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ADDRESS TO THE READERS OF THE
"GOSPEL STANDARD."

WHAT shall be the *subject* of our Annual Address necessarily demands with each recurring year a larger amount of anxious thought. Our main aim and desire still are, as indeed they ever have been, to *edify* our readers—at least, as many of them as are willing to receive in a spirit of affection what flows, we trust, in the same spirit from our pen. Our next desire is to be favored with such a *variety* in subject, thought, and expression, that each successive Address may not be the mere echo of the preceding. To combine these two desirable requisites is difficult, not only, or rather not so much from the limited nature of our subjects, as from our own limited abilities and attainments. Yet as the Fountain of all wisdom and truth is unexhausted and inexhaustible, may we not hope that He may still in this, as in other instances, graciously "supply all our need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus?"

One subject, however, this year has so forced itself on our attention, that, as we could not totally pass it by, we have felt induced to give it a prominent place—indeed, to make it the chief topic of our Address. That subject, we need hardly add, is one which is in everybody's mind and mouth,—the fearful WAR in which we as a nation are now engaged.

It has, therefore, struck our mind, that it might not be wholly out of place to present our readers with some thoughts which may help them to a *Christian view* of the subject. Should some of our preliminary remarks wear too much of a political aspect, let it be borne in mind first, that such a view of the matter is almost inseparable from the subject itself; and, secondly, that we have purposely dwelt upon this point in order to relieve difficulties which may have presented themselves to and perplexed some of our readers.

The opening year finds us engaged in deadly strife with a foe alike gigantic in resources and unscrupulous in their use. After a

Peace of almost unexampled duration, during which, amidst alternations of suffering, the Giver of all good has largely showered down prosperity on our native land, WAR has broken out with all its attendant horrors; and though its present seat is happily removed from our favored shores, yet it has already exacted a fearful amount of victims from English homes and hearths. It is scarcely possible, were it even consistent with Christian feeling, to be unconcerned, unsympathising spectators of such important events as are now so deeply agitating the mighty heart of England; nor does it seem as if we could or should shut up our ears and minds in a kind of apathetic, monkish seclusion from all interest in public affairs, when English blood is flowing in torrents, and English homes in almost every class of society are saddened with lamentation and woe.

Ours has been for many years, and still is, a highly-favored land. Civil and religious freedom, with all their attendant blessings, we have so long inherited from our ancestors as now to claim them as our very birthright, and to hand down to our children this legacy unimpaired is a fixed determination with every true Englishman. No one, therefore, in whose breast an English heart beats could view Russia spreading her net of crushing slavery over the fairest part of Europe, and eventually over our own country, with tame, passive indifference. Into political matters it is not our office or inclination to enter. If, therefore, we seem to touch upon them, it is, as above hinted, chiefly with the view of relieving a difficulty which has probably presented itself to some of our readers. Afflicted and distressed with the scenes of horror and bloodshed which the war has already brought, anticipating greater, and doubting perhaps the eventual issue, they may feel induced to ask, "Can war under any circumstances be justifiable? Is not peace preferable at any price?" To answer this question we propose the following considerations. As Christians, we must ever deeply lament the existence of war under any circumstances, and loathe and detest its attendant cruelties and bloodshed; and as believers in the precepts of the gospel, we should, in our own individual capacity, not take up the sword at all. But what *we* should do as followers of Christ, and what *England* should do as a great and mighty nation, at the head of European liberty, are very different matters. We should not, therefore, view the war as if England were a gospel church, and the Queen's ministers partakers of the grace and power of the gospel. But cast as our lot is on English ground, and bound up as we are in our time-state with England's weal and woe, we must view the matter as free citizens of a free country. And our own firm conviction is, that whether justifiable or not, the present war was inevitable either now or at no

distant date. It is not an *offensive* war, to enlarge our territory or advance our power; but strictly a *defensive* war, entered into with great reluctance to prevent our own eventual overthrow. It is not, then, as some suppose, an attempt to prop up an infidel power like Turkey, but it is a life-and-death contest for liberty and civilisation against slavery and barbarism; or rather, to prevent the universal prostration of all freedom, civil and religious, under the most crushing despotism which imagination can conceive. Was England, then, to wait till Russia had seized Constantinople, and thus secured for her fleets and armies an impregnable position, or to oppose her deep-laid schemes whilst resistance was possible?

It is with reluctance that we discuss a point which seems so foreign to the gospel; but we believe the conclusion to which all thinking minds have come, is, that if Russia had been permitted to carry out her deep-laid plans in the Baltic, and to obtain also possession of Constantinople, the certain result must have been the universal prostration of civilisation and liberty throughout Europe.* If, then, we think for a moment what would certainly have been our position a few years hence had no check now been offered to Russian ambition, and what additional suffering would have been entailed by each successive advance in power of that unscrupulous Czar who sways millions with his nod, we may be content to accept war *now*, whilst success is probable, rather than war hereafter, when defeat would be almost certain. The present war, then, is not a general madness, a blind fury without end or object, but a national instinct of self-preservation, which has therefore enlisted all classes to support it with a spirit and a unanimity unparalleled in our history. Without entering further into politics, we have been induced to offer these thoughts in the hope of reconciling to existing circum-

* There are two narrow straits, one of which, the Sound, (in which we may include the Great Belt,) commands the Baltic, and the other, the Dardanelles, which commands both the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. The Emperor of Russia was steadily, though stealthily, advancing to the occupation of both these passages. By fortifying Bomarsund, which commands Stockholm, he was advancing first to the conquest of Sweden and then of Denmark, which would have given him the occupation both of the Sound and of the Great Belt, the only two practicable passages into the Baltic Sea. By seizing Constantinople he would have commanded the Dardanelles, making him master of the Mediterranean in front, and of the Black Sea behind, and really constituting him lord over Europe and Asia. Now what would have been the consequence? From his northern position he could have sent his fleets not only to destroy the trade and commerce of England, but to ravage all our sea coasts, burning all our naval and mercantile ports, as Portsmouth, Liverpool, &c. From Constantinople he could have transported his armies by sea to the south of France, cutting off meanwhile our communication with India, and overawing or crushing Germany with his immense forces on the northern frontier. Would England, would France, submit to be what Poland now is? If not, war was unavoidable either now or at some no distant period.

stances the minds of some of our readers, who might, in their horror of war, think peace preferable at any price. One word more before we quit this portion of our subject. If our Puritan ancestors took up arms against their king, and plunged their country into all the horrors of civil war rather than part with their political and religious liberties, we, their degenerate children, may well be reconciled to a foreign war if it be to prevent England being degraded into a Russian province.

But quitting political ground, let us turn our thoughts into a more profitable channel. There are few events of any magnitude in which there is not a Christian view of things; and as we cannot keep our minds from sympathising with that gigantic struggle which is taking place in the East, it will be our wisdom and mercy if we can stand upon our watch-tower and view with a believing eye scenes which are now agitating so many hearts at home and abroad.

I. As almost everything which agitates the mind lays it open to a peculiar class of temptations, our first word shall be a *word of warning* and affectionate admonition to our Christian readers; and in so doing, we shall point out several snares that may be spread for our feet at the present eventful crisis. Let them be assured that, in so doing, we shall not speak of these temptations as mere spectres seen in imagination, or viewed in the dim unknown distance, but practically and experimentally, as we have felt them ourselves.

1. One main temptation, in the present posture of affairs, when with well-nigh every day heart-stirring tidings flash along the electric wire, is *undue excitement*. As the experience of one heart is often the experience of another, will our readers allow us to mention a little circumstance of personal feeling which may serve to illustrate this?

Lord's Day, Oct. 1st, was a season of more than usual feeling and solemnity with us in the things of God, and the impression remained in good measure on the morning of the following day. About noon on the Monday we sallied forth to breathe a little fresh air, but had not gone many hundred yards up the public street before a large placard, surrounded by a numerous throng, met and in a moment riveted the eye, announcing the "BATTLE OF ALMA AND CAPTURE OF SEBASTOPOL." It was impossible not to stop for a few moments and read the few lines of the telegraphic despatch. But what was the effect? The heart almost leaped into the mouth; an electric shock ran through the frame, quickening the pulse and step, and filling the mind with a torrent of engrossing, exciting

thoughts. Where were solemn feelings now? Where was spiritual meditation, secret prayer, or any lifting up of the heart God-ward? Gone, gone. During the rest of the walk,—and, we must confess, almost the rest of the day,—the heart-stirring tidings were uppermost. It may be from want of sufficient grace, or from inability to master the risings of strong natural feeling, but we do acknowledge that the gallant exploits of our brave soldiers and their alleged success in capturing the Czar's stronghold did stir up the blood and make it leap and bound in every artery. Haters of oppression, lovers of liberty, friends of civilisation, and above all, English to the heart's core, could we, could any of us, read or hear of such deeds of valor and of such triumphant success and remain as cold and as calm as the mountain pool? United as we trust we are, many of us, dear readers, in a higher, holier, and more enduring tie, as citizens of a heavenly country, is there one of us who, in the thought that he is a Christian, can forget that he is also an Englishman?

But here lies, just now, a great temptation—one against which we shall do well if we can be on our watchful guard,—the temptation of being carried down the stream of absorbing excitement. Now, this excitement of mind, this voluntary yielding up of the thoughts to a rushing troop of spoilers that rudely trample under their hoofs the rising crop of that spiritual-mindedness in which alone is life and peace, is a sad evil. To dwell with avidity on the details of battle and bloodshed, to be as anxious about the siege of Sebastopol as if our very soul and all were at stake, to be daily waiting with excited minds what news from the Crimea each successive post may bring, is most unfavorable to the life of God in the soul and most deadening to every divine feeling in the heart.

To have no sympathy with and take no interest in events of such heart-thrilling magnitude is scarcely possible, or if possible, not desirable, and may rather argue apathy and selfishness than great spirituality. Some of us may have relatives at the seat of war; others may have just received tidings that some one near and dear to them has been struck down in battle or is languishing of wounds in the hospital; and visions of that dear face when last seen, so radiant with health, are ever floating before the eyes in appalling contrast with what that face is now. If not so deeply and personally interested, members of the same church and congregation with us may have sons or grandsons in the tented field or on the storm-heaved deck. Are we to be stocks and stones, devoid of pity and compassion for them? Nay, even if not so sensibly reminded of the miseries and anxieties which the war creates, can we at night lie down in our warm beds

and listen to the howling wind, or see in the starry sky the signs of a biting frost, without thinking of our poor soldiers shivering on the frozen heights which overlook Sebastopol, and exposed every moment to shot and shell hurrying them out of time into eternity? May we not, too, as Christians walking in his steps who wept over Jerusalem, fore-viewed by his all-seeing eye as surrounded with armies, drop a sympathetic tear over the dying and wounded of our fellow-countrymen? Every feeling of patriotism and natural tenderness says, Yes; nor do we believe that the precepts of the gospel say, No.

The difficulty is to steer the middle course, and neither on the one hand shroud ourselves in sullen apathy under the idea of eminent spirituality of mind and conduct, nor on the other give way to that avidity after intelligence, and that undue engrossment of mind, which by exciting it on passing events, opens a door for thoughts and feelings very hostile to vital godliness.

2. Closely connected with this excitement of mind is an evil of scarcely inferior magnitude. If undue engrossment of thought, if to be, as it were, continually thrown out of gear by shock after shock of exciting intelligence, is to disturb that "quietness and confidence" in which is our "strength," (Isa. xxx. 15,) what shall we say of the *enkindling of a warlike flame* in our breast? We may read of bayonet charges by our noble Guards, of the bold dash of cavalry regiments rushing fearlessly on destruction, of the slaughter of thousands of Russians by the deadly Minié rifle, until we seem transported in imagination to the very scene of this blood-fraught strife, and almost to see with our eyes the desperate struggle on the heights of Inkermann. We may be even so carried away by this warlike spirit as almost to exult in the destruction of thousands of those miserable Russians who are driven on to battle like sheep to the slaughter-house. But to convince yourself what a foe this spirit is to all vital godliness, take this test. When your mind is in this excited state, open your Bible at John xiv., and try to read that and the following chapters. One of these two things will result. You must either lay down your warlike spirit or lay down your Bible. If enabled to lay down your warlike spirit, you will feel how contrary the precepts and spirit of Jesus are to what you have been indulging, and this will or should fill you with self-condemnation. If you are, on the other hand, compelled to lay down the Bible with a sigh, as being unable to read it, that of itself is an evidence that it is too holy ground for you to walk on in your present spirit, and therefore that the Scriptures condemn both it and you.

3. As evils are rarely single, but one is almost sure to introduce

another, we will, in the same spirit of affectionate warning, mention another temptation which may beset some of our readers at this present crisis. It is the danger of being *entangled with worldly men*. Any link of union between us and the world is fraught with temptation, and tends to impair that distinct and separate spirit which the Lord inculcates in those striking words, "Ye are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Our families in most cases, and our worldly occupations in very many others, connect us with the world more than is good for our souls. We need not, then, any additional link to bind us to one of our chief enemies. But what an approximating tie may Satan and the carnal mind weave between the church and the world out of this war! "Have you heard the important news this morning?" may be the first thread to weave a web of conversation between a child of God and a servant of Satan. The ear thus opened, which would be barred to mere worldly talk, drinks in at once the exciting intelligence. The two men feel alike interested in the subject and make their remarks upon it with an agreement which seems to draw them together. They part, but not as they met. "Well, after all," says the servant of Satan, "he is not such a bad kind of fellow as I thought. I like very well what he said about the war and the soldiers. He's not so stupid, either, as most of those canting chaps." The child of God feels that he has not done right in talking about the war to this worldly man; but the poison is at work. He feels a strange thirst for a little more news from the seat of war. His yesterday's companion is all ready for him. He has been reading up at the pot-house over night all the accounts of the battle, and he is charged up to the muzzle for his new friend. We need not pursue our sketch. Who does not see the snare thus laid for a child of God, and what it may entangle him in to his soul's injury? It can never be sounded too loudly in the ears of the family of God, that all beyond absolutely needful association with worldly men is fraught with peril. They may draw us on to *their* ground to our soul's grievous hurt, but we can never draw them to *ours* to their souls' real good.

4. At the risk of being wearisome in sounding so many notes of warning, we can hardly forbear mentioning another snare, closely connected with the preceding, and perhaps more subtle in operation, if not so dangerous in result. It is the temptation of making the war too much *the subject of conversation amongst Christians themselves*. Few things are more edifying than spiritual conversation. When the speech is with grace, seasoned with salt, it is not only good to the use of edifying, but it is taken favorable notice of by the Lord himself. (Col. iv. 6; Eph. iv. 29; Mal. iii. 16.) But, on

the other hand, few things are more carnalising than worldly conversation amongst the family of God. It lowers that tone of Christian feeling and depresses that standard of spiritual-mindedness which believers should seek to maintain in themselves and each other; and where it does not grieve the spirit, hardens and deadens the conscience. What a handle, then, may Satan make of the war to stifle with this engrossing topic Christian conversation, perhaps even to introduce argument and discussion how it is or should be carried on, until professed followers of Jesus Christ, whose conversation should be in heaven, differ little from a knot of worldly politicians.

II. But having struck the note of warning, suffer us, Christian readers, to add a word of *instruction*, and to point out how these events should be viewed in harmony with the revealed will of God and the spirit of faith in a believer's heart, as well as what is the becoming path of those who fear the Lord at this eventful crisis.

I. The first grand point is to view them as *all working out God's decreed purposes* and bringing about the plans and designs of the Most High. Whilst the unbelieving world sees nothing in these events beyond the hand of man, let the Christian see behind the cloud the directing, controlling, overruling hand of God. This will enable us to look at them with a degree of calmness not otherwise attainable, and preserve us from being elated or depressed by every gust of prosperous or adverse tidings. "The LORD reigneth" is or should be sufficient to still every fear and remove every doubt as to the eventual issue. That issue, beyond all doubt, must be the glory of God, and the good of those who fear his great name. But our own impression is, that it will be a long and arduous, even if it should eventually prove a successful struggle. This persuasion arises not only from what we see in common with others of the amazing strength and tenacious resistance of the Russian Empire, but from what we see or think we see in the inspired record. We have laid aside our prophetic pen and do not mean to resume it; but, in addition to our remarks in our last August No., on the threatened plague of hail, (Rev. xvi. 21,) which, if our interpretation be correct, implies the unbroken power of the Czar, we can hardly forbear mentioning our conviction that Russia will yet play some important part in the fulfilment of prophetic history. Her very name is mentioned as heading that numerous host, which is to perish on the mountains of Israel; not, it is true, in our version, where the word "Rosh," (Ezek. xxxviii. 3,) instead of being preserved untranslated, as the name of a nation in conjunction with Meshech and Tubal, is rendered "the chief prince." It can

hardly escape notice, if this view be correct, that Rosh is akin in sound to Russia, as Meshech is to Moscow.* But apart from this, which may seem to some too much to border on conjecture, or at best to be a mere matter of private opinion, we may be sure that the events now on the wheels are full of importance both to the church and the world. Their ultimate effect none can foresee, but few can doubt that the intervening period will be marked with suffering and blood. The latter we may not be called upon to spill or witness; the former we may have, in some measure, to endure. So great a calamity as war cannot occur without seriously affecting all classes of society. Heavy taxes, commercial embarrassments, serious losses in trade and business, and general rise of prices, may press deeply on those of our readers who have a little measure of this world's goods; and dear provisions, failing employment, and scanty wages may sorely try those who have to live by the skill of their fingers or labor of their hands. But let us only believe that the Lord holds the reins of government, and must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet, and it will be like oil on the troubled sea, stilling every wave into a calm.

2. Now what we would desire to feel in ourselves and to see in our Christian friends, is what will certainly flow from such a believing view as we have just spoken of—a *patient submission* to what we may be called upon to endure. We cannot alter matters. The war may be a great evil, and we may be ready, under the pressure it may bring, to murmur against our rulers for plunging the nation into it. But there it is; and all our murmurings and frettings against heavy taxes and dear provisions will not put an end to it. The load, however, which cannot be shaken off, may be made lighter by submission under it.

