is a humility, and yet a dignity, marked upon him that Peter never saw before. There is a force in his word, and a fervor in his tone, and a fire in his eye, that arrest, subdue, and silence in wonder, his bolder and more rugged brother. Peter will go with Andrew, for he is almost convinced that God is with him. He will, at least, as Andrew did, go and see. Thus Andrew “brought him to Jesus.” Himself fresh from the society and fellowship of Jesus, he had the deep desire, and a certain irresistible influence to bring his brother to Jesus too.

Is not this the secret of a true spiritual awakening passing from one soul to another? It is when you have yourself had fellowship with Jesus that you have either the heart or the power to speak of Jesus to another. Were we much with Christ, we would speak of Him, and we would speak in a tone of simplicity, directness, and warmth, and with honorable truthfulness, which nothing save fixed malignity would profess to disbelieve

or despise. But if we have not fellowship with Christ for our own souls—no hidden life secretly sustained by communion with God, and spiritual exercises of the heart on the bread of life and the fullness of Christ—our religious talk when we attempt to speak to our worldly brother, our ungodly acquaintance, will become mere dead, and vapid, and formal cant. The world will despise it, and no wonder; it will have a hollowness in it truly despicable; a hollow, heartless ring about it, as if it were tossed like an empty echo in the cheerless chambers of hypocrisy, or the chill, dull vaults of a whited sepulchre. To such attempts at religious talk, where no sense of Christ's grace and glory is in the heart, marked often by their very ease and excess, the language of James is eminently applicable—“If any man among you seemeth to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, that man's religion is vain” (James 1:26). And the still more awful words of the psalmist speaking in the person of God, “Unto the wicked,

God saith, What hast thou to do to take my covenant into thy lips?" Alas! How many a generous youth, deceived and over-done by such fluent pious-like conversation, has been only confirmed in his dislike of spiritual religion, because of its being pressed on him by those over whose hearts and lives he could see no evidence that it had asserted its mastery or power. And is it not under the sensitive and honorable recoil from this that the true Christian may be found at times tempted to seal up his knowledge of Jesus in his own secret bosom; afraid lest his deeply felt inconsistencies and shortcomings should stamp, if not the brand of hypocrisy, at least the impress of weakness and uselessness, on what he might otherwise be disposed to say in reference to things divine, or his own knowledge and experience of them?

But on this point let these things be observed. The Christian, as he is bound to be ready to give to everyone that asked a reason of the hope that is in him with meekness and

fear, so is he likewise bound to be ready to speak to his brother to induce him to seek the same. He is not bound to speak to him, whether in his own soul he be ready for the duty or no. But he is bound to be ready for it. He is bound to cultivate and cherish that communion with God, which, deepening his own impressions of divine things, will enable him to speak of them with meekness and fear. The fact that he is himself compassed with infirmity, and offends in many things, is, in the meantime, not to be allowed to seal his lips, and oppress him with the bondage-driven dread of being told, “Physician, heal thyself.” But, being beforehand as to that very hint with all who could cast it in his teeth, and plying it far deeper than those who might be disposed to give it can ever know of, he is, notwithstanding the consciousness of many imperfections, to enjoy and exercise a sound liberty of Christian speech, such as cannot be condemned, provided he do it under the shield of this very obvious rule—namely, that

so long as he can, notwithstanding these same imperfections, commend himself and his sincerity in daily prayer to Him who is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things—that same sincerity which he can thus, through the blood of sprinkling, keep beneath the all-searching Eye in peace—he may freely and firmly put forth in the meek and humble effort of impressing some Christian truth or duty on the heart and conscience of his brother. For as to your freedom for this, as for all Christian duty, “if the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” (John 8:36).

Ah! It is our very coldness that needs any such discussion, any such rules on the subject at all. The fresh, free-hearted, full revival of the Lord’s work in the soul dispenses with all such necessity, goes sweetly and straight up to this duty—to this desired work. The overflowing soul, in genuine simplicity of spiritual instinct, too full itself of tender “truth in the inward parts,” to dream of being misinterpreted or misunderstood, testifies

of the Christ that is now found and known. Nor can that testimony have fresh vitality and vigor, save from fresh fellowship with Jesus. The secret of Christian influence is the society of the Christian's Master. "Master, where dwellest thou? Come and see. They went and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him. Andrew findeth his own brother Simon, and he brought him to Jesus" (John 1:38-40).

