

# **SCRIPTURE CHARACTERS**

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Scripture Characters by Robert S. Candlish

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**ROBERT S. CANDLISH**

**SCRIPTURE  
CHARACTERS**



## INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

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IT is not mere affectation that makes me avoid the use of the title "Sermons" in designating the following papers. Nearly all of them were, in point of fact, written and delivered as pulpit discourses, either in the course of the Author's ordinary ministry or on particular occasions; and they will doubtless be found to bear the usual marks of compositions intended rather to be heard than to be read. But I would not wish them to be regarded as fair specimens of what I think the preaching of the gospel to a congregation, from Sabbath to Sabbath, ought to be. Not inadmissible at intervals, for the sake of variety—not inconsistent with evangelical doctrine, or incapable of a practical application—they are still not altogether what one would call "gospel sermons." At all events, I prefer that they should be judged by a somewhat more flexible and accommodating standard than I might myself apply to compositions professing to be the utterances of ambassadors for Christ, in the direct discharge of their commission, beseeching men to be reconciled to God.

For the very miscellaneous character of the volume some apology is due. A slight thread of connection may perhaps be traced in certain portions of it; and one or two subjects are pretty fully discussed. But for the most part, the papers are but desultory and fragmentary essays; suggesting topics of inquiry, rather than exhausting them; and neither fitted nor intended to demonstrate any one truth, or series of truths, in the system of Theological or Moral Science. On this account I have hesitated much about obtruding them on general notice, and I even suspended the publication for a considerable time. Circumstances, however, of no interest to the community, have led me to complete the work and consent to its issue. And such as it is, it may be welcome and useful to friendly readers.

Some of the papers have appeared in print before. They have undergone, however, such revision—often amounting almost to rewriting—that I can scarcely plead guilty to any charge of plagiarism from myself. I have endeavoured to present them in a form more worthy of preservation than the hasty publication of most of them at the time permitted.

I could have wished that, in appearing thus before the public, I had had a better reason to give for printing a book than the usual apologies which, if I chose, I might adopt. Had it been a treatise more evidently called for by the times, or more directly bearing upon the defence

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of divine truth, the interests of society, or the advancement of scriptural knowledge, I might have been more justified in hazarding the publication. But let it pass. And, such as it is, may a blessing from on high accompany it!

EDINBURGH, 23d May 1850.



PREFATORY NOTE

TO

NEW EDITION OF SCRIPTURE CHARACTERS.

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I HAVE been advised to publish the SCRIPTURE CHARACTERS in a separate form by themselves, reserving the MISCELLANIES for another volume. This accordingly is now done. A chronological arrangement also of the Characters is now, as far as practicable, adopted. The articles have undergone careful revision and correction; but no material change has been made as to their substance.

EDINBURGH, April 1857.



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# SCRIPTURE CHARACTERS.

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## I.

### THE UNIVERSAL CHARACTERISTIC—"AND HE DIED."

GEN. v. 5, 8, 11, 14, &c.

"And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation."  
Exod. i. 6.

THE succession of generations among the children of men has been, from Homer downwards, likened to that of the leaves among the trees of the forest. The foliage of one summer, withering gradually away, and strewing the earth with its wrecks, has its place supplied by the exuberance of the following spring. Of the countless myriads of gay blossoms and green leaves, that but a few months ago were glancing in the beams of the joyous sun, not one remains; but a new race, all full of brightness and promise as before, covers the naked branches, and the woods again burst forth in beauty and song, as if decay had never passed over any of their leafy boughs. So of men: "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh, but the earth abideth for ever" (Ecl. i. 4). —the same to the new generation that cometh—the same

scene of weary labour, endless vanity, alternate hope and disappointment—as if no warning of change had ever been given—as if the knell of death had never rung over the generation that is passing away.

But there is one point in which the analogy does not hold,—there is one difference between the race of leaves and the race of men: Between the leaves of successive summers an interval of desolation intervenes, and “the bare and wintry woods” emphatically mark the passage from one season to another. But there is no such pause in the succession of the generations of men. Insensibly they melt and shade into one another: an old man dies, and a child is born; daily and hourly there is a death and a birth; and imperceptibly, by slow degrees, the actors in life’s busy scene are changed. Hence the full force of this thought—“One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh”—is not ordinarily felt.

Let us conceive, however, of such a blank in the succession of generations as winter makes in the succession of leaves. Let us take our stand on some middle ground in the stream of history, where there is, as it were, a break or a void between one series of events and another, —where the whole tide of life in the preceding narrative is engulfed and swallowed up, and the new stream has not begun to flow. Such a position we have in some of the strides which sacred history makes over many intervening years, from the crisis or catastrophe of one of the world’s dramas to the opening of another: as, for instance, in the transition from the going down of Israel into Egypt in the days of Joseph, to their coming out again