3. The last point to which we would direct the mind of our readers is the desirableness of *bringing these matters before the throne of grace*, especially in the assembling of ourselves together. We have of late felt ourselves reproved in conscience as guilty of having too much neglected the apostolic injunction 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2. Afraid of formality, and chiefly pleading for spiritual blessings, we have most commonly closed our public petitions without dropping a word of supplication for our Queen and "for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." In so doing we have neglected that which the Holy Spirit declares is "good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour." Without falling, then, into that dry and formal round of praying for everything and everybody which characterises the congrega-

* Tubal, we understand, is the native name for Siberia.

tions of the dead, we would press on those who are mouth for the people, whether ministers or private Christians, in our public assemblies, that they would put up a word for our beloved country, and for those who sit at the helm of government. And why should not a word be dropped for our poor soldiers, among whom there may be some who fear God? To this and every other thing really needed in providence and grace, the good word of God fully encourages us; for if we are invited "in *everything* by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving to let our requests be made known unto God," we have a full warrant to ask of Him who alone can "make peace in our borders," to put a stop to this horrid bloodshed, and grant us a secure, lasting, and honorable peace. Though it may clash upon the ear, we deliberately use the last epithet, because, apart from our sympathy with England's renown, we are sure that a *dishonorable* peace would but madden the nation and reopen the war with additional horrors.

If in our Address this year we have diverged from our usual track, we trust our readers will accept the present crisis as our excuse. There are several points more intimately connected with the "Gospel Standard" which we could willingly bring before them; but we have occupied for the present more, perhaps, of their attention than we desire, or deserve; and we will therefore not weaken the impression of the foregoing pages by any further addition.

That during the coming year the best and richest blessings which a covenant God can give or a believing heart receive may rest upon and be the happy portion of those of our readers who fear the LORD and desire to live to his glory, is the desire of their affectionate friend and servant,

THE EDITOR.

If God were to deal with men according to their works, (I will not except the apostle Paul himself,) the hottest place in hell would be the lot of us ministers. I think the early death of my father and mother, the death of a wife and children, in a remarkable way, wrought for my good. I could not but notice, when God took away these, he always supplied their room with himself. May he deal thus with you, my children, when I die. As to my recovery, I wish that God may do what is most for his glory, and for the good of my soul. Were it left to me whether I would choose life or death, I would not turn a stone for either, but would refer it wholly to God himself. All my days I have been rebelling against and vexing his Holy Spirit; yet I may say this has been the sum of his conduct to me, he wrought for his name's sake that it should not be polluted.—*John Brown.*

THE FUGITIVE NOT TO BE GIVEN UP.

“Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee.”—Deut. xxiii. 13.

The servant who has “escaped from his master,” is he who has escaped from the lusts of the flesh, the snares of the world, the flesh, and the devil; he who has looked within his own heart, and beheld some of the abominations there; (I say some of the abominations, because, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?”) he who has beheld the chamber of imagery; he within whom the Holy Spirit of God has shone and made manifest to him the abominations of the heart, shown him the idols there, and the besetting sins which he knew not of, neither could see, because he was blind; he who knew not how firmly he was held, knew not that he was being led captive by the devil at his will; knew not that the sinful habits of which he had been guilty, which were at first as weak as a spider’s web, had become as bands of iron for strength, which it was entirely out of his power to break or release himself from, and which, if some powerful hand had not unfettered him, would have bound him to all eternity. This servant who has escaped, is he who has tried and struggled to release himself from his bonds till he has found that he is like a fly caught in a spider’s web,—the more he struggles, the tighter he is bound; till he finds himself like the cripple at the pool of Siloam,—not able even to move his foot for the restoration of his health; for he finds there is no soundness in him. He is like the woman bowed with a spirit of infirmity, who could by no means lift herself up, and, unless the Redeemer of Israel heals him, he never will lift himself up. He is like the Egyptian whom the servants of David found. (1 Sam. xxx. 11.) His master, the Amalekite, has left him behind, because he was sick, sick of the world and its pleasures, sick of sin, sick of bondage, sick of his master, who has become a hard taskmaster. There seems to be hardly any life left in him; he seems ready to perish. “The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores; they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.” He receives a little nourishment; he revives; there is some hope; he says, “Let me not go back to my master again.” And he shall not be delivered to his master again; he has been drawn by the Father to the Son; and the great Fulfiller of the law, the Lord Jesus Christ, in obedience to the command of his Father, says, “Him that cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out.” Here, it appears, is the direct answer to the command, “I will in nowise cast out.” He is brought to Christ; the disciples could not heal him. “Bring him to me,” says our Lord and Saviour. “Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden; and I will give you rest.”

The Lord Jesus came to fulfil the law; this text is part of it. He will not deliver the servant again to his master after he has escaped; for he says, “Lo, I come to do thy will, O God; in the

volume of the book it is written of me." The sinner is escaped from the bondage of Egypt; he is hearing the thunderings of Sinai; he shall not return again into Egypt. He is being led by a way which he knew not, a way of sorrow and trouble, a way of terrors by day and terrors by night, till he has a slight glimpse of the promised land. "Come now, and let us reason together," says the Lord; "though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Here he receives a grape from the promised land. His joy is great; he has escaped from his master; the Lord has broken his bonds: "This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in his eyes." But fears and doubts beset him again; Satan buffets him; he begins to fear he shall again become a slave. He beholds the vileness of his heart, and thinks perhaps it is all a delusion. Is it possible he can have been cleansed from his sins? He appears more wicked than ever; surely the Lord has given him over to a reprobate mind. It is not so; the Lord will not deliver him again to his master. Nay, his old master shall not have dominion over him. Satan desired to have Peter, that he might sift him as wheat, but, says the King of Jacob, "'I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.' Thou shalt not fall away entirely. Thou hast not received 'the spirit of bondage again to fear,' but thou hast received 'the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father!'" He is now a servant of the Lord; he loves his master; he shall remain in the house with his Lord for ever. He shall do no servile work; he is a son, and joint-heir with Christ. What! is it possible? this poor fellow, who seemed a slave, is now a son, and has received the spirit of adoption? Why should he not be? "Bring forth your strong reasons," says the King of Jacob. Here are the evidences of his adoption: Repentance, humility, "and before honor, is humility;" he has humbled himself before God, and "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted;" faith, hope, love to God, a desire for righteousness, mourning: "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." He is one of the poor and needy, poor in spirit; his is the kingdom of heaven. Here are the evidences that he is chosen: The Lord has brought him low; the Lord has humbled him; and when God humbles any one, he means to exalt him. If the Lord shows him his vileness, he means to have mercy on him; if the Lord has cast him down, he is sure to lift him up; if the Lord has wounded him, he will heal him; if the Lord throws down, he will also build up.

Many may despise this servant, and some of them would deliver him again to his master; if they could, they would drive him back into the world again. But, "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in nowise believe, though a man declare it unto you." The despisers, those professors of the letter, and not of the spirit, will not believe it. He is of the escaping of Israel; there is a remnant left; he is escaped out of the captivity. The prey is taken from the mighty. The Lord of hosts will keep him as the apple of his eye. He shall not be cast out; he is a chosen servant of the Lord of Hosts. Men

may despise him; but, "Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee." This poor servant who has escaped, who expected so little except condemnation, finds that the Lord to whom he has come, is all-merciful; he asked for life, and the Lord has given him long life, yea, for ever and ever. He is loaded with tender words and promises, which he never expected or had the least idea of. The Lord found him in the waste howling wilderness; the good Samaritan has passed by and taken him up, and given commands concerning him; and he will pay all demands. All that justice requires is fulfilled. None can condemn him; if they attempt it, they condemn themselves. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." And if Christ make intercession for us, "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." He will perfect that which he has begun; he will have a desire to the work of his hands. Though we be unprofitable servants, the Lord will not leave nor forsake us. Our sins and iniquities he will remember no more.

E. W. W.

If God's Spirit has stripped you of your own righteousness, he has not stripped you in order to leave you naked, but will clothe you with change of raiment. He will give you a robe for your rags; the righteousness of God for the rotten righteousness of man. Rotten indeed we shall find it, if we make it a pillar of confidence. I will say of it, as Dr. Young says of the world, "Lean not upon it;" lean not on your own righteousness; if leaned upon, it will pierce you to the heart.

"At best a broken reed, but oft a spear.

On its sharp point peace bleeds and hope expires."

—*Toplady.*

The principal efficient cause of the conviction of sin, is the Holy Ghost. He it is who "convinceth of sin." (John xvi. 8.) He works indeed by means. He wrought in David by the ministry of Nathan, and he wrought it in Peter by the look of Christ. But *his* work it is. No man can work it upon his own soul; it will not spring out of men's rational considerations. Though men may exercise their thoughts about such things as one would think were enough to break the heart of stones, yet, if the Holy Ghost put not forth a peculiar efficacy of his own, this sense of sin will not be wrought or produced. As the waters at the pool of Bethesda were troubled but when an angel descended and moved them, no more will the heart for sin, without a saving illapse of the Holy Ghost.

—*Owen.*

“SAW YE HIM WHOM MY SOUL LOVETH?”

Dear Sir,—In your letter you seem to speak of travelling in the valley; but it is a blessed thing to know that God traces out such characters in his holy word, and declares they shall be exalted. He also commands us to take up our cross daily, and follow him; but it is a painful cross to have to travel in this dark path alone. It is the darkness of the valley and the dreariness of the wilderness, and seeing neither bud nor blossom, that cause the grief in our souls. But he declares he will “lead the blind by a way that they knew not.” God’s ways in leading and teaching, I find often, dear Sir, are very grievous to my soul; for I should like a little light that I might see, and a little of his presence to comfort me while passing through these dark valleys. But he tells me plainly I want those things that would cause the cross to cease, as was the grief of the church of old, when she said, “Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?” It is the loss of our Beloved that makes the cross, causes us to groan, and presses out sighs and cries after him. I have known something of what this is, dear friend, since I last wrote to you. I have had to come away many times from hearing our dear friend, without getting anything to satisfy my poor soul, which has caused me to hang my head like a bulrush; and I have had hard work to keep from bursting into tears for the want of a word from “him whom my soul loveth.” One Thursday evening my grief was so great that I scarcely knew how to bear it. I said, it was of no use, I must go into the fields to seek him whom my soul loveth, and tell him all my complaint, for I knew it was he alone that could ease me of my pain. And I believe if ever I did besiege the throne of grace, it was at that time, when strong cries, groans, and supplications went out of my poor broken heart and grieved spirit to him. It began to rain; but I did not mind the poor body getting a little moisture, if I did but get a little unction, a little dew to my poor soul. I felt as if I could have stayed there all night, if I could but believe the Lord would bless my soul. I stayed till between 10 and 11 o’clock. I began to feel weary, and my hope of any mercy reaching my case at that time began to decline; and so I came away. Dear Sir, I continued in this state for some time. I had a hope that he would appear, but when and in what way I knew not.

I awoke one morning about 5, when I thought I would get up and read a portion of God’s word before I went to my employment, but little thought at the time that it was my Beloved who had called me up after being tossed to and fro in this dreary wilderness. The time of love was sweet to my soul. I arose and bowed myself down before the Lord; and to my surprise I spent an hour in this way. But I can assure you, Sir, the time seemed very short, when I had got the ear of my Beloved, to tell him all my wants and diseases; and he appeared to heal my diseases, and to take away my filthy garments, and give me a change of raiment. All my enemies were fled and gone, the world was beneath my feet, and I could

hold sweet communion with a thrice-beloved three-one God. I could sweetly sing that blessed hymn where it says:

“The dark designs of hell are broke.
Sweet is the peace my Father gives.”

Dear Sir, I found this sweet peace to be with me during the following week. I was favored to hold sweet communion every morning, and continued to do so for several weeks. It is a great blessing when we are favored to supplicate the throne of grace; for I know it leaves a sweet savor more or less throughout the day. It is here we understand what Paul meant when he said, “These light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” I believe in my heart that the blessed Spirit here means not the afflictions of the body, but of the mind. These words were applied when I was travailing in the bitterness of my soul. Lord, help me to think of thy name, for I cannot. Whatever we do with singleness of eye for God’s glory in mortifying our affections and lusts, shall work out for us a “far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” Then we come to the mind of the blessed Spirit, where he says, “to be spiritually-minded is life and peace.” The Psalmist declares, by the Holy Ghost, that “goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.”

Dear friend, it is a hard matter to believe this, when, like a woman in travail, we are crying out with darkness, deadness, and lamenting our wretched state, which you seem to complain of. It is not the dead that cry out; there must be life in that soul which is thirsting and crying after a living God. We know that it is “of the Lord’s mercy that we are not consumed;” and all these things, he declares, work together for our good, not because we have loved him, but because he has loved us with an everlasting love. Let the devil and our devilish nature, which is every bit as devilish and full of malice and enmity against God and godliness as the devils themselves, say what they will, it must be so; for I know these things by painful experience. In these things we come to the mind of the blessed Spirit, where he says that a man’s foes are those of his own house. I have felt many times as if I should have liked to run away and leave it, but am obliged to carry it about with me and feel the plague thereof. Nothing can remove guilt, heal a wounded spirit, nor cleanse the conscience and make it white, but an application of the peace-sprinkling blood of Jesus. This is the blessed balm to heal sin-sick souls. He does this because he has loved us.

I need not mention that I have been afflicted and laid aside, but will go on to tell you something of the fruit of the affliction. In many cases they are very bitter; they produce malice, rebellion, and enmity against a holy God, thinking we are harshly dealt with. I am not going from home when I am writing to you of this, for to my shame be it spoken, I have passed through these things in soul-travail. These are the fruits of nature. But now I will show you the fruits of grace. - If we be trees of God’s right hand planting, we shall bring forth different fruit than nature produces. These words were sweetly brought into my mind:

"I can do all things, or can bear
All sufferings, if my Lord be there;
Sweet pleasures mingle with the pains,
While his left hand my head sustains."

He broke my soul sweetly down with these words: "I have done this because I have loved thee." I was meditating on it and wondering how it could be in love, when he said, "I have done it because I have loved thee, and because I would have thee live near to me." This melted my frame, and made me wonder how a holy God should want a poor vile sinner to live near to him. All that I could get was, "Because I have *loved thee*." You must believe that my soul flowed out in love and praise, with thanksgiving, to the Lord who bestows such rich favors on us. I have had my heart sweetly drawn out in love to enjoy the separating, weaning, drawing, effects that love produces in the soul. It makes him unto us "the chiefest among ten thousand and the altogether lovely." It gives us a perfect hatred to anything and everything that would draw our affections from him. Other things that we have been pleased with become a stink in our nostrils, and we put them away with abhorrence. I well remember the feeling I had once, when walking down the yard; my hand went as if I would thrust the world from me, as if I had nothing to do with it. These words sweetly flowed into my soul, "Ye are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." I then knew something of what it was to be crucified to the world, and the world to me. It is a blessed thing to be crucified and dead to the world, for if we are not dead to it, we are dead God-ward; for when I have enjoyed the sanctifying, drawing influence of the Holy Spirit in my soul, which has made me "dead indeed to sin, but alive unto God," I felt the substance of that scripture where Christ commands to leave all, and I felt that I could leave all for his sake. I seemed to hate my own fleshly life also, that I might live a life of faith on the Son of God. He seemed once to have granted my request, which was to enjoy a thrice-beloved one God and his gospel; and I seemed to have *him* in my heart and affections, and could for several weeks sit and muse, in my stammering way, over his gospel, and was afraid to stir out when invited by any of the friends. But afterwards I had to turn the Bible about, and could not find any part to read. But this did not continue long, for my mind appeared to be stayed on the Lord. He again broke in upon me, and caused a little light to shine upon the word. I have had to bless the Lord for this affliction. I do believe in my heart it has been a profitable one. And I believe in my very soul that the most painful things that the Lord causes us to pass through I have frequently found to be the most profitable.

You speak of "groaning and thirsting after a holy God," and I believe that many of these sighers and groaners after a well-beloved God are often worshipping him in spirit and in truth, and are near his precious side when they little think it; for I believe these "groanings that cannot be uttered" enter into the presence of a living God, while thousands of prayers never go out of the place

where they are offered up. I do not write these things to please or flatter you, for I have not so learned of him. I believe that nothing will satisfy your poor soul but God himself bearing testimony to your soul; for I have experienced these things as being the fruit of "the Spirit making intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered."

If changes be a mark of grace, then, dear friend, I am the subject of many. I shall never forget the time when, leaving my employment, I went down to D——, to hear my friend and brother, M'Kenzie. I felt much darkness and deadness of soul. I called myself a many fools for leaving my work to go there to hear the man speak. I was much tried and exercised when I had got part of the way, to know whether I should go forward or return home, until these words, which appeared to help me forward, came and held me on: "Perhaps you may get something." I then thought I would go forward, but never be such a fool again as to leave my work on such an occasion. But we must be made fools in self before we are made wise in Christ. It is a way that God takes to make crooked things straight and rough places plain, that it may be said of them that sit in darkness, "unto you is a great light sprung up;" and God's word declares plainly, "If thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as God's mouth." And I for one can truly say, *he* was as God's mouth to my soul; for as the words dropped out of his mouth, they dropped into my heart and conscience; they were as a hammer to break down my hard heart, and as oil to soften and melt my soul. Truly "I found his word, and did eat it, and it was the joy and the rejoicing of my soul" before God; and it was to me wine that made my heart glad, and oil to make my face shine, and "that bread which, if a man eat thereof, he shall never die." I could feelingly say, that my Beloved spake by his mouth, and said unto me, "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away;" and I could say, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things." Truly the entrance of his word gives light, and I came home rejoicing in the light of God's reconciled countenance, and we walked and talked together with that familiarity as one friend with another; for I felt him to be "the chiefest among ten thousand and the altogether lovely" to my soul.

Dear friend, it was about 12 o'clock when I reached home, for we do not want to hasten out of such company. When the Lord comes in and sups with the poor soul, and he with the Lord, he does not want him to prove a hasty guest, that tarries but a day. And here my soul would wish to live and die. And should the dear Lord be pleased to bless any of this account to the benefit of your soul, may the Holy Ghost enable you to give him all the glory.

Stamford, Jan. 23rd, 1854.

T. B.

The enormity of sin is always the same, whether the sense of that enormity with me is the same or not. It does not alter the actual nature of it in the sight of God.

HE IS OUR PEACE.

Dear Friend,—May peace and mercy be with you from God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. There is no peace like that, for it is a “peace which passeth all understanding;” it “keeps the heart and mind through Christ Jesus.” It is such a peace that the world can never give, with all its smiles, honors, and preferments; neither can the world take it away. None can give trouble if God give peace: I believe you know this; and so do I in some measure. I could like to have more. The Lord grant it, if his blessed will. It is sweet peace. Sweet to the soul is that peace which God gives. It is preserving peace. It preserves from pride and vain-glory; from the love and power of sin, so that it shall not reign. Where sin is a plague it does not reign; and so long as the Lord keeps the soul in peace, that soul is happy, resting on the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Peace with which that poor sinner is blest. “For he is our Peace,” says Paul; and sure enough he was right. “In the world ye shall have tribulation,” says Christ; “but in me ye shall have peace.” The just shall come out of trouble: “These are they which came out of great tribulation.” The Lord will not always have his people in trouble. There is a way into trouble and there is a way out of trouble; and in all these troubles he is with them, although they do not see him; for in six troubles he is with them, and in the seventh he will not leave them. That is the best time, even the last, when they shall come out of them never to go in any more for ever. O happy time! Blessed departure, to take our flight from this wicked world and this body of sin and death! What a deadly weight to carry about with us as we go along! But sweet will be the parting time, and it will not be long. O for grace to say and feel, “I will wait till my change come!” But while we are here, may it be our happiness to have peace extended to us like a river, flowing at his command who “speaks, and it is done,” who can rebuke the wind and the sea, and say, “Peace, be still,” and they shall obey him. O how comfortable a thing is peace, when all is right between God and our poor souls! “Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” The world may frown, but if the Lord shines, all is well.