Here, then, is the first appearance of our noble-hearted apostle, as he comes forward on the field of Scripture history, and the field of glorious Christian usefulness. And what a humble, lovely beginning! We think we see him coming to Jesus. Would you expect the germ of such a future as Peter's was, in this little family picture? He looks like a little child—we would almost say like a blind child, brought forward by the hand of his brother. It is Andrew's eyes that are open; his glance intelligent and keen, his hope strung high; it is he who has been with Jesus. Yet it is this same Peter who is soon to become

unspeakably the more eminent, to eclipse entirely his brother's name and memorial.

But are we sure that we have been accustomed to deal justly with the memory of Andrew? It is true that this single lovely scene in which he is presented to us in the blessed attitude of leading a brother by the hand to the Messiah is the only incident in his life and apostleship which the pen of inspiration has been employed to record. And the holy narrative soon demands our attention many a time to the more dauntless, energetic, generous, and almost lionhearted, the sometimes indiscreet, disciple. And all the while, there is not a word of his brother who brought him to Jesus. We see Peter soon leading the van and teaching his brothers to confess most ardently the Messiah, the Son of the living God. We hear him giving the keynote of faith unquenchable: "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6:68). We hear him longing for tabernacles to enjoy in heavenly rapture his Lord's society and glory,

in transfiguration blissfulness, from a vain and weary world. We see him, in verily the wild romance of faith and love, walking on the stormy ocean to meet his Lord. Through many a trying scene we trace his honest, manly form; we hear his quick and ready answer, occasionally too quick and keen; we see the ardent generous expression graven transparent on his straightforward countenance. In quick succession we find him with terrific energy protesting eternal faithfulness; in wild despair drawing his sword; in the hour of darkness falling prey to Satan and shamefully denying his Lord; in heartstricken grief repenting, retiring, weeping bitterly; in deep-toned humility and gratitude most graciously restored, again a fisher of men; yea, a pastor thrice entrusted to feed the sheep, the lambs. Thoroughly restored and meekly conscious of the truth and honor in his own retrieved heart and conscience, he is seen firmly moving for the appointment of a successor to the traitor. He testifies in company

with John boldly against the priests and rulers. He rejoices in prison. An angel liberates him. By his hand the middle wall of partition is broken down, and the glorious emancipated church of Christ, freed from beggarly elements, bursts forth on the right hand and on the left, transmitting to us of the Gentiles the privileges we are now enjoying. We see him in labors many, in journeyings often, planting churches, ordaining elders, confirming disciples; writing epistles at the mouth of the Holy Ghost; finally glorifying God by that death which Jesus told him of—departing the martyr's death, gaining the martyr's crown. Who can trace the magnificent usefulness, the countless powers and lines of influence, of such a life as this? And when the vision of it grows before our view in its impressive grandeur; when we think of the incalculable influence that this man's life has exerted on the cause and kingdom of Christ; when we are overwhelmed in admiration of what by the grace of God he became, and what

by the grace of God he was honored to do— Simon Peter stands before us as the object of irrepressible admiration, commending our attention and compelling our warmhearted love and esteem.

Yes, but meantime there is another form farther back in the picture that gently solicits remembrance and affection. It is the form, the figure of his almost forgotten brother. For when, in the series and succession of instrumentality, we trace all this splendid usefulness of one apostle, with his stupendous influence on the kingdom of Christ, a single step further, we find it coming forth from the hand of him that laid the hand of affectionate arrest upon Peter and “brought him to Jesus” (John 1:40). Let the memory of Andrew be held in everlasting remembrance. To him the church of God is under everlasting obligation for the brother whom he “brought unto Jesus” (John 1:40)—a magnificent instance of the truth that while the Spirit divides to every member of the body severally as he will, “the

eye cannot say unto the feet, I have no need for you. Nay, much more those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary” (1 Cor. 12:21–22). Here is a heart-stirring encouragement also to the Christian of the humblest ability and the lowliest position, to do, nevertheless, for Christ and His brethren, whatsoever his hand findeth to do! Such a labor of love shall never lose its reward.

Part II

In the present case, the reward began immediately in the gracious and singular reception which Andrew was privileged to see given to his brother. For He who subsequently said, “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37), immediately received the new inquirer, and received him in terms fitted to attach him to His person and His cause forever. “And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jonas: thou shalt be called Cephas; which is, by

interpretation, Peter, or a stone” (John 1:42). A very singular and memorable saying—almost mysterious, as we have already said, and somewhat difficult to understand. Yet the mystery will disappear if we try to place ourselves in the apostle’s position and sympathy, and consider how such a saying would affect him in the circumstances.

