

The Glasgow Infidel's Death-Bed

John Hastie lived in the East-end of Glasgow, and was the only son of a godly mother, who had become a widow when he was quite a lad. He was sent to be an apprentice to a weaver who was a notorious unbeliever, and who did all he could to propagate his principles. John, to the sad grief of his mother, imbibed his master's atheistic notions, and after his marriage to his master's daughter, who too had cast off all religion, he descended rapidly into recklessness in thought and conduct. In this condition he remained till his own child had approached the years of manhood. Then his health began to give way, and soon consumption fastened its grip upon him.

Having opportunities for serious thought, his indifference was broken up, and, at

last, he sent for a minister, who, however, failed to remove his unbelief. One of Dr. Chalmers' most valued elders, in his parish visits, discovered the dying weaver, and found that his case required greater skill than he possessed. Accordingly, he brought Dr. Chalmers to the man's house. The Doctor, by his godly sympathy, so similar to that of his mother's, won the confidence of the dying man, and drew from him a history of his life, and especially the history of his unbelief. Doctor Chalmers presented to this needy sinner the precious truth in Jesus.

Once each week for three months did he visit him, and laboured most carefully to adapt the presentation of the truth to the perverted, disordered, guilty, and almost despairing mind of the weaver. The

blessing of God manifestly rested upon those efforts. As the man drew nearer the grave, his minister became more and more satisfied that his soul had been renewed by the grace of God, and that he was rapidly preparing for heaven.

The interview which both felt would be the last on earth came. "Doctor," said he, lifting his Bible off the bed on which it lay, "will you take this book from me as a token of my inexpressible gratitude?" "No, sir," said Dr. Chalmers, after a moment's hesitation; "no, sir, that is far too precious a legacy to be put past your own son. Give it to your boy." It was not likely that the Doctor's advice would be disregarded. "Give me a pen," said the dying man. His request was complied with. Gathering up his remaining strength of mind and body he wrote, on a blank leaf of the Bible, the following plain, homely, but, from the circumstances in which they were written, most interesting lines:

"To thee, my son, I give this book,
In hopes (that) thou wilt from it find
A Father and a Comforter,
When I do leave thee here behind.

"I hope that thou wilt firm believe
That Jesus Christ alone can save- -
He bled and suffered in our stead;
To save from death, Himself He gave.

"A strong desire I now do crave
Of them to whom thy charge is given,
To bring thee up to fear the Lord,
That we (may) meet at last in heaven."

After writing these lines he laid his head back on the pillow and passed into the Saviour's immediate presence.