And mercy, too, is a sweet thing. What should I be without it?

“Without thy sweet mercy, I could not live here;
Sin soon would reduce me to utter despair.”

Great has been, and still is, thy mercy toward me! “For he hath remembered me in my low estate; for his mercy endureth for ever.” Upon this I cannot but hang; it is sweet to my soul. It was one of the first things my soul wanted after I was made concerned about my soul; and it was, “God be merciful to me a sinner!” When it came, it was sweet indeed. I have been in love with it ever since, when in my right mind. I have wanted it ever since that time. I feel a little of it now, and want its sweet, soothing,

embracing, upholding arms to carry me on and bring me through. Filthy and unworthy as I am, my dear friend, mercy is a humbling thing. O how I love to be brought in my soul to say and feel, "It is of the Lord's mercies that I am not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is his faithfulness." O how overcoming it is to have this feeling! We are sorry for our sins, confess them to God, forsake them too, and find "there is mercy with him, that he may be feared." It is sweet to find mercy; it is a blessed companion. What is the world to a child of God, who feels himself in mercy's arms? Yes, my dear friend, it is so; and the more I taste of the sweet mercy of the Lord, the more do I feel loosed from the things of this poor sinful world. I am a great debtor to mercy. It helped me freely at first; it helps me freely now. The more I have, the more I want, and love to have it so. There is no way but one for mercy to come that will do for me. I learned the way to prize mercy, through being taught that God was just and holy, and could by no means clear the guilty. By the deeds of the law no flesh living could be justified in the sight of God; and glad I am that the Lord ever let me know this. They shall be all taught of God: "Every man, therefore, that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." This will make a poor sinner want mercy through the bleeding heart of the once suffering Son of God; and that soul who once tastes that the Lord is gracious and merciful will be hanging upon him from time to time, pleading for the rich, sweet, humbling, sin-overcoming mercy of him who is rich in mercy and great in love.

Bury, Nov. 21st, 1854.

T. C.

None know the depth of man's fall, nor the foulness and filth, the uncleanness, the infidelity and enmity, hardness and impenitency, the rebellion and atheism, of our inbred corruptions, but those who are taught of God; and none but such will ever embrace, adore, and admire the Saviour. Of all the spectres, ghosts, beasts, or devils, whether in earth or hell, whether real or imaginary, not one ever appeared half so fearful, terrific, or dreadful to me as myself, when exposed by the application of the law!—*Huntington*.

Our faith, in reference to dispensation, is to believe. Though the dispensation be rough, stormy, black, yet Christ is fair, sweet, gracious; and hell and death are servants to God's dispensation toward the children of God. Abraham must kill Isaac; yet in Isaac, as in the promised seed, all the nations of the earth are blessed. Israel is foiled, and falls before the sons of Ai; yet Israel shall be saved by the Lord. Judah shall go into captivity, but the dead bones shall live again. Read the promise in general, engraved upon the dispensation of God. Garments are rolled in blood in Scotland and England. The wheels of Christ's chariot, in this reformation, go with a slow pace; the prince is averse to peace, many worthies are killed, a foreign nation comes against us; yet all works for the best to those who love God.—*Rutherford*.

A WORD OF EXHORTATION.

“For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.”—
1 Cor. xi. 30.

If these words were applicable to the church in the infancy of Christianity, while as yet the savor of the walk and conversation of the Lord himself remained with numbers then living, and chosen men of God, greater than the prophets, filled with the Spirit, still moved among the churches with burning words of truth, men carrying the realities of the law and gospel about with them, and knowing the terrors of the Lord, persuaded men, crying, “Flee from the wrath to come;”—if the words, I say, heading these remarks were applicable to the saints in those days, what shall be said of the necessity now? To what congregation of the saints can we point whose faith and charity are spoken of throughout all the churches? Or to what pastor can we point who is travailing for souls? How few, alas! are the pastors whose hearts go out beyond the precincts of the chapel, longing, with large expanded soul, for the salvation of sinners! To preach a little old experience and to iterate doctrines which never disturb the flesh, that the few supporters of the place may be satisfied, appears to content many who call themselves the Lord’s servants. Much is said about poor sinners, but very little about sleepy saints. No; the great ones would be offended, and the ghost of legality be raised to the detriment of the good man’s usefulness. In such places religion languishes, and ease and the love of gain are the only outward characteristics; but the conscience must confess to ill-suppressed covetousness, carnal mindedness, secret sins, and evil passions obtaining mastery.

The doctrines of grace are sometimes charged with this state of things, and the soul lulls itself into the persuasion that it cannot help it. But the closet can tell of restrained prayer, and church duties testify to a feeling of compulsion. It is true there are some, perhaps many, who cry out under these things, and long for a word of reproof from the pulpit, if so be power might enter the soul and strength be imparted to cast off the trammels of death. But, alas! the same dish is presented, and the soul cannot feed. Complaint is useless; for what is man? The Master is as one in a far land whom neither sighs, tears, nor cries, seem to reach, and the soul is bewildered almost to despair. It feels that none are ministers to it, and begins to write bitter things against itself. O for the days when Bunyan preached and Owen wrote; when the Holy Ghost quickened men to seek the salvation of their fellow-men, before these days of carnal fear, wherein the pastors seem afraid to expose the sins of saints or to preach to sinners, lest they should say aught not quite in keeping with their correct divinity! “For this cause many are weak and sickly among the churches, and many sleep.” (1 Cor. ix. 30.)

But if the voice may be lifted up against the pastors in so many places, is there not a cause also for a cry against the churches? Let

it be remembered, that apologies avail nothing to the Christian; he cannot lay his sins at his pastor's door, nor record an excuse at the throne of grace. Whatever may be the circumstances which bring about a declining state from living godliness, conscience testifies that the cause is in the man himself. Business is pursued too anxiously, worldly connections too much indulged, worthless conversation allowed, and carnal company trifled with. Is it a cause for wonder that the closet has no attractions and the word no savor? Should it surprise, that sin sometimes obtains the mastery, and that the soul feels defenceless against temptation? *But it is sometimes urged that the doctrines of grace, of God's predestinating love and almighty power to perform his will, provide against a declining condition. Experience, however, in every living soul witnesses that it is guilty of its own declension. The word of God addresses men as men, who are to be "reproved, rebuked, and exhorted with all long-suffering."

Incline, then, to much meditation. "Stir up the gift that is in thee." Be earnest to be a fruitful branch in the living vine. Covet to know more of Jesus, to bear his image, to carry the savor of his name wherever you go. Strive to be a whole Christian. Let earnestness be seen to pervade you and the realities of your faith to incite you. The promise throughout the word is everywhere to the seeker, not to the sluggard.

But this point requires very delicate treatment, lest we should appear to fall into will-worship. The Christian, however, will find that if he waits for spiritual motions, neglecting the means, he will reap certain disappointment. If we cannot pray with enlargement, we can at least speak in complaint of our case; and if we cannot always praise, there is at least always room for confession. Prayer, in the worst condition, should never be neglected. "Men," said the blessed Lord, "ought always to pray, and not to faint." Besides, apparent denial should only stimulate our faith and make us more in earnest with Him who by so many notable illustrations has encouraged us to pray. Meditation, too, will often be found connected with sweet expansion of soul; and at such times we may drop a tear that we have ever neglected the gentle, the amiable, the full-of-compassion, the incomparable, and inexpressibly precious Immanuel. We may then chide ourselves that we should have lost any ground, and weep to see how great a privilege we neglected when we failed to present ourselves before the Lord.

If we listen to ourselves, we take counsel of ignorance, and take for a guide what will surely lead astray. Many suppose they understand the doctrines of grace; but it is only the infirmity of ruined nature to narrow what is limitless, and to imagine that its puny line fathoms the unfathomable. The more we live in ourselves, the more dwarfish we shall grow; but the more we study the Scriptures, and the more we cleave to Jesus, the firmer will the rock feel under our feet, even the Rock of the immutable promise of the immutable Jehovah.

THOU ART ALL FAIR, MY LOVE.

My dear W.,—Your last seemed to say you were mending in your health. Yes, the Lord “woundeth, and his hands make whole,” neither of which, without a discovery of his hand, would do us any real good. How needful and how profitable, then, is it, and what a gracious thing to be enabled so to do. It not only makes work for prayer and praise, but keeps our hands employed in the work. A communion kept up with God in our souls is most profitable indeed. We have been taught it. It is found out in the path of tribulation. The way to the kingdom lies right through it. Yes; Jesus Christ will not suffer his spouse to lose sight of his love and care over her; so he shows her he has chosen her in this furnace, that he might purify her thereby, and draw her to be a peculiar one from the world and peculiar unto himself. “Thou art all fair, my love,” &c. Methinks no love but his could carry it out in such a way, seeing so much in us so contrary to his nature; but having made a purchase, his soul cannot and will not go back. But when her heart goes from him it is, (O what a wonder!) “Return unto me, for I have redeemed thee; thou art mine.” His soul-ravishing love overcomes. It is not only spoken, but felt; the knowledge of it, Paul says, “passeth all understanding.” Yes; the more it is known, the more it is wondered at, and leaves the soul astonished at the glory that attends it. How does it enlarge the soul to petition for all things that shall be for his glory! And it is here that we bring in the good of our souls, bodies, and spirits. Thus, “no good thing does he withhold” from us. Sometimes we have such a sight of the precious things brought forth by the sun, that by the present shining of it, in one moment (let the soul be never so much chilled) the darkest night is turned into the brightest day. That precious fruit he eats with her in the garden. Such a feast causes all the faculties of the soul to burst out with new wine and go forth with tabrets “in the dances of them that make merry.” Then it is that the heart of God and man is rejoicing together. This is an earnest indeed of the time when the bride shall be taken home up to and within. Yes, enclosed with cedar boards. His and her father’s house, eternity, will leave no space for any more tribulation. “Be thou faithful unto death; and I will give thee a crown of life.”

Yours in truth,

Brighton, Dec. 26th, 1840.

W. S.

“Shall I cause to travail, and not cause to bring forth? Shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb, saith thy God?” Shall I exercise my children with legal bondage, fear, and torment, and make them travail under wrath and guilt, and not shed abroad my love in their hearts, to cast out fear and torment? Or shall I cause them to bring forth life, light, and hope, and shut the womb of my secret decree? No; I have predestinated them to the adoption of sons, and they must and shall be born again.—*Huntington.*

SEEK YE MY FACE.

My dear Friend,—I embrace this opportunity of answering yours by these few lines, being the Lord's prisoner by affliction. You may think we are fit correspondents. There is a similarity, it is true,—we are both in, and know, affliction, although mine may be more particularly in body and yours in mind; yet I think I have been tolerably well exercised in both. And yet, notwithstanding all, I find myself a learner still. May the Glorifier of Christ so teach me to write, that he may bless some word or sentence to the real spiritual benefit of your immortal soul.

We were glad you wrote, though after so long; and believe me, you would not have been likely to have had so quick an answer, but I really found your case made an appeal to my every sympathy. We were very glad to find you had been retracing your steps, when the communion of saints was sweet, when the Lord's house was a Bethel to you, and, what is most delightful of all, when the dear Lord used to converse with you, and bear testimony with your spirit that he was yours and you were his. These are seasons that deserve to be remembered; while I well know that neither all enjoyments past nor all the grace received, will satisfy the present necessities of the soul.

Well, dear friend, whence all this barrenness, darkness, deadness, and restraining of prayer? I have selected four solemn things from your own evidence: 1st. Is the Lord Jesus Christ become a *barren heath* or a *desert waste*? This cannot be; for he is that immortal Tree of Life which bears "twelve manner of fruits," and whose very leaves are "for the healing of the nations." 2nd. Is he become *darkness*? This can never be; for he is not only the Sun of the church; but the Light of every poor believer that ever saw one feature in his lovely, suitable Person, as him who is "able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him." 3rd. Is Jesus *dead*? Blessed be his dear name, he was dead, but is now "alive for evermore." Yes, and now lives to make intercession for poor helpless, worthless, hell-deserving worms like you and me. Have you committed your immortal all into his hand? He will never suffer you to be put to shame; his name is still "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." He rests for ever in his love, and still hates to put away. Now, dear friend, the 4th particular in question is, *restraining prayer*. I feel deeply persuaded by bitter experience, that this lies like a canker-worm at the bottom of every comfort. Believe me, dear friend, I do not desire to arraign you at my judgment seat, but face the matter out with our God if you can. You may conclude I am turned Arminian. Not so; for to the present moment, I feel myself a deep-in-debt sinner to almighty, free, distinguishing grace. But to the point. Has the worthy Lamb, who shed his most precious blood for your ransom, lost all his preciousness, so as not to cause you to admire and adore such wondrous love? May more tastes be given you, whereby you may be constrained to weep at the mercy you have found.

It appears, dear friend, that you have relinquished the company of your heavenly Friend; at least, in a great measure. Depend on it, the Lord will not suffer things to go on long at this rate; and unless you are brought back to a sense of your declension, believe me, you may assuredly expect the Lord to visit by some fiery dispensation. The Lord grant he may enable you to turn unto him, and say unto him, "Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously."

My dear sister, let me intreat you to ply the throne of grace; and although you may have nothing to take but a dead, dark, and barren heart, and only able to sigh and groan before him, remember, his bowels of love are such that he will not long reject your suit; and though you may meet with an apparent denial, yet, Syrophenician woman like, follow the dear Lord hard, plead his word, his love, and grace, and rest assured, instead of a few crumbs, even a Benjamin's portion shall be yours, for he has promised to grant, "more than we can either ask or think." Take courage, then; and although you may have slighted the King's invitation, your case is now truly necessitous. Go in with your petition, and you shall have the royal sceptre held out, and your heart's desire, and when it shall go well with you, speak a word for a poor weary and afflicted brother and fellow-traveller in tribulation.

I have been called to wade through much affliction of body and many conflicts of soul, especially during the last eleven months. Still, notwithstanding all the floods and fires, I have neither been drowned nor burned to death; and although I have thought each wave would swallow me up, and by each fire I should have perished, yet still (ten thousand praises be ascribed to His matchless, omnipotent grace) I am a monument of his covenant mercy, and at this time am waiting to realise the full consummation of all that a covenant God in Christ has promised; for though I have often tasted of the sweetness of the streams, yet my immortal spirit cannot be satisfied until it is privileged to bathe in that sea of everlasting love, when I shall awake up in his own likeness.

Yours in the bowels of Christ's love,

New End, Hampstead, June, 1842.

W. J.

Christ "is appointed the heir of all things." (Heb. i. 2.) Then he is the heir of a draught of water, of brown bread, of a straw bed on the earth, and hard stones to be the pillow. To the saints, to the children of God, hell (to speak so) is heavened, sorrow joyed, poverty riched, death enlivened, dust and the grave animated and quickened with life and resurrection.—*Rutherford*.

There must go a great deal to the making of a man a Christian; for as to that, every man is a fool; yea, the greatest fool, the most unconcerned fool, the most self-willed fool of all fools; yea, one that will not be turned from his folly but by the breaking of his heart. David was one of these fools; Manasseh was one of these fools; Saul, otherwise called Paul, was one of these fools; and so was I, and that the biggest of all.—*Bunyan*.

OBITUARY.

MRS. F. BANFIELD.

In the word of God, the death of the righteous is set forth as precious in His sight; and to the church their memory is blessed. Again, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord; they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them."

In writing this brief account of the experience and death of my dearly beloved wife, Mrs. F. Banfield, I desire to do it with a single eye to the glory of God, and for the encouragement of those who are travelling in the same path of tribulation, whose cup, as good Mr. Hart, says, "seems filled with gall." Although under particular dispensations it does seem so, yet in reality it is not so; for the dear Redeemer having drunk up (for his people) that bitter cup to the very dregs, theirs is only in apprehension what his was in reality. There is the "secret something" springing up at intervals which "sweetens all."

She was called by divine grace very young. The precise time when life entered her soul she could not tell, which often, in former days, caused her much anxiety when she has heard others relate when and where the Lord began with them. But she was gradually brought down into a state of death and condemnation under a deep sense of her sinfulness and unworthiness. To use her own words, which I have an account of, "I continued some time in great trouble, not knowing what would become of me, feeling myself such a sinner before God. I felt neither fit for the world nor the people of God, but was often crying, with the publican, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' This cry was kept up more or less until the dear Lord appeared and set my soul at liberty, by applying with power the following words three times, 'Look to Calvary! Look to Calvary!' 'And with his stripes we are healed.' The fear of death which I before so much felt was entirely removed, and the dear Lord appeared the 'altogether lovely' and 'the chiefest among ten thousand.' I could then say by heart-felt experience, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.' Now I thought my mountain stood strong, and that I never should be moved." But after experience proved the contrary. For thus she expressed herself: "I have lost the enjoyment, and am in the dark, calling all in question, and fear I am nothing but a deceived character. I cannot tell you half what I have gone through of late. I have proved by sad experience that old nature is not, as I once thought, dead; and when I look back it makes me cry, with one of old, 'O that I knew where I might find him!' I know what it is to wet my couch with tears; but drops of grief can ne'er repay. My heart is almost ready to burst. Feeling so much sin, it causes me to cry out, 'Can ever God dwell in such a heart as mine?' Again I have been favored to feel a cry in my soul for the Lord to come and manifest himself to me as he does not to the world; then again I have been blessed with some sweet moments."

In addition to soul-exercises, she had to wade through heavy family trials, with a weakly body, which she labored under nearly all her days. She was much favored at times under the preaching of the gospel. She often referred to a time when Mr. Fowler was supplying in Church Street Chapel, Brighton, how his ministry was blest to her, particularly at one time, from these words, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him;" again, in hearing Mr. Warburton, in Gower Street Chapel, London, from the words, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness." She referred to this latter only the day before she died, and she lived to prove the Lord was "not slack concerning his promise."