Remember, then, that Jesus, in saying this, steadfastly “beholds” him, looks into his very soul, and authoritatively predicts that he shall be called by another name: “Thou shalt be called Cephas, Peter, a stone.” Now, how would this affect the surprised inquirer?

1. In the first place, the proposal and prediction of a change in his name was in itself fitted to arrest his most earnest attention. A Jew familiar with Scripture could not but remember those striking instances in which such an event in the lives of the saints stood connected with some vitally important epoch in their history, some grand change or noble advancement in their spiritual condition and

estate. Could Jesus mean to say that he would yet be dealt with as Abram was when his name was called Abraham, because a father of many nations had the Lord made him? Or as a Jacob, when, being mighty in prayer, his name was called Israel—a prince with God? Or as Gideon, when, by the Lord's word made a mighty man of valor to plead against Baal and the enemies of Israel, he was surnamed Jerubbaal? It would arrest him immediately. It was precisely what would strike, what would seize, an ardent mind like his. "Thou shalt be called by a new name which the mouth of the Lord shall name" (Isa. 62:2).

2. Still, it was a future matter. "Thou shalt be called." Not now; but in due time. "What thou knowest not now, thou shalt know hereafter" (John 13:7). The change in character and spiritual nature which shall warrant and render full of meaning this change of name, has itself not yet transpired. When it has, then "thou shalt be called, a stone." The disciple scarcely understands what he is told. But

the intention of Christ, nonetheless, takes effect at once. Hope is stimulated. A dawning future of spiritual change and benefit begins to engross the enquirer's thoughts. Jesus has whetted his expectation—not gratified it; and this was precisely what he meant to do. This was what was eminently suitable in dealing with such a mind as that of Simon. Indeed, it characterizes in a measure all of Christ's initial dealings with those who come to him. To Nathanael he says—leading him out in hope to a brightening future—“Thou shalt see greater things than these” (John 1:50–51). His effectual dealings with the soul always contain this element. Jesus appears to you as the Lord, the Light, the Guide, the Guardian of your future. He may not give specific information about your own special future; but he unveils to you the future of all dreadful gloom. He makes it safe, whatever it may contain. He teaches you to say, “I will trust, and not be afraid.” Yes, he plants your perfect happiness forward into the future. He leads

out your thoughts and heart to it. He stimulates and quickens expectation. The Christian is always living for something better to come. Thus it was with Simon from the moment that Jesus said, "Thou shalt be called Cephas" (John 1:42). He might little understand what this could mean. But at least he saw that it was something to be not dreaded but desired. It was no threatening; it was a blessing, though he could not comprehend it. Sure he was it could only be a blessing. The look of love with which it was spoken could never be mistaken nor deceive.

3. Consequently, Peter could never shake off the remembrance of this strange, brief, enigmatical, and almost tantalizing remark, which signaled and sealed the beginning of his fellowship with Jesus. It haunted him day and night. There was a point in it and a power which he could never set aside. He went back after this to his nets and his ship on the lake of Galilee; but an arrow, dipped in grace and hope, had struck into his soul, suffusing

there the promise, if not the elements, of a great and blessed change. Another sure token that Christ is dealing with a soul, when His brief word of suitable and striking address takes possession of the man and refuses to be dislodged. Thus, Peter is fairly bound to the Lord's cause and person. Jesus had by one word attached him forever to himself.

And in the brevity and beauty and point and adaptation of this striking utterance, is there not a lesson on the subject which has been already under our notice? Does not this warn us of how we ought to try to deal with one whom we would desire to see gained over to spiritual Christianity and to Christ? It is not so much by an indiscriminate and fluent torrent of religious conversation that you are likely to secure the brother who has yet no personal acquaintance with the truth. In many cases that might only aggravate prejudices and put back the very end which you have in view. But there is such a thing as watching his character, his peculiar

disposition, his special prejudices, his particular stumbling-block, his exact state of mind, and then reflecting, what, in such a state of mind, would have once been suitable to me—likely to arrest, to disarm, subdue, or gain me? What in such a case would have been likely to do good to me when I also was a stranger and a wanderer? And so, having found what will be the word in season, you speak it from the heart, launching it in love, and sending it home with a secret prayer that it may not be forgotten or dislodged. That, were it found among us, would be Christian love to a brother's soul; that would be charity, bearing all things, enduring all things—enduring the thoughtfulness, the watchfulness, the kindly sympathy, the care which such a style of dealing with a brother implies. Alas! How few of us will take the trouble with another which true love demands! We would rather pour out a religious remark, or a multitude of them. That would not task our care: that would not call for fresh anxiety and thoughtfulness on

