

Convicted Yet Confiding.

J. G. Bellett.

Article 8 of 47 **Short Meditations**

(Cavenagh, 1866.)

I read this little sentence as though it might be the common motto of all the saints. It tersely describes us, and is God-glorifying, and sinner-humbling. It is also the experience of faith. Let us engrave it on our spirits, and read it out as our confession. "Convicted yet confiding." The great houses of the earth have their several devices and mottoes, memorials of family distinction. This may be the family-motto of the saints, not distinguishing them one from another, but each and all of them from a world that seeks to maintain its own character, and to keep its own good opinion, not knowing the secret of confidence in Jesus.

That confidence, the confidence of a sinner in a Saviour, is what God proposes to Himself for the glory of His great Name, in this revolted world. Having exposed us under the law, He says to us (as another has said) as in the Gospel, "I find I cannot trust you, you must now trust me."

God claims our confidence, and He has graciously entitled Himself to it. He has accepted the death of Christ for sinners. He is just when He forgives, because of the work of Christ, and because of the glory of the Person of Him who did that work. It, is not *mercy* that forgives the believing sinner; it is *righteousness*. Grace provided and gave the Son. That is so indeed — mercy unfathomable, inestimable. But it is righteousness which accepts the Son and what the Son has done and perfected for sinners. We lean our souls and our hopes upon facts — not upon gleams of sunshine in our spirits, nor upon promises in the Word, nor upon help from God. Mere help would not do for them that are already under condemnation — promises to us would not answer God's demands upon us. It is upon facts, upon transactions counselled, accomplished, and accepted as between God and His Christ and as for us, we rest ourselves — an anchor of the soul sure and steadfast.

"Convicted yet confiding." Yes, it is a fitting motto for the family of believing, ransomed sinners.

We must be convicted, or we should not know ourselves; we must confide, or we should not know God. Confidence may be firmer and more perfect in some quickened souls than in others — and so conviction may be in different measures of intensity. Scripture illustrates these things, and experience proves them every day. Still, the blessed God, in the Gospel of the blood of Jesus, has entitled Himself to fullest confidence, and claims it. and surely we sinners have to submit to conviction; and this the believing sinner may take, and surely will take, as his motto, as that which emblazons his condition, and memorializes his character, "Convicted, yet confiding."

Adam knew this condition, as soon as he came forth from his hiding-place, and "submitted" his naked body to be clothed with the coat which God's own hand had made for him. And so, we all know the same condition to be ours, when, as sinners, we by faith "submit ourselves to the righteousness of God." (Rom. 10: 3)

Patriarchal faith, which took knowledge of death in ourselves, but likewise took knowledge of God as a Quickener of the dead, did the same.

Israel, putting the blood upon the lintel, to shelter themselves, in God's provision, from the death that was abroad in the land, did the same.

All *the ordinances of the law*, its washings and sacrifices, rehearsed the same continually. They set it forth, that we had destroyed ourselves, but that in God and His provisions we had our salvation.

All *the Prophets taught* the same; but Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel are put through the *experience* of it, and Isaiah, as I may say, through the *history* of it.

And now, it is *the characteristic of the Gospel* to publish this fact, and to invite sinners, by faith, to take this condition, to adopt this very motto, as I have called it, as their own, the expression of their state, and that which tells what they are — "Convicted yet confiding." It is illustrated in the quickened souls of the New Testament — in Peter, and Paul, and the Samaritan, and the three thousand, and the Jailer, and Nathanael, and all beside. And each of us, to this day, and all till the last sinner be saved, as I may speak, pass through the same history, in spirit, or in the experience of our souls.

Precious is this unity, this common light and intelligence, this oneness in the nature we have all received in Christ. We are all one, as standing in this condition..

But among all the cases which illustrate or set forth this condition, none at present more strikingly gives it to us than David in 2 Sam. 23.

David had involved his conscience beyond, it may be, what any saint of God had ever done. The scarlet, crimson colour of his sin was deep indeed. We need not rehearse the particulars of it. And deeply indeed he had been convicted. Many of the Psalms may tell us this, and much of the history which we get in chapters preceding this. And in "his last words," as he calls his utterance here, we may see the same — that he had been thoroughly convicted. For he owns that his house was not with God as it ought to have been — and this was the fruit of his own sin. He had himself brought a sword into it, that was never to be sheathed till he had given up that house to another. But, though thus convicted, thus taking knowledge of the judgments which had overtaken him, he yet confides — and utters his confidence in these "his last words" in very blessed language indeed. He talks of future and everlasting blessedness, perfect in its character, clear and certain in the title he had to it. It was, as he says, "ordered in all things and sure."

And he can speak of the judgment of "the sons of Belial." This is very striking. In the day of his sin, he had been called by this very name. "Come out, thou bloody man, thou man of Belial," Shimei had said to him. And he would not answer Shimei. He rather owned that God had given him his commission thus to charge him. Sons of Belial might, therefore, say he was as bad as they. But in the face of all this, he is not afraid: nor does he hesitate to pronounce their judgment, confident that in the riches of grace, however they might convict him, God had separated him from them. As Peter can face and challenge the Jews as *deniers* of the Lord, the Holy One and the Just, though he himself had been, literally and simply, a denier of Him himself. And Paul can condemn his own nation for the very things that had distinguished his own guilt. (1 Thess. 2: 15.)

This was a wonderful utterance of a man "convicted yet confiding." It was a voice heard from the realms of *the restored*. David was not merely a sinner then, looking forth from his self-wrought ruins to the God of salvation. He was a restored backslider, looking from amid the terrible ruins which he had brought upon himself, and out of which he was never to escape while he lived, to Him who was his in bonds that would hold for eternity. And this gives this utterance eminent peculiarity. It is a voice heard from the realms of the restored.