After this, in the year 1843, she went to Midhurst, in Sussex, to visit some relations and Christian friends. I here subjoin an extract of a letter which she wrote to a dear brother now in glory:

"Dear George,—Accept my sincere thanks for your kind and affectionate letter. I hope this may find you in body and soul as well as I feel myself, and your friends also, if the dear Lord will. I find all the Lord's people near and dear to my heart. How kind in bringing me here amongst his dear people, and what is beyond all the rest, to manifest himself to me in such a gracious manner as he was pleased to do on Tuesday and yesterday evening, whilst his dear servant (Mr. Parsons) was speaking in his name from this portion of his blessed word, 'The Lord is my portion, saith my soul, therefore will I hope in him.' O the peace and joy that I felt! every idol was dethroned, I had no burden, no sin on my conscience. I should like then to have gone to glory. I could say, 'My beloved is mine, and I am his.' I felt as dear Hart has it,

'Lost in wonder, melt with grief,
And faint beneath the bliss.'

I thought I must have exclaimed aloud. I never felt more happy in my life. Who is a God like unto our God? Come, my dear brother, let us exalt his name together. Praise him for bringing you thus far, for you will be enabled to say the same as I now can,

'And none of mercy need despair,
Since I have mercy found.'

'Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me bless his holy name!' How true, as you observe, is the Christian's path; sometimes up and sometimes down. Before I went to chapel last evening, I had lost the savor and was tried again. I felt such an earnest cry that if I was right the Lord would be pleased to lead his servant to speak from the same portion again, which he did. O how I blessed the dear Lord! At another time he spoke from these words, (which were once blessed to me,) 'The eternal God is thy refuge,' &c. I found he was so. What sweet resignation I felt, and believed everything would work for my eternal good. I hear Mr. S. A. is no more. What a loss to his family; but his eternal gain. O my dear G., may we be found amongst that happy number when the Lord comes to make up his jewels!

"Wishing you every blessing, believe me to remain,

"Your affectionate Sister,

"M. P."

In about 12 months after this, our hands were joined in marriage, ever since which, till the time of her departure, she was a true helpmate; indeed, she was one that truly walked in the fear of God with a tender conscience. The last 10 years since our marriage we have been settled in Brighton. The ministry she sat under was often made a blessing to her. Nearly the last time she was able to go out, which was at the early part of the present year, our dear

friend Mr. S. took these words for his text, "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial," &c.; under which discourse she was as happy as she could well be.

She has now left me and two dear children, with many friends, to mourn her loss. But sure I am, our loss is her eternal gain. May it be our happy lot to follow her as she followed her Lord and Master, that we may come to the same peaceful end.

Notwithstanding the very many tokens for good she had been favored with, when left to herself she was one of the most timid I ever met with; and it was with difficulty you could get a word from her. She very much tried to ascertain how she should meet that grizzly king of terrors, death. But never was one more completely divested of fear than she was, as the sequel will prove. When she came to the brink of the river, she had no dread of it; but all was calm and serene, firmly relying on the arm of her Beloved, who had held her up in six troubles and would not leave her in the seventh. Blessings for ever be on his precious name!

Toward the end of the month of February or the beginning of March, when her complaint increased, and she was confined to her house, she had a dream which made a deep impression on her mind, and she looked upon it as something more than nature. She and a friend being out together, they came to a large sheet of water, when she got a pole to see if it were too deep for them to go through. They got safely out at the other side. Then there was another, a smaller sheet, not more than two yards wide. She did not know how they were to get through that. At last it came into her mind how the Lord once divided the waters for the children of Israel, "and he is able to do the same for us;" and immediately the waters divided, and the tract was very narrow. When they had walked through, there was a little ark, where they went in. Upon this there was a tremendous hailstorm, which fell on the great buildings; but they felt no fear.

About this time she also had several passages of Scripture applied with power to her soul, such as the following: "The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing." Again, "Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters." These, with other circumstances, led her to anticipate that she should soon be removed from us. Her complaint became very painful, suffering most excruciating pain in her head; so much so that she could not read or bear any one to read to her, (which before had been a great comfort to her.) This was very distressing, and she besought the Lord earnestly, if his will, (the only remedy she could find effectual, all others having failed,) to remove the cause. Her dear Lord was pleased to hear and answer her speedily, and the pain was entirely removed. Her little boy, six years of age, was in the room with her. She said to him, "My dear, the Lord has removed the pain from my head." (He had been in the habit of reading to her.) He then said, "Shall I read to you, mamma?" She replied, "Yes." He took up Newton's hymn-book, which was lying on the table, and opened upon the following hymn, the whole of which I transcribe, as almost

every word seemed to speak to her; in fact, it almost overpowered her to see the goodness of the Lord so manifest :

“Behold the Throne of Grace!
The promise calls me near;
There Jesus shows his smiling face,
And waits to answer prayer.
“That rich, atoning blood
Which, sprinkled round, I see,
Provides for those who come to God
An all-prevailing plea.
“My soul, ask what thou wilt,
Thou canst not be too bold;
Since his own blood for thee he spilt,
What else can he withhold?
“Beyond thy utmost wants
His love and power can bless.
To praying souls he always grants
More than they can express.
“Since 'tis the Lord's command,
My mouth I open wide,
Lord, open thou thy bounteous hand,
That I may be supplied.
“Thine image, Lord, bestow,
“Thy presence and thy love!
I ask to serve thee here below,
And reign with thee above.
“Teach me to live by faith;
Conform my will to thine;
Let me victorious be in death,
And then in glory shine.
“If thou these blessings give,
And wilt my Portion be,
Cheerful the world's poor toys I leave
To them who know not thee.”

About this time her doctor recommended her to try change of air. She did not feel equal to undertake a journey. He then advised her to try another part of the town. She felt willing to try all lawful means; consequently, she went to a friend's house for a few days, but felt not the least benefited by it. During her stay there, she suffered much in her mind, and experienced one of the most severe conflicts she ever passed through. She never felt hardness of heart to such an extent in all her pilgrimage, and wondered what it all could mean. She earnestly begged of the dear Lord to show her if there was any cause which might be hid from her, wherefore he thus dealt with her. Moreover, she felt if she did not get deliverance, she must die under it. But her blessed Lord did shortly appear and “set her in safety from him that was puffing at her.” These words of Mr. Hart gave her relief :

“Why through darksome paths we go,
We may know no reason;
Yet we shall hereafter know,
Each in his due season.”

When she related the above to me, she said it appeared to her as if the enemy was making his last attack upon her; and, most re-

markably, he was not permitted to make another up to her last moment; that is to say, not to cause any distress. After this she returned home, and her strength declined rapidly. She never left her bed-room again.

At one time the following verse of Hymn 64, Gadsby's Selection, was greatly blest to her:

"Sov'reign Ruler of the skies,
Ever gracious, ever wise;
All my times are in thy hand,
All events at thy command."

When her medical man pronounced her case to be dangerous, (which was only about a fortnight before she was taken,) she was not the least moved, but with all the composure imaginable, said, "I shall be in time now to be buried in the Hanover grounds before they are closed;" a spot where she had long expressed a wish to be laid, near her dear father, who died in the Lord a few years since.

The following portion was much on her mind, "In your patience possess ye your souls;" a grace which was truly manifest throughout her illness. Not a complaint or a murmuring word was heard to escape her lips, but expressions of the greatest gratitude for any service rendered to her by the friends, who felt it a pleasure to be with her by night or day.

On Sunday evening, April 30th, several called to see her; to one she said, "It is a solemn thing to die; and if I had not a hope beyond the grave, I should be of all creatures the most miserable." A friend then said, "Do you not feel any terror about death?" "No," she replied; "but I have gone through long and sore conflicts to come to this now. Come life or death, I have no will; my will is lost in the Lord's will." During the night she said to me, "How true is that saying, 'A contented mind is a continual feast!'" She had been much exercised about leaving myself and the dear children, but the Lord mercifully appeared about a fortnight before, when she said, "I was enabled to commit you into his hands." From that time it was no trouble to her, and she felt perfectly resigned to her heavenly Father's will: "Let him do to me as seemeth good unto him." "He is too wise to err, too good to be unkind."

On Tuesday, May 2nd, she complained of feeling hardness of heart; "Not that I have lost hope," she said, "but I want his sensible presence; a sense of blood-bought pardon again and again." In the evening, when a friend left her, she said, "Do not weep, but beg for the happy moment to come."

On the morning of Wednesday she felt thankful to the dear Lord for giving her a little quiet during the previous night. This portion came to her, "Let all Israel hope in the Lord." Again, "Rest in the Lord; wait patiently for him." I quoted a portion of a hymn to her,

"Ye pilgrims of Zion and chosen of God,
Whose spirits are fill'd with dismay,
Since ye have eternal redemption through blood;
Ye cannot but hold on your way."

She said, "I have sung that from my heart many times." I remarked, "My dear, you have been favored above many." She emphatically replied, "I have."

On Thursday, when alluding to her complaint, she said, "It will never be better. I have felt for some time becoming dead to everything here, and how good the dear Lord has been in gradually removing it from me." Then she referred to me and the children, and said, "My dear, 'The Lord will provide.'" She then spoke of the sore conflict she passed through at the friend's house, and what more she might have to pass through she knew not; "but," she said, "the dear Lord has promised to be with me when I pass through the waters; and he cannot deny himself." I spoke to her of some friends who were in trouble. "That attends," she said, "the followers of the cross."

On Friday morning, she was favored with a little more rest than she had had for some time, again proving that the Lord was still a God hearing and answering prayer. She wanted all to praise him for having also favored her with sweet and blessed communion with the dear Redeemer, from the words, "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." This, like a reviving cordial, cheers and makes temptations light. This was a blessed visit indeed!

On Saturday she repeated a portion which had been a great stay to her: "Rest in the Lord; wait patiently for him." Her mouth and throat being so bad, it was with difficulty she could swallow a spoonful of wine and water. One said to her, "You are willing to try?" She replied, "I am willing to take it, or willing to go without. It is all mercy." In this frame she lay, just like a child. The first part of Saturday night she suffered greatly, but without the least complaint. To all appearance her end was very near. She revived again about midnight, when I said to her, "You still find your mind stayed? What a mercy!" She replied, "Yes," took a little wine and water, and said, "How good the dear Lord is in enabling me to take it. I would extol him with all my heart."

On Sunday, in reply to something I said to her, she repeated,

"How oft have sin and Satan strove
To rend my soul from thee, my God!"

And thousands of times I have wondered that the Lord has not cut me down as a cumberer of the ground; for it has appeared to me as if my very breath stank with sin. But I shall praise him for bringing me through. I cannot do it here, for want of strength." During the day, this portion was a great stay to her, "Great is thy faithfulness." After experiencing severe pains again, she exclaimed, "Every one leaves the number less. I have been comparing my sufferings to my dear Lord's, and O how light in comparison! O that my eye-strings would break in death! Hold out, patience, a little longer. I wish I could talk. (It was with difficulty she could articulate a sentence.) He is my Trust. He is my Rest."

On Monday, May 8th, when I entered her room, she said, (and never shall I forget her heavenly countenance and with what warmth the words came from her heart,) "I have felt some sweet moments during the night. I awoke with my hands clasped, and felt such a sweet spirit of prayer. I had no particular words; but I felt as though the Lord was coming." This agrees with what James says, "Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth near." About 12 o'clock I went to her again, when she told me she had had these words of dear Hart on her mind,

"Owe what thou wilt, the total sum
Is cancell'd by his death."

"I shall not," she added, "say much more to you." In about an hour after this she was taken for death, when one said to her, "You still find your dear Lord's presence supporting you?" She replied, "Underneath;" doubtless meaning that she felt the everlasting arms underneath. I said, "Your breath gets shorter, dear." "O," she replied, "that the last were come! Patience! Hold out, patience!" Afterwards she gently said, "When thou passest through the waters, ——" Here she stopped. I make no doubt she wanted to convey to us that she was experiencing the fulfilment of that promise which the dear Lord had given to her, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee." After this she lay quiet for about half an hour, when her eyes brightened, and she cast them upwards as if she saw the heavens opened, and so breathed her last.

"Without a sigh her fetters broke;
We scarce could say, 'She's gone,'
Before her ransomed spirit took
Its mansion round the throne."

Thus my beloved wife left this vale of tears, May 8th, 1854, in the 43rd year of her age.

Brighton, July, 1854.

F. B.

POETRY.

LINES

COMPOSED ON THE DEATH OF MRS. F. BANFIELD, BY A DEAR FRIEND WHO CORRESPONDED WHEN IN IRELAND, AND WHOSE LETTERS APPEARED IN THE "STANDARD," UNDER THE SIGNATURE "B. B.":

Another dear saint has just bid adieu
To this wilderness state, its sorrows and woe,
And all the effects of the fall.
Far out of the reach of all foes that could harm,
Secure and safe landed, and free from alarm,
Through Christ she has conquer'd them all.
The spirit has left the frail house of its clay,
And winged its flight to the regions of day;
Its happiness, O who can tell?
The poor worn out body is all that remains,
And that is for ever releas'd from its pains,
And rescued from sin, death, and hell.

Though tempted and tried, the Lord stood by her side ;
 She found him sufficient, and on him relied ;
 And proved his promises true.
 When rack'd with sore pains, and scarce able to move,
 He laid underneath her the arm of his love,
 And sweetly supported her through.
 She's for ever released from all earthly care,
 Nor sorrow nor trouble will ever more bear ;
 Supremely, eternally blest.
 Her highest delight is to praise and adore
 The Saviour of sinners, and for evermore
 With him and his chosen to rest.
 O happy exchange ! how blissful the state !
 I fain would be with her and join to relate
 The wonders of sovereign grace.
 Hold out, faith and patience, the time will soon come,
 When all who love Christ will be welcomed home,
 And unite in an endless embrace.
 She has left us below to battle awhile,
 With the powers of darkness to struggle and toil,
 Before we enter in ;
 But let us not faint, our Captain is strong,
 And whether our conflict be short or be long,
 'Tis He that has overcome sin.
 His promise is sure, his word cannot fail ;
 He is faithful to do, and has power to prevail
 O'er all that oppose his will.
 When we've finished our course, may he give us that peace
 Which he gave to our sister, and a happy release
 From sorrow and every ill.

And when all the seed elect are gather'd round the throne,
 The flesh of Jesus' flesh, the bone of Jesus' bone,
 The head and members one ;
 In robes of white array'd, see the church triumphant stand,
 The crown of life upon her head, the palm of victory in her hand,
 The praise to God alone.

The bond of love is perfect now the union is complete.
 Loud hallelujahs to the Lamb, for highest praise is meet !
 O blest employ !

The raptures of the saints are beyond conception high ;
 Their pleasures never ceasing, their love can never die ;
 What boundless joy !

Brighton, May 8th, 1854.

B. B.

At the request of the Editor of the "Little Gleaner," we suggest to those of our readers who have families, or are otherwise interested in the rising generation, that the opening year affords a favorable opportunity of commencing to take in the work.

If there is anything like peace of conscience or rest of mind after sin in a believer, unless the guilt be removed by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, such quietness is a lying delusion. It is generated by the deceitfulness of sin, and the art of Satan.

THE
GOSPEL STANDARD.

MATT. v. 6; 2 TIM. I. 9; ROM. XI. 7; ACTS VIII. 37, 38; MATT. XXVIII. 19.

No. 230. FEBRUARY, 1855. VOL. XXI.

“YOUR ADVERSARY, THE DEVIL.”

The promise which issued forth from the covenant of grace immediately upon the fall of mankind in Adam, was to the effect that enmity should be put between Satan and the seed of the woman. This seed of the woman pointed immediately to the Lord Jesus Christ; for the “seed of the woman” is spoken of not only in the singular, as denoting one, but also in the masculine gender, as pointing to a man, which man was the “Man Christ Jesus” and no other; for no other ever bruised Satan’s head but he, who is essentially the arm of the Lord to bring salvation to his people. “Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon?” (Isa. li. 9.) This arm of the Lord that has wounded the dragon is also spoken of in the 53rd chapter of the same prophecy, and applies to the Lord Jesus Christ in language that cannot be mistaken: “To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he (the arm of the Lord) shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground; he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him;” from all which it is evident that this “arm of the Lord” which has “wounded the dragon,” is no other than the Lord Jesus Christ, who was the seed of the woman there pointed to.

Now, the Lord Jesus Christ has a seed in his loins, who, according as they are by the providence of God brought into the world, are made partakers in measure of that Spirit which he had in fulness; and the covenant of grace secures this to them in such a way that they can never fall short of it, nor miscarry when they possess it; for, says God, “This is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; my Spirit that is upon them, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.” (Isa. lix. 21.) Thus, by virtue of union to Christ, the Spirit is sent forth to take possession of the soul, never to depart out of its subject, because the same vitality which the head possesses must find its way to every member of the mystical body; and therefore the words of our Lord, “Because I live, ye shall live also.”

Satan, therefore, being in enmity to the Head, now becomes in enmity to the members, and seeks with all the sagacity of a spiritual and powerful foe to oppose, hinder, and molest the seed of Christ wherever he can find them. He has walked to and fro in the earth, and found his Jobs, and Pauls, and Peters to sift ever since the days of Adam, and seeks now, by all manner of wiles and schemes, to do all the mischief to the cause of Christ in his saints that he can. Hence the words of Peter, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." (1 Pet. v. 8.)

Now, the masterpiece of Satan's wiles to me seems to be this,—that he has the power of hiding himself behind his works, and works upon the child of God in such a way that he does not suspect who it is that does it. He is said to be "transformed into an angel of light," (2 Cor. xi. 14,) so that his works and insinuations appear to come from an enlightened source. He does not come as an open adversary to molest and harass, that we can discover him to be so, and have, as it were, a pitched battle with him; but he comes with everything glossed over in that way by which we may be deceived, beguiled, and entrapped. Thus, when he tempted Eve it was done in this way more than in direct opposition to her. "The serpent beguiled me," she said. And Peter's sifting was much in the same way,—beguiling him to suppose he had power and human strength enough in him to stand of himself. And so it is with us. He is "transformed," and so deceives by making us think his influences proceed from another source.

1. Sometimes he makes the children of God think they cannot be the subjects of grace because they are such *sinner*s, and of course backs it with the representation that such a conclusion is a right, reasonable, and scriptural one; so much so, in fact, that the matter is not to be doubted. The scriptural description of saintship is entirely overlooked, or rather put out of sight; and the soul is then ripe for another delusion,—that he must do something in order to get a little better; whereas the Scriptures say that Christ "receiveth sinners and eateth with them." It is sinners, and not the self-sufficient righteous, that Christ came to save. And he is said to "justify the ungodly;" so that a feeling sense of one's sinnership is so far an evidence of Christian saintship. But Satan overturns the tables, misrepresents the subject, and upon these premises works despondency in the soul. The blessed Spirit, however, can and will lift the soul out of this state, and give it to see that Christ's salvation is for guilty and needy sinners, and that Christ is oft "a guest with a man that is a sinner." (Luke xix. 7.)