every new occasion. That would not need a varied and a watchful adaptation to the very circumstances or condition of each separate soul whom we attempt to influence towards Jesus. But let us be assured that “the word in season—how good it is!” And “the words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, given by one shepherd” (Eccl. 12:11). Be judicious, specially judicious, when you deal with those that are not yet brought over to the love of Jesus. Be as full, as fluent, as you please with those whom you have reason to regard as fearers of the Lord. To them you may be frank and abounding in your communications if you choose. “Come, all ye that fear God, and I will tell what God hath done for my soul” (Ps. 66:19). But be discriminating, be judicious towards them that are without. “Walk in wisdom towards them that are without” (Col. 4:5). —the wisdom which Jesus gives liberally, upbraiding you not, and in thoughtfulness and care that will deeply consider what might

do them good, and which, when they awaken to see the fact that you have thus in anxious thoughtfulness watched to do them good, may storm and surprise their hearts with a case of true charity of which they once little thought themselves the objects.

But to return to Peter, in whose soul the nail in a sure place had been fastened by the one Shepherd himself.

4. In the fourth place—though it be anticipating events of his future history—that there were two things needed before this disciple could actually realize the new name which the mouth of the Lord had named on him: a spiritual sense of sin, and a spiritual sight of Christ.

1) He needed a deeper view of himself and his sinfulness. And this was soon conveyed to him. For when, after Simon had replied, and almost objected to Christ's command, "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught," saying, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; but

nevertheless at his Master's word let down the net, and immediately enclosed a great multitude of fishes"—overwhelmed with the demonstration of Christ's divine majesty and power, he exclaimed in deep self-abasement, "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man." Thus was he brought to abhor himself. He made a deep confession of sin (Luke 5:1–8).

2) He needed also deeper views of Christ, and His grace and glory. But these also were given him, and he made a glorious confession of the Savior. When Jesus came into the borders of Caesarea-Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I the Son of man am?" And they said, "Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some Elias, and others Jeremias or one of the prophets." He saith unto them, "But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.'" Thus he has confessed in deep abasement that he is himself a sinner—a sinful

man, unworthy, unfit for the presence of the Lord. He has confessed also in heaven-taught faith—not revealed by flesh and blood, but, as Jesus assured him, by His Father in heaven—that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the Savior. And now, when he has right spiritual views of himself, and right spiritual views of Christ—“I am a sinful man: Thou art the Christ,” Jesus answers him, “I say unto thee, thou art Peter.” Thou art now, when I first looked on thee, what I told thee thou wouldst become. The mystery now is solved. Thou art a living Stone on the Rock of ages. For thou hast “tasted and seen that the Lord is gracious; unto whom coming as unto a living stone, thou also art built up a lively stone, a royal priest to God” (1 Peter 2:4).

“I say unto thee, thou art Peter!” How meaningless to a stranger ignorant of the early conversation! How full of meaning to Peter—fitting in with the strange and early word that had long hung over him with its

mysterious spell, but now illumined with a flash of light!

And how much that was dark to the anxious mind always does become clear as day when these two things are gained—a deep and abasing view of self; a glorious and spiritual view of Christ as flesh and blood cannot give them, but our Father who is in heaven. Then you are called by the new name which the mouth of the Lord had named—a name that no man knows save he that receives it. Then you understand and see what the promise and the hope are which mysteriously exercised you in much anxiety, from the day that Christ first planted an arrow in your heart—an arrow dipped in love. The mystery of a free justification from God the Holy One to a hell-deserving sinner stands out to view in glorious simplicity—mysterious now no more save in its endless depth of clearly revealed suitableness to you a sinner; its endless glories of divine love and righteousness and wisdom, profoundly honoring to God,

and securely saving you! And what brings forth upon you His bursting light of noon-day over all your field of anxious expectation and inquiry is perhaps some simple word of Christ in which another would find nothing striking, but which, in virtue of His former training of your weary and heavy-laden spirit, and in virtue of its bearing on what He had already spoken to you, becomes, as no other can see, a flash of light to you—a seal of love, and the dawn of glory; the full-orbed rising of the Sun of Righteousness. And so you rest by faith, a living stone on the sure foundation, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against you. “Thou shalt be called Cephas—which is by interpretation, A stone.” Convinced of your sin and misery, and enlightened in the knowledge of Christ, “Thou art Peter”—a living stone, a royal priest unto God through the Spirit.

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