2. Another deception that he works upon an honest soul is, that he is *not a great enough sinner*. He represents that the children of God all go to a great depth in the sense of sin, and their guilt under a broken law, and their apprehension of the curse and wrath of God is terrible; therefore as the poor soul has not gone down there, he is not a fit subject for Christ and his salvation. The poor soul little suspects that this is one of the wiles of Satan, but is led by the same adversary to believe that it comes from a scriptural

view of the case and the decision of an honest conscience upon it; therefore he goes groaning, crying, and bewailing his state, and pleading for a deeper law-work, and for more wrath and curse to be revealed to him rather than be deceived. But the real depth to which a sinner must sink, must be left to the sovereign will of the Lord. Suffice it to say, that the Scriptures set up but one standard, and that is, that as a knowledge of sin is by the law, and it is the special work of the law to give it, that when it has given it, and wrought it in the soul, that its work is done; and the standard that this is to arrive at is thus settled by the apostle Paul, that "every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God." (Rom. iii. 19.) So that the soul is brought to see that "by the deeds of the law, no flesh living can be justified;" and all idea of creature-might, creature-power, and creature-goodness being crushed, he is led to another source for salvation, which source is Christ. But this Satan will hide and manœuvre to keep out of sight.

3. Another thing in which Satan is adverse to us is, by always *feeding that latent spirit of free-will*, that we all have too much of in ourselves. No matter what difficulties and troubles we may have, he will be ever stirring us up to do something to get us out of it, instead of resting upon the Lord to do it for us; hatching fresh plans, plotting and scheming to deliver ourselves from difficulties and perplexities. But we never shall. A child of God cannot by carnal scheming and human sagacity deliver himself from trouble. He is not to lean upon his own understanding; he is not to trust to his own strength; he is not to depend upon his own heart; but he is in all his ways to acknowledge the Lord, and he will direct his steps. Why, we are for ever meddling with affairs as if the way of man were "in himself;" as if it were "in man that walketh to direct his steps;" as if the step of the children of God were *not* "ordered by the Lord;" as if the "bounds of our habitation" were *not* fixed, and we might and could do as we chose. Whereas the word of God plainly declares, (and we are for ever proving it,) that we move under the immediate control of a covenant God. This secret self-trust is much fed by the secret workings of Satan in the soul.

4. Another thing in which he is an adversary is, *by feeding and pampering the old man of sin*, causing representations before the mind which tend to draw him out into exercise, whispering in a gilded tone that which feeds lust, stirs up the passions, or excites pride, self-esteem, or any other limb of the old man, which may tend to draw us off from better things. He has much power over our evil passions and fallen nature; and especially so when he covers his representations over with apparent brightness, and by seduction draws us into sin. We cannot, I am bold to affirm it, we cannot of ourselves resist him; we are perfectly helpless in his hand. Having no power nor will to stand against him, we are carried along with the tide of his evil suggestions, till a higher influence interferes. No power can stand against the power of Satan but the power of God; and thus we see and feel our need of continual strength and continual wisdom from above.

5. Another thing in which Satan exhibits his skill as our adversary is, *in raising up and feeding troubles and opposition from the world;* and in this respect he is often the cause where we little suspect him. See how he worked in opposition to poor Job; he could and did, we learn, work in the Sabceans to conceive the idea of falling upon his oxen and slay the servants. He had power also to operate upon the element of fire, so that others called it "the fire of God out of heaven," not knowing that Satan was the cause; and for aught I know, Job thought so too. He operated upon this fire to come down and burn up the sheep and servants and consume them, so that only one was left to tell the tale. Then he used his influence upon the minds of the Chaldeans, to fall upon his camels, and to carry them away and slay the servants. And then he was permitted to bring "a great wind from the wilderness," which smote the four corners of the house where his sons and daughters were eating and drinking, so that the house fell and killed the inmates; and last of all, to bring sore boils upon Job's body from head to foot, and to work on his wife to tempt him to "curse God and die." Here we see something of the power of Satan in raising up troubles in the world for the children of God; and his power is by no means diminished to this day, nor our strength increased to resist him. His physical power, as well as his mental sagacity, no doubt is very great, and no mere mortal can even commence to oppose it, were it not for that strength of Israel who has engaged finally to beat down Satan under our feet.

Satan, no doubt, is the cause of many of the troubles of the children of God where they little suspect him, and yet wonder and look about for a cause oftentimes. He works in a friend to grow cold and then turn round an open enemy to you, and you cannot for the life of you tell the reason why. No wonder. Satan was the cause. His hatred to you as a servant of Christ prompted him to it, and you need look no farther for the foe. Sometimes the children of God are led to conceive evil surmisings of other children of God; then to doubt their interest in divine things; then to whisper it about to others; and, last of all, wound and mutilate the poor creature, so as to cause him many pangs and much grief; and he cannot think why his brother (for he feels he is so) does such things and use such hard speeches as he does. Ah! friends, I can tell you I have had to writhe bitterly under it, and especially because I know it comes from the people of God. Satan is the cause; he loves to set the brotherhood by the ears; and he will do it if he can. O what a blessing it is that we have a great Captain of our salvation, that, however we may get mutilating one another, and thus become the drudges of Satan, yet he has to "speak the word only" (Matt. viii. 8) and every enemy flies, and "behold, there is a great calm!" (Mark iv. 39.)

Thus, and in many other undiscovered and discovered ways, is Satan continually an adversary to the people of God, and will be till the end of time. But he is held back by the hand of our blessed Lord, so that he can do us no real harm; and it is well for us to be

continually looking to him for our support and deliverance, by faith depending upon his all-sufficient arm to deliver us as we travel on, and ultimately to overcome the wicked one, "whom," says Peter, "resist, steadfast in the faith."

Hastings, 1854.

O.

LETTERS BY THE LATE STEPHEN OFFER.

LETTER III.

Dear Sister in our one great, glorious, and exalted Head of his mystical body the church, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is over all, God blessed for evermore, and has all power in his hands both in heaven and earth. May grace, mercy, and peace be with you, with faith, love, patience, hope, humbleness of mind, and a submission to the sovereign will of our covenant God and Father in Christ in all things, for he is "too wise to err" in any of his sovereign dispensations. It is unto his sovereign grace that you and I, dear sister, are debtors daily; for if we differ from others or from what we once were, it is unto his electing grace who quickened us when we were both "dead in trespasses and sins" that we are both indebted.

I am glad to hear that your soul is breathing after more holiness, and to be "conformed more unto the image of God's dear Son," for God has predestinated and called his people for this very purpose. And what a mercy, my dear young friend, that the Lord has stayed you in your youth, whilst so many of your age are spending their youth and health in pride, and sin, and folly, serving the devil and running the road that leads to hell. You and I were once both in this awful state; but the Lord has made us "willing in the day of his power" to be saved in that way which his love appointed and ordained before the world began, and revealed in the Holy Scriptures of truth. The Lord has given you spiritual life in your dead and benighted soul, by which you felt your need of a precious Jesus; for you know that there was a time when you did not know what it was to mourn after him, because you were dead in sin. He has given you light, that you may see that "by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified," and that the law is "our schoolmaster, to bring us to Christ;" and the Holy Spirit is convincing you daily what a poor, helpless, weak, and sinful worm you are, to bring you to the feet of Jesus, that he may perfect his strength in your weakness; and a sense of your sinfulness makes you prize his precious blood, that cleanseth from all sin. If you can prove that the Lord has done these things for your soul, and that this is your daily experience, then the Lord the Spirit has done great things for you, and he will never leave you nor forsake you, but will be with you in six and in seven troubles, and will be your God and Guide unto death, and will be your Portion for ever and ever. If the Lord has taught you these things, and chosen you out of the world, then you must expect the world, the flesh, and the devil to be at war with you.

But the Lord has commanded you to "call upon him in the day of trouble, and he will deliver you;" and think it not strange concerning the trials of the way; for if you ever wear the crown, you must bear the cross.

I suppose that you cannot find many lovers of the Lord Jesus, for according to the word of the Lord, they are but few. The Lord has provided for you in providence and also in grace, where you can hear the gospel of his grace; and may the grace of the gospel be felt, experienced, and enjoyed in your own soul.

My dear sister, I pray that you may be kept by the mighty power of God, and be as a bright and burning light amongst those that you now live with, that you may be "an epistle known and read of all men." Look to Jesus in all your temptations, trials, fightings without, and fears within; for it is he alone that can deliver you out of them or bring you through; and he will do it, for he is able and he is willing, and will make a way for your escape.

May the Lord cause his face to shine upon you and give you that peace within which is known only by the grace of faith in the precious blood of the Lamb of God.

S. OFFER.

Look to the right marks of having closed with Christ; if you love him better than the world, and would quit all the world for him, then *that* says the work is sound.—*Rutherford*.

Paul was a chosen vessel, appointed to preach Christ to the Gentiles, and, at last, to bear witness of him at Rome; and this must be done, although bonds, imprisonments, and death itself attend him in every place. If, therefore, they lie in wait for him at Damascus, and watch the gates night and day, to kill him, he shall be let down by the wall in a basket, and so escape them. (Acts ix. 2-25.) If all Jerusalem be in an uproar to kill him, the chief captain shall come with an army and rescue him, (Acts xxi. 31, 32,) though no friend to Paul, nor to his cause. If more than 40 men have bound themselves with an oath that they will neither eat nor drink until they have killed him, his kinsman shall hear of it, and by his means the chief captain shall be his friend again and grant him a sufficient convoy, (chap. xxiii. 14-23,) and this attempt shall be an occasion of sending him to Rome, where his last testimony is to be given. If Jews and Gentiles make an assault together, to use him despitefully and to stone him, he shall be aware of it, and by fleeing, save himself, (chap. xiv. 5-7,) by which means also the gospel shall be further spread. But, suppose he be left in their hands, and they so far prevail as to stone him, and drag him out of the city, (ver. 19,) then, sure, his work is at an end? No, all this shall not hinder; death itself shall not separate Paul from his work. It is not his being once stoned, nor his thrice suffering shipwreck, nor his being in deaths often, nor anything else, that shall make void the purpose of God for his bearing witness of Christ at Rome, as is abundantly evident by the stories of him, and the event, at last.—*Elisha Coles*.

A LETTER BY THE LATE MR. TURNER, OF SUNDERLAND.

My dear Friends,—The state of the church of Christ in this day of great false light but real darkness, often makes me very low. For days together I am much cast down; not for our little church in particular, though I lament the want of life and love amongst us, but it appears to me, that as the march of intellect keeps quick time, the light of life decreases. O that the Saviour would “take to himself his great power,” and reign, and that “his own right hand and stretched out arm would get to himself the victory” over the worldly-mindedness, lukewarmness, carnal ease, and barrenness with which the church of Christ itself seems to me to be fearfully entangled. Were I not persuaded that the Lord has yet a great work to perform upon earth, I should conclude that the time of the Bridegroom’s coming was near; when both the wise and foolish virgins slumbered and slept. I feel, lament, confess, and pray against much of those things of which I am the unhappy subject. I have experienced some support and sweetness from these words of the sweet Psalmist of Israel, “But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh on me. Thou art my help and my deliverer, make no tarrying, O my God.”

I am sometimes provoked to jealousy, when I hear of several of my people going home from chapel rejoicing, when I return grieving, murmuring, confessing, praying. Sometimes awful rebellion rises in my desperately-wicked heart; then comes, “Be still, and know that I am God; my understanding is unsearchable, my ways past finding out; mine arm is not shortened, nor my ears heavy; the display of my power depends upon my wise, holy, just, gracious, sovereign will.” This produces self-loathing, submission, hearty confessions, and humble entreaties. And the forbearance, long-suffering, and infinite condescension of the Almighty cause me to lie low in the dust. O what strange creatures we are! Fickle, sinful, helpless. But we have an immutable, Almighty Saviour to look to and trust in, whose love is everlasting, whose mercy endureth for ever, whose purpose is unchangeable, whose covenant can never be broken, whose faithfulness can never fail, whose promises never alter nor ever come short of their accomplishment, whose salvation can never be abolished, and whose righteousness is everlasting. O for more faith in him, love to him, and enjoyment of him. O for more of the Holy Spirit’s witness of interest in him; may it be more abundant and more abiding! And may he favor us with more unctuous experience of the benefits and blessings flowing from the mediatorial work of that Just One, and make us more faithful to God. Do not your hearts say, Amen? Who but the blessed Spirit could produce such breathings in our vile hearts? And never could we have been made partakers of that Holy Spirit unless we were the purchase of Christ’s sin-atoning blood, and the objects of the Father’s everlasting love. The free, sovereign, eternal love of God is the Fountain Head; Christ crucified, the precious Channel; and the Holy Spirit’s conscience-satisfying, heart-purifying, and soul-fructify-

ing influences, the streams that flow from that Fountain through that Channel. These can satisfy the thirsty soul, though in a barren land. How thoughtlessly I once repeated those words, "We bless thee for the means of grace;" but, blessed be his holy name, he has many times given me occasion and enabled me so to do. How amiable his tabernacles, how pleasant his ways, and what perfect freedom there is in his service, when his soul-enlightening, quickening, comforting presence is with us.

The Lord bless you, and keep you in his fear, faith, and love.
Farewell.

Yours affectionately,

Sunderland, April 17th, 1845.

S. TURNER.

Providence has a thousand keys to open a thousand doors for the deliverance of his own, when it is even come to the greatest extremity. Let us be faithful, and care for our own part, which is to do and suffer for him, and lay Christ's part on himself, and leave it there. Duties are ours, events are the Lord's.—*Rutherford*.

Jacob, to save his life, flies to Padan-aram; there Laban deals hardly with him, and when he made homewards, follows him with evil intent; but the Lord in a dream takes him off. No sooner is he escaped from him, but Esau comes against him with four hundred men, full bent to revenge the old grudge; the Lord turns his heart in a moment, and melts him into brotherly affection, that instead of destroying Jacob, he proffers himself to be his guard and convoy. When Simeon and Levi had so highly provoked the Canaanites, that it was a thousand to one but they would come and cut off Jacob's family at once, the Lord causes a terror to fall upon them, that they do not so much as look after them. When a seven years' famine was coming upon the land, (likely enough to eat up poor Jacob and his house,) the Lord, by a strange providence, sends a harbinger to make provision for them in Egypt. When oppressed by the Egyptians, and all means used to destroy them, and that both with craft and cruelty, the Lord so orders the matter, that the more they were oppressed, the faster they grew, and by a high hand he brings them out at last. In the wilderness, they carry themselves as unworthily towards God as ever people did; doing all that in them lay to cut off the entail of that good land by their unbelief and daily repeated rebellions; insomuch that the Lord threatens to dispossess them; but for his promise sake made with Abraham, withdraws his hand, and spares them. I might instance also the great straits and dangers they were in at the Red Sea, which the Lord divided for them; afterwards for want of water, which he brings them out of a rock; then for bread, which also, he gives them from heaven; how they were denied passage by some, and waylaid by others, and yet carried on and delivered; and at last, how the Lord drove out those giants whom they despaired of overcoming; and so gave them the land in possession, according to his promise hundreds of years before; "there failed not aught of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass."—*Elisha Coles*.

REMEMBRANCES AND DROPS OF BLESSEDNESS.

“Set thee up waymarks, make thee high heaps.”—(Jer. xxxi. 21.)

O how precious, when grey hairs begin to alter the appearance of our head, warning us of a coffin and the grave, I say, how immensely valuable, how unspeakably precious, then and at such times, does beam forth our calling and election of God! What is free-will *then*? An empty bubble. Did God begin with me, there is the point, in religion? If I began with him, it will all be choked and suffocated in eternity. What a surprising thing, that the Almighty God should begin with me, so insignificant a worm! Nay, what is so far worse, so rebellious, so naturally polluted and fiendish a creature as I. The word “fiendish” will not offend one who knows all the hidden evils of his heart. But nothing short of this will do, that the Almighty verily began with us! What a stoop, that the Creator of heaven and earth, the most unspeakable Maker of the starry heavens, should ever have dealings and transactions solidly felt and known by me. His bondages and deliverances, his bindings and loosings, his anger and his love, felt by me; all, all show to my wondering eyesight that Christ is mine and I am his. The repentance he has granted me, the forgiveness of sins he has given me; the quickness in a state of sin he has given; (whereas before I was stupid, besotted, and benumbed in the sense of sin;) the lively feelings as regards guilt and pardon; the quick sense of stings and balm, envenoming stings of guilt, and healing balm felt of Christ’s blood. I assure you, in sight of grey hair, a coffin, and the grave, we want our calling and election to shine warm and strong. Worms, and dust, and our mouldering to clay and corruption, want the strong hand or voice of God in us to assure us of our interest; to open the gates of paradise to our wondering eyesight; and softly to say, (louder than ten thousand thunders,) in accordance with Scripture, “Thou art mine.”

There is nothing short of this will do; more or less. The elect of God are not permitted of God to rest at a peradventure. And the doctrine or the gift of grace, which is it in me? the tinkling bell of knowledge, or the warm life-blood, as it were, of everlasting life, which is it in me? This frets and rankles, and makes us as the Psalmist partly, “I opened my mouth and panted” after assurance. Besides, affliction, sorrow, poverty, sickness, and knowing one’s own sore and grief in ten thousand ways in the course of years, makes us unwilling to rest short of assurance.

All quickened souls may be divided into two sorts; seekers or finders of Christ.

The finders of Christ feelingly, are mostly gradual, like the shining light, that shines more and more. It was in the year 1833, amid whirlwinds and hurricanes of distress, when I was preaching a few Sundays at a parish church a few miles from Baydon, Wilts, when God first plentifully broke up spiritually the great deeps of his love in divine influences feelingly to my soul, and made spiritually springs, wells, and rivers to touch or overspread my heart with hidden “manna like hoar-frost” or supernatural dew, and I said, What is it? Delight,

joy, soothing calm, peaceful bliss, moistening rapture, and gracious satiations overspread my God-fearing soul, that had greatly feared and greatly panted after rest and joy; but then was satiated. It was in 1845 or 1846, when God showed me partly and remarkably in a dream, what he would do for me in temporal things, which in 1848 he fulfilled by his unexpectedly giving me a temporal provision, thereby setting my head above all my enemies. It is to be feared, that many good people are more or less left to smother their convictions, to please man somehow or other for a piece of bread. But I might as well have swallowed lies in the Church of England as do so among the Dissenters. In 1847, in a most distressing twelvemonth's illness, God showed me unspeakably, and *never, never*, to be forgotten by me, that my soul and everybody else's soul generally that was a child of God was in a sickly state. And I secretly feel now that the real children of God in the present day, through worldliness, carnality, lukewarmness, allowed and winked at backsliding within, and regarding iniquity in their heart, and want of keeping their heart and life with all diligence through grace; (all smothered up more or less in a doctrinal assurance;) I say I still believe most of God's children in our present day are in a sickly state; for as a blessed aged man near Wootton Bassett now dead, said, "When I go to see them, I mostly come back a worse man," that is, they are in a sicklier state of soul than I am? Gracious and adorable God, say I of my poor unworthy self, worthless creature that I am, can it be possible, with broken health, having left the Church of England without sixpence to depend on and no friend to look to; can it be possible that I, having stood in such most perilous places between God and my conscience, can be content with a sickly religion? No. When I was a Church minister I had more tenderness of conscience, more yearnings after God, and more love to the people of God, than many dead-alive Particular Baptists have.

God in his unsearchable providence has, unexpectedly to me, made me better off in temporal things than most of his children; so, spiritually, when I was in the Church, before I knew almost there were such people as Particular Baptists, I used much on my knees reverentially, in anxious sorrow and careworn tremblings toward God, to read the Bible from end to end, backward and forward, and forward and backward, until my knees were almost horny; so, having been 20 years at Abingdon, I lift up my hand to heaven, as I did when I left the Church without a sixpence, or kindred, or good health, to justify such an extreme step as throwing and tossing away my bread for conscience' sake, without consulting one creature under the sky; I say there is not one precept in the Bible, as well as doctrine and experience, but what I hold dearer than life. Such is religion got in prayer, and that "takes the whole gospel, not a part."

It is not saying, but gosselly doing the will of God, through enabling grace, that wins the prize. Through affliction, sorrow, and distress sanctified, for the last 20 years, in trembling anxiety, in poverty, or sickness, or unspeakable woes, I have mostly kept a diary

daily of my life, and that will show, after I am dead and gone, that I have not been permitted to do otherwise than, as Huntington says, "Balance accounts between Christ and your conscience twice a day," nor to be permitted to lie down on my bed with unrepented-of sin. Swift, daily, and unmuffled repentance is a gift; and the want of it produces much of the bondage so much cried out about.

I am a poor vile creature. My language is, "Help me to keep the bloody field." Continual temptations, vile feelings, my heart, like yeast, continually swelling with one base working or another; saved by grace, yet pained at an evil thought; glorying in feeling the imputed righteousness of Christ mine, and yet longing and struggling, through the Spirit, for an imparted righteousness as the fruits and effects of the former; for good works gospelly and tenderness of conscience, wishing in love to match or outshine any one I know, and yet glorying in being saved by my Saviour's passive and active works alone; feeling, before a heart-searching God, I could lay down my life, if required, for any one of God's children, and in love showing, by making daily sacrifices for them, I can so far prove it; feeling I am the vilest whelp under heaven, and yet desiring and struggling (having ill health), through grace, to have a spotless conscience; thus struggling to be ready to die any moment; though baffled unwillingly, stung, and goaded by imperfection and indwelling sin; hating myself worse than the devil for my shortcomings; determined, through grace, to win the prize, and yet feeling a chilling weight of sin opposing my warmest wishes after the fruits and effects of grace in holiness of life, word, and thought.

I should speak against my conscience, and the Holy Ghost, and the Scriptures, if I said I did not possess these things. These and various other items of blessedness make grey hairs, a coffin, and the grave to shine or dawn with brightest bliss on my happy, ravished, and transported feelings. And as Paul says, "The judge of quick and dead, who will reward every man according to his works, knoweth that I lie not."

N.B.—The dream above-mentioned is this: In 1845, or thereabout, having long had poor health and nothing of my own to live on, I very much inquired of God what was to be done providentially. He gave me this dream. I saw a will with my name in it, for so much money left me, as plain as I could see a man standing before me. I never thought of the dream afterwards except as mere vanity. In 1848, perfectly unexpected by me, yea, perfectly contrary to my expectation, that dream was literally fulfilled. And after I had got the money, Mrs. B., a godly woman, near Abingdon, said, in effect, to me, "*Now, you know that what you told me years ago about that dream has become literally true.*" "God speaketh once, yea, twice in a dream, and man perceiveth it not." If we were led and enabled more tenderly to consider and observe God's operations, little and great, inward and outward, toward us, both in providence and grace, I am persuaded we should be more built up or edified. Bless the Lord, O my soul!

Abingdon.

I. K.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A LIVING AND A DEAD FAITH.

My dear Friend,—It is a great mercy if I have not been preaching in vain since I left A——.

I have been well attended at Eden Street, and have felt liberty in speaking two or three times. When the Lord blesses my soul, and there are signs of God's word being blest, it seems then I am in my right place. I am constrained to exalt the mercy of God, knowing there is no hope of salvation for me in any other way. What a mercy it is to know that Christ died for our sins, past, present, and to come; but a real faith in such realities is sure to be tried. It seems too great for sinful dust to call God "Father," and to feel sure we have a mansion of glory; but I have felt such enjoyments, and can therefore declare them to others. But the devil, with the infidelity and blasphemies of my heart, will ever fight against such a faith in my soul. Yet what a difference there is between a dead faith and a living faith! It is the living faith that will be tried, and will cause God's people to be very thankful for upholding and supporting grace.

It is nearly 19 years since I first preached in this large city. I knew then if I went to heaven, it must be through grace. But I have, through mercy, been taught more what I am by nature and what I am by grace, and have known more of the precious love of Christ than I knew then. I wish that I could prize more and more every mark and testimony of God's love to my soul.

I hear of the Lord's blessing attending the word spoken by me at different places, which is encouraging. I believe a good many God-fearing people come to Eden Street Chapel; and although they have never had a pastor, they have now 70 members.

Mr. G., who has preached at A—— for many years, intended to go by the train that was upset the other day, and ran down a deep embankment near B——. However he changed his mind, and went on horseback, as he was going to Lewes, and arrived at the very spot where the dreadful calamity took place two minutes afterwards. It made him feel grateful for such a deliverance.

I hope the friends are well. Give my love to all inquiring friends. "Greet them by name."

Pentonville, June 16th, 1851.

Yours affectionately in Christ,

W. T.

A LETTER BY THE LATE W. GADSBY.

Dear Friend,—I just drop a line to say that I am still in the wilderness, and for wise purposes my dear Lord sometimes suffers me to be very much bewildered. But, bless his precious name, he does not leave me there, but he comes again, and brings light, life, and liberty with him.

I am glad to hear that the dear Lord now and then affords you a sweet lift by the way. In fact, it is no small mercy to know when we are down and need his blessed Spirit to lift us up. I was speaking from Job xxii. 29 on Lord's Day, namely, "When men are cast

down, then thou shalt say, There is lifting up." Blessed be the name of our ever-living and ever-loving Jesus, he is sure to send help, and lift up his dear children when they are down, though not in the way they may dictate, nor perhaps quite as soon as they wish it; but his promise is sure, and he is faithful. Darkness may endure for a night, and it may appear a long night too, yea, and a very cold one, and the beasts of the forest may creep forth, (Ps. civ. 20,) and very much annoy and fright the poor benighted soul; but the Lord will appear, and put a new song into his mouth, and he shall in holy faith and triumph say, "I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. My meditation of him shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord." Grace must and shall win; therefore victory is sure.

The Lord keep you, my dear friend, in the old beaten path; but remember, trials must abound, and comforts will follow.

Give my love to your dear father and wife, and all the dear family of God among you. The sweet smiles of Jesus cheer your hearts, and the unctuous love of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost enrich your souls; then you will sing for joy and your faces will shine brightly.

I have been very poorly this winter. My breathing fails me much; yet my dear Lord has kept me at my work, and has been graciously pleased to give me a measure of strength for it.

I fear I shall not be able to be your way this year. I am much disappointed at it, for I fully expected it; but the Lord does not always let me have my own way. I expect to be in Brighton instead of coming your way. The end I have in view is the sea air, for I feel it my duty to get as much of that as I can. Should I never see you again, it rejoices my heart to know that we are one in our dear Lord, "bone of his bone, and body of his body, and flesh of his flesh;" yea, and what sweetens the whole, life of his life and spirit of his Spirit.

Let me hear from you soon, and be assured that if it ever lies in my power to come to see you and impart some spiritual blessing to you as an instrument in the Lord's hands, I will gladly do it. But I think duty calls me elsewhere this year. I am now taking medicine, and I do hope my breathing will mend; but I wish to say and feel, "The will of the Lord be done." What a mercy it is that we are the care of our adorable Lord the Lamb. Bless his precious name, he cannot err; no, nor be unkind.

Yours in the Lord,

April 16th, 1833.

W. GADSBY.

O what kindness God has heaped upon me! what kind strugglings, what kind smilings! what kind overlookings of my outrageous wickedness! But he has shown himself to be God, and not man, in his dealings with me. In my mad attempts, he has often stopped me; my mad wishes he has refused to grant; and my mad words he has often seemed to overlook.—*John Brown.*

JOYFUL IN TRIBULATION.

My dear Friend,—Many times have I wanted to write you since I wrote you the last few lines in London, but have had no opportunity till now, and I do not know a minute but that I may be called away; but still I must make a trial to send you a line.

Through God's great mercy and goodness, I am brought through the past year, a year gone, and gone for ever; and all the troubles, trials, crosses, distresses, perplexities, griefs, sorrows, anguish, fears, and cares which my soul has had to bear, carry, and endure through the last six months of the past year, are gone, and gone for ever! My soul has that much the less of the number which are appointed for me to pass through, for they are all meted out by measure; for the lot must fall upon us, and the measure we must have. But, my dear friend, mine has not been all trouble, cares, fears, sorrows, sinkings, distresses; anguish, affliction, temptations, and wars during the last six months of the past year. No; far from this; the Lord has given my soul many sweet humblings, crumbings, softenings, meltings, lifts, helps, touches, kisses, smiles, and deliverances, with very many mercies in providence as well as in grace; and under these sweet humbling and melting frames of soul, I could thank him from my very heart for this long and painful affliction, which no one but the Lord and myself knows to the full. Many times have I thought I must sink under it, for my strength, both natural and spiritual, seemed to be all gone; at times getting but little rest night or day; but, somehow or other, the Lord has supported me, and brought me through thus far, and held me up and held me on.

The week before Christmas was indeed a trying one; I verily thought I must give up my preaching and profession altogether, for the very powers of darkness seemed let loose upon me day and night. O the agony my poor soul went through! But I hobbled off to chapel on the Lord's Day morning in a poor trembling state of mind, went into the pulpit heavy laden, read, and began to try to confess my state and condition before the Lord, with my bleeding wounds laid open under my heart-aching and heart-breaking sorrows. The Holy Ghost opened the door of mercy, the throne of grace, the door of hope, and the door of faith, and led my soul into the Person of the Lord Jesus, in that feeling way and manner which I have not witnessed for many years. The wounded side of the Lord Jesus was laid open to my soul's view, and the healing virtue of his blood flowed freely into the bleeding wounds of my heart, so that they were all healed, and my soul was brought forth into a large place, Jesus made exceedingly precious, his word of truth very sweet, and a springing well flowed within my soul. I do not remember having more than about two or three such inlets and springs at a throne of grace before in all my experience. O how sweet it is to have a sweet draught out of the well of salvation! to have a good drink of the brook by the way, and one's soul full of the love, mercy, and goodness of the Lord! to have a gospel door opened and one's soul led into it by faith! to walk about Zion! to have the gates of

righteousness thrown open! to have a sweet view of one's interest in the blood of the everlasting covenant! and to feel it has cleansed one's soul from all sin. Truly, my dear friend, it must be cleansing blood to wash my foul and filthy soul clean, purge away all my guilt and dead works, and to sanctify my base heart right before the majesty of heaven. Truly this is a free act of sovereign grace and mercy. This set my soul upon its legs again, made every crook straight and rough place plain, and every dark cloud remove, and my soul walk at large. A sweet day of liberty I had, and hope many poor tried souls were comforted, fed, blest, and encouraged.

O, my friend, what a free grace salvation it is, and must be, to save such a filthy, guilty, wandering, backsliding wretch as I! Truly his mercy must be from everlasting to everlasting towards them that fear him. But all this would be nothing to my poor sin-tortured and devil-hunted soul, were it not for feeling some union and having some communion with Jesus, the God-Man upon his mediatorial throne, and seeing and feeling that he can be touched with the feeling of my infirmities, and that he has been tempted in all points like myself. Truly "he is able to succor them that are tempted." O how Satan has tried to make a full end of me in my troubles! What cutting, distressing, and distracting temptations! How my soul struggled through! If I were now with you I could relate some of them to you; I am sure your heart would ache for me if you knew some of my besetting and killing troubles. But the Lord knows them all, and has promised to deliver me out of them all; and blessings be on the head of the Lamb, who "hath delivered and doth deliver," and in whom my soul is constrained to believe "will yet deliver."

But, my dear friend, I have struggled through the first week of the new year, and it has opened up fresh troubles and fears from the same source. But the Lord has favored me with a spirit of meditation upon my bed in the night-watches, and in the midst of them you were brought to my mind; a chain of things opened before me; a spirit of prayer, I trust, fell upon me; and a hope sprang up within my heart that I should see and experience some peace and quietness on the earth once more.

What a mercy to be favored with a good hope through grace, and to have a feeling sense that all is right between God and conscience; that it matters not whether we die by sword, pestilence, or famine.

I feel with you in this awful war, and hope I have had many cries to the Lord to appear for us as a nation. The Lord only can gain the victory for us. My love to all inquiring friends.

Yours affectionately,

Woburn, Jan. 8th, 1855.

T. G.

The ornament and beauty of this lower world, next to God and his wonders, are the men that spangle and shine in godliness.—*Bunyan.*

A LETTER BY THE LATE MR. GOULDING.

The younger unto the well-beloved William, whom I love in the truth,—Beloved, I wish above all things that you may prosper and be in health, even as your soul prospereth. Amen.

Your epistle came safe to hand, and I was not a little comforted by the coming of Titus. To the Lord's ever-blessed name be all the glory and all the praise for removing you out of a strait into a broad place: "When said he to any of the seed of Jacob, Seek ye my face in vain?" Never. No. He never fails of fulfilling his promise when the prayer of faith goes up. "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. I will pour out my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring." "The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall wax stronger and stronger." "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon." "O that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness, for the wonderful works that he doeth for the children of men!"

I have great reason to be grateful and thankful to him for all the goodness, long-suffering, and sparing mercy that he has been pleased to make known to and display in the behalf of his unworthy servant. The many deliverances and salvations wrought out for me by the way are "more in number than the hairs of my head;" if I were to reckon them up in order, they are more in number than the sand upon the sea shore. Adored be his precious name, I am now as well as ever; not only saved from the affliction in my head, but also from one in my foot, from a wound there received. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name." "Say ye not there are four months, and then cometh harvest? Lift up your eyes and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest; and he that reapeth receiveth wages and gathereth fruit unto life eternal, that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together." This is a very precious text. Truly the harvest here spoken of is a spiritual harvest, setting forth the gathering together of poor elect Samaritans to Christ, the Lord of the harvest. And every one that God raises up and sends forth into the field, "bearing precious seed," and preaching the word, which is the general means of sowing it, "shall doubtless come again rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him;" that is, all the elect of God, converted by his instrumentality, shall be his joy and crown of rejoicing in that day. They are his work in the Lord; and when the day of judgment comes, then "both he that soweth and he that reapeth shall rejoice together." A harvest field is a beautiful representation of souls meet for glory.

Mr. Huntington has been and is, I am sorry to say, very ill, but is better now than he has been. If you have any interest at a throne of grace, O fail not in helping us! I am afraid we are not to have him long. But O if it be not contrary to the Lord's

blessed will, may he be raised up again and continue long amongst us.* May he come forth from this furnace, when he is tried, as gold seven times purified, that the Lord's children may again have it to say of him, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth." When Elijah was taken away, the Lord was pleased to raise up Elisha; but whether it will be the case when our Elijah is gone, God only knows. However, we have this promise, that Israel shall never be forgotten of his God, and that he will send his elect pastors after his own heart, that shall feed them with knowledge and with understanding. As this city is Satan's seat, I charge you before God and the elect angels that you cry mightily to God that our Samson may be restored. This, God willing, is the work I mean to go through; and O that the ever-blessed Spirit may lead and guide me into all truth, help my infirmities, and teach me what to say.

"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give all diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall. For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."—(2 Pet. i. 10, 11.)

I shall show,—

I. Who are the *brethren*.

II. What is *effectual calling*.

III. What is *election*.

IV. How calling and election are *made sure*; and from these, when made sure, none can finally fall.

V. And lastly. That *all such* shall certainly enter into that everlasting kingdom prepared for all the elect in glory.

I. First, then, who are "brethren?" I need not dwell largely upon this. There are false brethren and true brethren; brethren by name and profession only, and brethren by possession of the grace and Spirit of God. It is but to the latter that the words in the text are addressed. A brother is one who is quickened by the Spirit of God, brought to believe in Jesus Christ, and to love him in his heart in sincerity and in truth. He is one that is effectually born again, born of the Spirit of God, and so made a new creature, or created anew in Christ Jesus, as all the elect sooner or later shall be, "for except a man be born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." And these Christ "is not ashamed to call brethren." "Henceforth I call you not servants, but friends." And again, "I ascend to my Father and to your Father, to my God and your God." "God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city," yea, "a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." These brethren the apostle warmly exhorts to "give all diligence to make their calling and election sure," because he knew, by his own experience, until this was the case, and settled in the court of their own consciences,

* Mr. Huntington lived for nearly 15 years after this.

there could not be solid and lasting peace. He knew that they would be unstable, liable to be tossed about with every wind of doctrine and temptation of the devil, and to be seduced by heretics and false teachers, who bring forth many cunningly-devised fables, whereby they lie in wait to deceive the simple and unwary; for all the business of these is to destroy souls. "A foolish woman (or false church) is clamorous, she is simple, and knoweth nothing. For she sitteth at the door of her house, on a seat in the high places of the city, to call passengers who go right on their ways. Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither; and as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant. But he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell." (Prov. ix. 13-18.) "Wherefore the rather," then, my brother, as there are such swarms of these foolish women, or false churches, "give all diligence to make your calling and election sure." But you may be ready to say, "Can it certainly be known here, in this life, whether we are called, or elected, or not?" Yes, certainly; which leads me to my second general head, viz.,

II. To show what is *effectual calling*. The calling that issues in everlasting salvation is the sole work of God himself.

The ministers of the gospel go forth and preach the word in the hearing of all, not knowing who are the elect, and who are not. Well, a servant of God goes and delivers a sermon; and under it one is effectually convinced of his lost estate by nature. He is quickened of the Spirit to feel the burden of his sin, and to know that he cannot save himself from the wrath to come. This brings him into soul-trouble and distress. He begins to be afraid of hell and destruction; nor can he go on in his evil course as he used to do. Go to hear the word he must; but all that he hears is against him. He finds the curses and threatenings of the law to come home with power, and each echoes a voice in his conscience, "Thou art the man." He finds by this he is that very sinner spoken of in the word of God, that he is under the curse of a broken law, and exposed to the wrath of God. Such texts as these come home like daggers to his breast: "The unrighteous shall not enter the kingdom;" "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."

This is the first work of the Spirit of God convincing of sin. When this alarm has spread through his whole soul, he begins to reason thus: "I am in a terrible state; I must surely make amends." To work then he goes in his own strength to keep the commandments. Well, here he works and toils; but still conscience condemns him and the law curses and follows him up closely with this language, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things," &c.; and "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." This makes matters worse and worse, so that at last the soul is obliged to draw this conclusion, "Well, I cannot perform what the law requires; I must give it all up for lost; damned I must be."

Now when the sinner's strength is all gone, and there is none shut up or left, then the sweet work of the Spirit is to enlighten the understanding and to set Christ before it as an all-sufficient Saviour, and as "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." He now feeds the soul with such promises as these: "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance;" "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost." These things raise up budding hope; "Who can tell," he says, (I am just the character described in the word,) "but that I may be saved?" This stirs the soul up to diligence in the means and searching the Scriptures. As his diligence increases, so the promises open; he begins to be enlightened into the complete works of Christ, and finds him to be just the Saviour that suits him. But he finds so much unbelief within, and his wicked life presses him so sore, that he cannot believe that ever Christ came to save him, or that he ever will save him; and yet he knows that out of him he must be lost and perish for ever.

When thus convinced "of unbelief," then the next work of the Spirit is to work faith in his heart to believe in Jesus Christ as his Saviour, and to receive him as the Father's free gift, with all his saving benefits. And when this is the case, then in comes Christ with all his glory into the soul, melts his heart down by a sense of his dying love, brings pardon, peace, and joy, casts the devil out of his heart, demolishes his works, gives him that evangelical repentance that needs never to be repented of, and the spirit of adoption, whereby he cries, "Abba, Father; my Lord and my God!" He now justifies him by the imputation and application of his righteousness to the conscience freely, from all things, so that he enters into rest; yea, finds (being gathered to Christ, the standard now set up among the Gentiles) his "rest to be glorious," so that "joy and gladness" is found in his heart, "thanksgiving and the voice of melody." Such a one is effectually called out of the world, out of the reigning power of sin, the destroying power of Satan, and out of self-confidence, and is called unto the Lord Jesus Christ, as all the elect are: "For to him shall the gathering of the people be." Effectual calling, therefore, is a display of divine power in the heart and soul of a sinner, turning him from the error of his way, changing his heart from the love of sin to the love of God; and as soon as ever this power is put forth, we die to the things of time and sense as fast as possible. And all that have in this way been convinced of sin and of the plague of their own hearts, and as have been brought to believe in Jesus Christ as their Saviour, so as to love him and follow him in faith and affection, are called as sure as there is a God in heaven or a word of truth in the Bible. Examine yourself; you may soon tell whether your profession springs from a love to Christ in the heart in saving you from your sins, or whether you are like the women spoken of in Isa. iv. 1: "In that day, seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel; only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach." But if you say, "Blessed be God, the first of

my setting off in religion arose from a conviction of sin, and a feeling sense of my lost estate, and I never could get any rest, comfort, or peace of conscience until the Lord was pleased to enlighten me into the truth as it is in Jesus; till he showed me his fulness and sufficiency, and that he came and was manifest in the flesh to save the chief of sinners; after which view he was pleased, by his Spirit, to enable me to close in with him as my Saviour; this, and this alone, brought peace to my conscience; his precious blood and righteousness being applied, I found my burden removed, reconciliation and friendship take place, I found God to be a loving, merciful Father in his dear Son; and I firmly believed that he, as my Surety, had paid all my debts, and in his blood washed away all my sins. This manifestation of his love to my heart kindled mine to him, and by faith in him and love to him as my adorable God and Saviour, I then began to walk, and so have, except a few little interruptions and withdrawings of the light of his countenance, continued comfortably in the way, so that I can lay my hand upon my heart, and say, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth I desire beside thee.' If this be your experience, it is true, real, and genuine, and you are called by grace and born of God, as sure as there is a word of truth in the Bible, for "he that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give all diligence to make your calling and election sure."

(To be concluded in our next.)

The doctrine of the gospel is like the dew and small rain that distils upon the tender grass, wherewith it flourishes and is kept green. (Deut. xxxii. 2.) Christians are like the several flowers in a garden that have upon each of them the dew of heaven, which being shaken with the wind, they let fall their dew at each other's roots, whereby they are jointly nourished, and become nourishers of one another. For Christians to commune savorily of God's matters, one with another, it is as if they opened to each other's nostrils boxes of perfume.—*Bunyan.*

Many a believer has the bitter remembrance of some special sin to humble him, and act on him as a thorn in the flesh in his progress through life. This, perhaps, is some sad yielding to his besetting sin, at a time and season and against circumstances that deeply increase the guilt and shame; as against special warnings, inward convictions, mercies, or tokens of God's favor. Sometimes under temptation, and deep laboring of soul to get guilt removed, of weeks, months, it may be years, (Ps. xxxi. 10, xc. 15,) all seem to no purpose,—strength spent for nought. Yet it is not so with God; every cry, every groan, every tear, has had its place. And yet to show it is of grace and not by virtue of effort, deliverance comes when least looked for, or when hope is given up; or perhaps under risings of discontent against God for long-deferred answer. God will *command* deliverances for Jacob. (Ps. xlv. 4.) Jacob's supplications have no power in them irrespective of this.

R E V I E W.

An Exposition of the Book of Solomon's Song, commonly called Canticles. By John Gill, D.D. London: Collingridge. 1854.

As an expositor of Scripture, Dr. Gill shines with peculiar and unrivalled lustre. Viewed as a single work, Dr. Owen's Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews is, perhaps, the deepest and greatest exposition ever given to the church; but it is too massive and learned, as well as too minute and prolix, except for such hard, indefatigable students as are now rarely seen or heard of. Owen is not on some points so clear as Gill, yet had perhaps a deeper and more experimental insight into the glorious Person of the Son of God and the mystery of his atoning blood, with all that appertains to his office as the great High Priest over the house of God. These deep and divine mysteries, in their various bearings, as reflecting, on the one hand, the glory of God, and meeting, on the other, all the wants and woes of saved sinners, Owen sets forth in the most masterly and experimental manner, in the Commentary to which we have alluded. But it requires more spirituality of mind, closer attention, and, we must add, greater patience of thought, than most in this day are blessed with, to derive all that benefit from Dr. Owen's writings in general, and his Commentary on the Hebrews in particular, which they are capable of affording. Dr. Gill is more readable, more concise and pregnant, more lively and animated than Owen. If he do not dig so deeply into the mines of heavenly truth, nor turn up such massive ore, yet is there "dust of gold" in all that he lays bare and brings to the light of day. Both were masters in Israel; both eminent for natural abilities and acquired learning; both good and great men, whose works praise them in the gates, and whom successive generations rise up and call blessed.

The work before us is a reprint of a scarce and valuable book, and is sent forth from the same press which has already given us Dr. Gill's Commentary. Having collected and arranged his staff—his raw Irish lads having now grown up into quick-sighted, nimble-fingered compositors, able to handle their ps and qs without making them into pie*—Mr. Doudney feels desirous to find work for them to do. To close his industrial school and turn his intelligent youths adrift just as many of them are in that critical transition state—too advanced to relapse into the peasant, not sufficiently masters of their craft to obtain permanent wages as journeymen—would indeed be a most painful step, as well as afford a seeming triumph to the enemies of all good by whom he is surrounded. He is therefore, with praiseworthy activity and energy, providing employment for them by

* When the compositor has filled his composing stick with type, amounting perhaps to some hundreds of separate pieces, he has to lift the whole number with his two hands into the galley, as if they formed a solid mass. To do this requires great skill and practice; as, at the least awkward movement, down fall the types into a mingled mass of confusion, called, in the language of the printing office, "pie."

republishing standard works of sound gospel truth. We cannot but warmly approve of his energetic attempts to ameliorate the condition of the people amongst whom his lot is now cast.

Let us not, however, in these remarks, be misunderstood. Mr. Doudney's position as a clergyman in the Irish Establishment is one thing; his position as an active, energetic laborer to ameliorate the social and religious condition of his parish is another. With the first we cannot feel much union or sympathy; with the second we feel both in a strong degree. And yet, strange as it may seem, it is most certainly true that, however separated in our mind, they cannot be separated actually; for, as we may presently show, were he not a minister in the Establishment, he could do nothing that he is now doing.

Nor, again, let it be supposed that, in approving of all that he is doing to advance the interests of his people, we are confounding spiritual religion, the gift and work of God, with schools of any kind or under any name. No man can have clearer or more decisive views than Mr. Doudney himself on that point, and most distinctly does he proclaim the sovereignty and divine nature of saving grace.

But, apart from these peculiar circumstances, as friends to education, to social progress, to the cultivation and enlargement of the human mind, to the relief of that misery and poverty which everywhere abounds, and to the gradual lifting up of the down-trodden masses, we hail with pleasure any and every attempt to improve the condition of the poor. To *them* the dear Redeemer preached the gospel, to feed *them* the loaves multiplied under his all-creating hand, and from *them*, for the most part, he chose his own immediate disciples. To have, then, no sympathy with the poor is to manifest little of the mind of Christ.

But, besides our general interest in all well-directed attempts to benefit the poor, we feel almost a personal sympathy with those efforts as extended to our sister island. Circumstances have given us, perhaps, a warmer interest in Irish affairs than can be the case with most of our readers; and this, we hope, may plead our excuse if, deferring to a future No. our remarks on the work before us, we devote our remaining space to considering the mode under which it comes forth.

We resided in Ireland for eighteen months at one period of our life—a time never to be forgotten by us whilst life endures, though more than twenty-seven years have rolled away since that warm summer eve, fresh to our memory as yesterday, when we left its green shores, and the beautiful Wicklow mountains faded on our sight. We have taught, in the Sunday School, a class of bare-footed, ragged little fellows, whose habiliments, smelling of turf, the least unpleasant of their odours, were sufficiently repulsive to the young collegian fresh from the elegances of Oxford; and remember, almost with a smile, to this day the careful way in which we had to put down our foot, lest it should inadvertently tread on some of the many naked surrounding toes. We have seen and talked with the poor peasants in their smoky, miserable cabins, and

been almost horrified by the spectacle of Irish misery. And we may add, that we have every reason to love Ireland, for there, in the early spring of 1827, the first beams of light and life visited our previously dead and benighted soul, and Irish valleys and mountains witnessed the first tears and prayers that went up out of the heart to the throne of grace. We can therefore sympathise with Mr. Doudney or any other Englishman used to the comforts and cleanliness of favored England, and transplanted to that land of misery, poverty, and dirt, and with his attempts to benefit the people. Unless a person has lived in Ireland he can form no conception of what an Irish village is, and what amount of good may be done by a person of influence, such as the clergyman generally is, who throws himself heart and soul into the work. A really zealous man in Ireland has no paradise of ease. A mass of misery meets his eyes in every direction enough to make his very heart sink within him.* In this turf-walled cabin lies a stout, gaunt man, prostrate with fever; in that, a miserable old crone of a woman, shivering in rags, is warming her fingers over a few turf ashes; in a third, is a ragged slatternly mother with a host of half-naked children; in a fourth, pig or cow are sharing the floor with the human—to English eyes scarcely human—inhabitants. But this is not the worst feature of that wretched land. A pall of the densest darkness and ignorance rests upon the people. Popery has had for centuries such dominant sway that it has filled the land with the most abject superstitions, and Protestants have so lived side by side with Papists that they have become insensibly inoculated with Popish views and feelings. The ignorance of the Irish Protestant peasant is not simple ignorance—what we may call common English ignorance. Like Irish dirt, it is engrained into the very substance of the people—the ignorance of centuries of Popish error, as Irish filth is the filth of a whole life. To carry the gospel into an Irish village without knowing whether there be an elect soul in the whole place; to have no saints of God to enjoy sweet communion with, no friend or brother minister near at hand to consult or converse with; to be without the many comforts and conveniences of an English house; to be almost daily exposed to the infection of that low typhoid fever† which, the result of starvation, is never absent from an Irish village, and in some parts to the bullet of the nightly assassin,‡ the blind hired agent of that secret society

* We were much pleased to be able, in the fearful famine of 1847, to send more than £500, which was contributed chiefly by the churches and friends interested in the "Gospel Standard," to that country, to which we owe so much.

† When we knew Ireland, fever had not reached that fearful type which has since so desolated the land. It was of a low chronic character, which was rarely fatal to the poor, though a terrible scourge from its great prevalence. It was, however, very infectious, and when it attacked the higher classes, was very frequently fatal. Many an Irish clergyman's widow has reason to remember her husband's visit to the cabin the sick tenant of which struggled through the fever which gave death to the visitor.

‡ We saw and conversed with a gentleman in Ireland whose life was preserved in a most miraculous way. Though a man of family and property, he

which palsies every Irish hand and blanches every Irish cheek; to lie under the maledictions of the priest*—in the eyes of the peasant a sacred being—whose curse is the curse of God himself; we are sure that a man need see his way very clearly, and almost have a special commission from God, before he can throw himself into such a path or expect support under it.

Dissent is at so low an ebb in Ireland, at least in the middle and south, that no one but a minister in the Establishment could do anything at all there. Among its other effects, Popery has infused into the Irish mind a strange, one may say a superstitious, reverence for church and priesthood. Whatever is not of the church, whatever is not from the priest, is to an Irishman damnable heresy, the very invention of the arch-fiend himself. By a natural process of thought, this superstitious reverence is, though in a modified degree, transferred by the Irish Protestant to the Protestant church and the Protestant clergyman; so that absolutely, unless a person be a landed proprietor, and so have temporal influence, or a minister in the Establishment, and so have religious influence, he has no more weight or power in an Irish village than a cork in the sea.

was in the habit of reading and explaining the Scriptures in the cabins of his tenants and laborers, undeterred by several Rockite notices—in Ireland not mere scraps of paper, but certain missives of death. One evening, however, whilst riding up his avenue with his servant, shots were fired from behind a wall. The servant man fell dead on the spot; he was himself wounded in one of his limbs, but the slugs aimed at his heart were intercepted by a Bible which he carried as usual in the breast pocket of his coat. In the midst of the leaves of God's word were the flattened slugs found.

* Mr. Doudney has been cursed from the altar, but the following bold and spirited extract from a printed circular to the inhabitants of his parish will show how little he heeds it:

"You are taught from time to time to believe that you are to merit heaven by your good works; but I never see those who set themselves up for teachers, and who ought to be (as the apostle Peter says, R. Catholic Bible, 1 Pet. v. 3) 'a pattern to the flock from the heart,' 'careful to excel in good works.' (R. Catholic Bible, Titus iii. 8.) Do they feed the hungry? do they clothe the naked? do they instruct the ignorant? Go to them, ye poor, ye starving ones, and what is your answer? 'To the poor-house—to the poor-house!' and what awaits you there? Separation from those you love; the husband from the wife and the child from the parent, and very often disease or a lingering death to each. A sorry prospect this! And yet if a man attempts to save you from this calamity, and to find you employment, he is denounced from what is called God's altar, and branded with the foulest of names. But, friends, so little do I care for altar-threats or priestly curses or denunciations; so certain am I, that that God in whom I trust will preserve me until my work on earth is done; and so greatly withal do I feel for the welfare of your never-dying souls, that even though death stared me in the face, and the next moment I must yield up my life into the hands of him who gave it, I would with my dying breath shout in the language of your own Bible, 'Go out from her, my people; that you be not partakers of her sins, and that you receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and the Lord hath remembered her iniquities. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine, and she shall be burnt with fire, because God is strong who shall judge her.'" (Roman Catholic Bible, Apocalypse, 18th chapter, 5th and 8th verses.)

"I am, my friends and neighbors, your faithful friend and well-wisher,

"June 17th, 1853.

"DAVID ALFRED DOUDNEY."

The Establishment being a recognised fact, a thing which stands before the rudest mind in the palpable, visible form of a church, affords a fulcrum on which the lever may rest.

As our views on this point, though formed from considerable observation and reflection, may not meet those of many of our readers, we wish to explain our meaning a little more fully. It is well known to most of them that we were compelled, from conscientious feelings and motives, to secede from the Establishment. Our views on this point have not undergone the slightest change, but have rather deepened and strengthened. We view her now much as we viewed her then, and feel that we could not, with a good conscience, minister at her altar. But we never were among those whose cry is, "Rase her, rase her, even to the foundations thereof." On the contrary, though we cannot recognise her as a church of Christ, we believe that she has been productive of incalculable good to the temporal, and in a degree, from the good men who have ministered within her walls, to the eternal interests of men. Thus, could we by lifting up our little finger, shut up every church in the land, we could not, durst not do so. For the question would at once arise, "What can we substitute in her place?" The void must be filled up; for men will have some kind of religion, and the villages at least, if not the larger towns, would either sink into gross heathenism, or Popery, Mormonism, or some wild fanaticism, would rush in and supply the vacuum. Her separation from the State, with the abolition of church-rate and tithe, could it be peaceably effected, we would gladly see; but as we cannot give men spiritual religion, and Methodism or general Dissent presents greater opposition to truth, we feel a preference, as a system of natural religion, for that quiet, respectable, jog-trot Church-of-Englandism which, at least in the southern portion of this country,—the part we are chiefly acquainted with,—seems best suited to the staid, sober-minded Englishman.

But if in this country the subject lies open to discussion, and a friendly difference of opinion may be entertained, what system of natural religion is best adapted for those who have no spiritual religion—the question after all being pretty much whether the dead shall be buried in flannel or silk, in an elm coffin or a leaden one, the case is very different in Ireland. There the question lies in a much smaller compass. In the middle and south (the north being chiefly Presbyterian) the question is not whether there shall be a neat chapel rearing its modest front, and a church formed on strict Baptist principles assembling within its walls, with a gracious, well-taught, experimental servant of God in the pulpit, but whether Popery shall universally brood over the land like an incubus, without opposition. Without attempting to justify the many monstrous things in the Irish Establishment, yet let it be weighed in an even balance, and many benefits will be seen to flow out of it. It spreads the Bible, sends out Scripture readers, and maintains a certain portion of divine truth in its articles. Many of its ministers are, or at least were in our day, before Puseyism had entered into its pale, zealous, self-denying,

simple-hearted men, holding a measure of truth,—how far experimentally we cannot say, but certainly laboring in the most unwearied manner for the bodies and souls of their parishioners.

The Irish country clergyman is not that stiff, starched, well-dressed, sprig of aristocracy recognisable at a glance in an English county town; or that ridiculous Popish ape, the close-buttoned Puseyite; but a plainly-dressed man, who, in his rough frieze top-coat, can push his shaggy poney through the intricate paths of the bog without much minding a few brown stains on his hat or splashes on his boots. His parish lying wide, and the cabins being scattered in the most out-of-the-way places, his poney is in daily use. The first thing in the morning, after breakfast, is to visit the school. This may well demand his first visit in the day, as well as his last thoughts at night, for next to his own house, and, if a single man, often before it, it stands the centre of all his hopes. Amidst the collection of scattered cabins, sometimes on the very edge of the bog whence the peasant cuts his winter fuel, rises a whitewashed building, forming, from its neatness, a contrast with the surrounding tumble-down huts. This is the school. This is the active Irish clergyman's workshop. Here he teaches or superintends the children; here he lectures on the week evening; here he distributes bibles, tracts, soup, and blankets; here, as in his cabinet, he administers his little realm.

Several circumstances give the Irish school much greater prominence and weight in a parish than the English school possesses with us. The numerous little dame schools, which here educate the younger branches, have there no place. The people are too poor to support them, and the class of respectable females who here undertake the office of training the infant mind, at their own houses, does not there exist. Amidst, too, all the differences between Protestant and Papist, a love for education widely prevails. The Irish mind usually possesses little depth or solidity, but the Irish child has an innate aptitude for such learning as the school affords. The Irish people, too, have a singular veneration for "book learning," and will make almost any sacrifice that their children may acquire this highly-prized treasure. It is this feeling, connected probably with obscure traditions of the learning of St. Patrick and the Culdees, in those remote times when Ireland was not only the "Isle of Saints," but the centre of learned light, and not any love to Protestant doctrine, that makes the Romanist peasant persist in sending his child to the Church of England school in spite of the opposition of the priest; and this gives the clergyman a foot-hold in the affections of the very Papists themselves.

But some may say, "Are there no experimental ministers in Ireland? and if not, why do not some of our experimental ministers go over?" Why, as to that, we want them badly enough here, without sending any to Ireland; but as to doing any good, they might as well go to Japan. A year or two ago some scheme was got up and partly executed, to send 50 or more evangelical ministers to preach in the Irish towns and villages. We knew at the time what the result would be, and that the whole scheme was merely a burst of free-will enthusiasm,

concocted in thorough ignorance of the state of Ireland, and sure to be put down by popular riot and probably bloodshed. What was the result? That the few ministers who preached in the streets were glad to escape with their lives.

In the present state of Ireland, then, there is no place for such churches or such ministers as we are in union with. It is thoroughly and essentially a Popish country; and the only body which can maintain a firm front against Popery is the Irish Church. "But," say you, "that is a corrupt system, and we might, therefore, just as well have it swept away; for it is nearly as bad as Popery." We don't agree with you. Its system, we well know, from personal and painful experience, is so carnal, and its services so burdensome to a tender conscience, that our wonder is how a good man can continue in it, much less deliberately go into it. But it is the only bulwark at present against Popery in that country; and were it thrown down, it would, in its fall, not only crush the Protestant population who now repose under its shade, but would give such an accession of power to the Romish Church, that very shortly, out of the 105 Irish members who sit in the House of Commons, there would be hardly half a dozen Protestants.

We do not, ourselves, believe that Popery will ever resume its ancient sway in England; but the greatest lift it could receive into the seat of power, would be the destruction of the Irish Church. Persons who talk fluently about sweeping away the Irish Church as a nuisance, are like those who talk about applying a sponge to the national debt. There are evils—great evils—in both; but an Irish Church is better than a Popish Church, and national debt than national bankruptcy.

What spiritual blessings have followed Mr. Doudney's ministration in Ireland we know not; but we suspect at present very little. His own account, in this respect, is not very cheering:

"Thus, reader, one sows in hope 'beside all waters.' The soil had long run to waste. 'Bonmahon' was reputed for its ungodliness; it was emphatically a dreaded place. But, 'mid many discouragements, unremitting toil, and considerable responsibility, there is much—very much—to cheer. The temporal condition of these poor and long-neglected ones is marvellously improved. Habits of industry are inculcated. Instead of wandering about the streets, or the cliff-brow, or sitting listlessly in their comfortless cabins, they are now (of their own free choice) closely occupied 'from early morn to dewy eve.' Their minds are cultivated. The way of salvation, in its fulness and freeness, is put before them. And the writer feels that, if but one solitary soul is at the last great day gathered into the heavenly garner, 'his labor will not have been in vain in the Lord.'"

Much spiritual fruit, however, could not be expected, when the whole Protestant population, including children and adults, is but 80 or 90. But a little book now before us, from which we have already made several extracts, entitled, "An Outline of the Rise and Progress of the Bonmahon Industrial, Infant, and Ragged Schools"—in our time they were all ragged enough—affords abundant evidence to his zealous efforts to ameliorate their social condition.

We give from this little tract the following extract:

"The village of Bonmahon is situated in the south-west coast of the county of Waterford. The cliff scenery is exceedingly bold, and opens to a fine expanse of ocean, but the village itself, though beautifully situated, is poor and uninteresting. It is built near the termination of a far-stretched valley, at one end of which is a noble strand, which divides for some half-mile the towering, iron-faced cliffs; from the other end of the valley the splendid range of Comeragh mountains rise.

"The inhabitants of the village are somewhat numerous. Perhaps not less than two thousand, old and young, reside within a circuit of a couple of miles, their occupation being that of miners. The copper-mines of Knockmahon (which is united to the village of Bonmahon) are held in high repute. The soil being so contiguous to the sea, and so perpetually exposed to the ocean blast, is for the most part poor, and but indifferently cultivated.

"With the exception of 80 to 90 children and adults, the whole of the inhabitants of this long-neglected village and neighborhood are Roman Catholics. The very nature of the miners' occupation has tended to foster intemperance, which has been followed in its train by an almost inconceivable amount of pauperism, misery, and both moral and physical degradation.

"The parish church of Monksland stands upon the brow of the hill. It is connected with Abbey, 30 miles distant, the village being formerly used as a watering-place by the monks who resided in that part of the country. The rector who holds the union of the two parishes, occupies that of Abbey, whilst the curate is left in charge of Monksland, Bonmahon.

"The curate's acquaintance with Ireland commenced during the famine of 1846-7, when through the extreme kindness of English friends, he was enabled very largely to administer to the starving necessities of the inhabitants of Templemore, the town where he was then located. In Sept., 1847, he was appointed by the Bishop of Cashel to his present curacy. His first visit to the village will perhaps never be forgotten; the sight of so much wretchedness and filth was perfectly disheartening, and he thought it impossible he ever could be reconciled to reside among the people.

"Month after month and year after year passed away, and oftentimes his heart would bleed for want of power to raise the thoughts, and principles, and habits of the people. The youth of his own parochial school were growing into years, but alas! without the veriest hope of occupation.

"For many years one secret wish had pervaded the writer's mind and heart; a wish suggested by a scene in a thickly-populated district at the east end of London, many years before. It was an Industrial Printing School connected with a day school.

"At length an opportunity offered for carrying out his long and deeply-cherished desires. Having sought, and after many months obtained, some hundreds of subscribers to a voluminous Commentary, he determined, under God, to open an Industrial Printing School, in connection with his own parochial school. Materials were purchased, assistants engaged, and, despite an immense amount of discouragement from friends, and antagonism from foes, the work began! In Oct., 1851, the machinery of this most novel and fearfully responsible undertaking was set in motion. Nine large quartos were to be compressed into six thick royal octavo volumes, the types of which were to be arranged by a motley group of 'raw Irish lads,' not one of whom had seen a press or type before!

"It would be taxing the attention unnecessarily, were the writer to enter into particulars. It must be left to the reader's own imagination to conceive of the working of this generally-admitted singular and hazardous enterprise. A word or two, however, may be desirable. One London publisher remarked to the writer, 'You know boys are of no use whatever for the first six months.' 'I know the character of the boys I have to do with,' was the reply. By the time mentioned—the six months—they had composed upwards of 1,000 pages of a large closely-printed Commentary! Their previous ignorance of the art of printing was no barrier. They fell into it with a shrewdness, and followed up their labors with an application, which far exceeded the writer's most sanguine expectations. The difficulties of carrying on such a work in so remote and inconvenient a locality, were, as may be supposed, numberless.

Sometimes they seemed insuperable. Still (supported by divine strength) the originator was enabled to persevere, and, within a few weeks of the given date, namely, Jan. 1st, 1854, the Commentary, containing nearly 6,000 pages, was completed! For upwards of two years this little Irish band kept three printing presses in constant operation; and from the fifth week of their entrance were in receipt of wages varying, according to their progress, from two to six and seven shillings per week. A steady improvement both in their appearance and habits were soon perceptible. A spirit of self-reliance was infused. And, notwithstanding the oft-repeated altar harangues and newspaper attacks with which the institution was assailed, still it maintained its ground."

There are but few of our readers who have not seen the poor Irish reapers travelling along the dusty roads, and the thought, probably, has crossed many of their minds, "Why in the world are the poor fellows so ragged? Why don't their wives or sisters mend their clothes?" Shall we tell you why they don't? Because they *can't*. Until the introduction of the muslin embroidery from Scotland, one of the greatest temporal blessings which Ireland has had for centuries, you might as well look for a silver fork in an Irish cabin as a thread and needle. The pig would have munched up the spool of thread, and the cow whisked off with her tail the paper of needles into her own dung. Besides which, bear in mind, worthy English men and women, that needles and thread require chairs and tables, not to say windows and absence of smoke. Had you walked or ridden with us more than a quarter of a century back, we could have taken you into cabins where there was neither chair nor table, and the only window a small pane, stuffed when broken with an old stocking, with more smoke in it than you could bear were your chest tender. Mr. Doudney, to meet this want, has established a girls' sewing school, of which he gives this interesting account:

"Although some 20 to 30 boys of the village were provided for in the Printing School, and from 50 to 60 children fed, and taught, and clothed in the Infant School, still there was a lack; it was employment for the elder girls and young women of the neighborhood. To meet this exigency, a house in an unfinished state having been purchased and completed, a Girls' Sewing School was opened, under the direction of a competent mistress, who was engaged at a similar establishment in the county of Clare. If printing were a novelty to the boys, embroidery was almost as great a novelty to the greater proportion of the girls, who were unable to thread or even hold a needle. This school was opened in Sept., 1853; and at the date at which this is written (June, 1854) upwards of 40 girls are employed in this school, 20 of whom are earning more than two shillings, and others upwards of three shillings per week.

"For the first six months after their admission, each girl is allowed a simple meal of stirabout and milk per day.

"Of an evening the Protestant parochial schoolmaster attends the school for an hour and a half. Fourteen of the girls (all Romanists) have learned to read, and, as rewards, eight have been presented with Bibles. They attend a Sunday class, and likewise the Sunday and Thursday evening lectures; their singularly good behaviour at which, and the pathetic manner in which they unite in our songs of praise, is exceedingly gratifying. The average attendance of Romanists, young and old, at these lectures, is from 35 to 45. Notwithstanding the opposition and persecution, this has been persevered in for nearly 12 months. And thus continuously are these poor fellow-creatures, so long cradled in ignorance, superstition, and vice, brought under the preaching of the simple gospel of our Lord and

Saviour Jesus Christ. Often, while addressing them, and beholding their close attention and orderly behaviour, is the writer's heart warmed and encouraged by the hope—at times almost amounting to assurance—that at the last great day it shall be testified, that 'this and that one were (spiritually and new) born there.'

We fear that in this sketch of Irish matters, drawn chiefly from our own reminiscences, we have not furnished our readers with much to edify or profit them, but we must have said sufficient to make them thankful for their many providential and spiritual mercies. No person truly values or loves England who has not lived out of it; and we know no better remedy for discontent with an English home, than a six months' sojourn in the Green Isle.

To what end does the sun shine upon us in a morning? Not that we may continue to close our eyelids, and press, all day, the bed of indolence; but that we may be up and be doing. And why does the light of God's Spirit shine inwardly upon his people? That they may arise and *walk* in the light of his countenance, *run* in the way of his commandments, and *work* the works of God, while it is day.—*Toplady*.

It is a sign the word of God has had place, and wrought powerfully, when the heart trembles at it, is afraid, and stands in awe of it. When Joseph's mistress tempted him to lie with her, he was afraid of the word of God. "How shall I do this great wickedness," said he, "and sin against God?" He stood in awe of God's word, durst not do it, because he kept in remembrance what a dreadful thing it was to rebel against God's word. When old Eli heard that the ark was taken, his very heart trembled within him; for he read by that sad loss that God was angry with Israel, and he knew the anger of God was a great and terrible thing. When Samuel went to Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled; for they feared that he came to them with some sad message from God, and they had had experience of the dread of such things before. (Gen. xxxix. 7-9).—*Bunyan*.

You and I have lately been drinking more of God's gall and worm-wood in the death of children than otherwise. Let us be dumb, because the Lord has done it. The cup that our Father gives, should we not drink it? Alas! what hard knotty timber must we be, that the Lord has to hack us so much, in order to render us plain and smooth! It is a mercy God is at such pains with us. But it is not easy for our hearts to believe such things mercies. Alas! how often we pray that God's will may be done; and yet, when he takes his will, we think we do well to be angry! We pray that God would divorce us from our lovers, and purge away our sin; and yet, when he sends sore troubles on us for this very purpose, we fret or rage like wild bulls in a net. What a mercy that we have to do with so patient a God that can bear with such conduct! so gracious, that he can forgive it! that we have to do with that blood of Jesus which cleanseth from all sin. What a mercy, that the more trouble we are in, the more promises are directed to us!—*J. Brown*.

POETRY.

PETER'S SIEVE.

"And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly."—(Luke xxii. 61, 62.)

Sometimes I find in Peter's case What speaks aloud to me, And shows, without preserving grace, What I must shortly be.	It is my soul's supreme desire, Thy precious face to see, And feel thy grace in exercise, To bring forth fruit to thee.
Peter three times, thro' fear, declared His Lord he never knew; And oftentimes my practice says The same of Jesus too.	But often have I been with those,— I speak it to my shame,— When I, like Peter, have drawn back, And feared to own thy name.
Such was the love for Christ he felt, He said, he fain would die. But O when left, a servant maid Did make him Christ deny!	With guilt and shame, I must confess, Much to my charge is laid, That I among ungodly men Should feel so much afraid.
What Jesus told him did transpire; The cock three times did crow; But he must feel a heavenly touch, Before his tears could flow.	It is by rich, almighty grace, That I this moment stand, Upheld, supported, and supplied, By thy almighty hand.
The cock might crow a thousand times, And Peter fast asleep; But when the Saviour gave a look, He then went out to weep.	The foulest deeds, the blackest crimes, By mortals ever done, Are in my nature rooted deep, If left the same to run.
This was a precious fruit of grace, The grace that him restored; A work there was for him to do,— To preach his dying Lord.	Dear Lord, subdue each lofty thought, In league with Satan's band; Grant humbling grace in exercise; It must come from thy hand.
Free grace he sweetly could proclaim, To souls oppress'd with sin; He knew the worth of sov'reign grace, He felt its power within.	May every day's experience prove Grace has in me a seat, While I in dust and ashes lie Low at thy sacred feet.
Dear Jesus, when I leave the fold, Like Peter, may I weep, And feel restoring grace, like him; Reclaim thy wand'ring sheep.	Let me not vainly think I stand, And in temptation fall; But me my constant weakness teach, And Christ be all in all.

I. H.

HOPE, THE ANCHOR OF THE SOUL.

"Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul."—(Heb. vi. 19.)

A hope of salvation I have,
And though oft it is dash'd by the waves,
Firm anchor'd in him who can save,
Each tempestuous storm it outbraves;
My Pilot the Lord, my compass his word,
His grace for my sail, how can I then fail?

My cable is strong, for it is his great love,
Which from everlasting extends;
While his good Spirit in gales from above,
As he promised, in mercy, he sends;
Yet sometimes I fear, that when I draw near
To the heavenly coast, my bark will be lost.

For should I then see the rich land,
 With its honey, its milk, and its wine,
 It will bring my weak faith to a stand,
 To believe that these blessings are mine;
 And nearest the shore, where waves loudest roar,
 I trembling may stand, though so near to the land.

Yet, Lord, thou canst grant me to leave,
 When my hour for departure is come,
 Some proof that a Saviour I have,
 Who has lain before me in the tomb.
 That path I'll then tread, without gloom or dread,
 And find it the way to the regions of day.

O—.

W. P.

I am sure they never got Christ who were not once sick at the yolk of the heart for him; too, too many whole souls think they have met with Christ, who had never a wearied night for the want of him.—*Rutherford*.

Where faith enables men to live to God, as to their eternal concerns, it will enable them to trust him in all the difficulties and hazards of this life. To pretend a trust in God as to our souls and invisible things, and not resign our temporal affairs with patience and quietness to his disposal, is a vain pretence, and we may take hence an eminent trial of our faith.—*Owen*.

It is common with them who are distressed with anguish, though all alone, to cry out to themselves of their present pains, saying, "O my leg!" "O my arm!" or as the son of the Shunamite, "My head, my head!" (2 Kings iv. 19.) O the groans, the sighs, the cries, that the broken-hearted have, when by themselves, or alone! "O," say they, "my sins, my sins; my soul, my soul! How am I laden with guilt! How am I surrounded with fear! O this hard, this desperate, this unbelieving heart! O how sin defiles my will, my mind, my conscience! I am afflicted, and ready to die." (Ps. lxxxviii. 15.)—*Bunyan*.

Man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart. A demure countenance, feigned speech, decent behavior, voluntary humility, reproving others, straining at gnats, sighing under the word, turning up the eyes, and learning to prate—pass current enough with many. But a deep sigh and sense of sin, a wounded spirit, a thirst for the living God, self-loathing, humility arising from a sense of undeserved mercy, meekness, submission under the rod, compunction of soul, a sorrowing after God, being stung with grief for past sins, repentance drawn forth by a believing discovery of the dying love of Christ, to rejoice with trembling, humble confidence, filial fear, cordial affections for the Son of God, and sympathetic fellowship with him in his dolorous sufferings, which make the King's daughter all glorious within—these are the spangling jewels which adorn the renewed soul, and which these outside adorners know nothing of, nor care for; and it is these that are in the sight of God of great price.—*Huntington*.

THE GOSPEL STANDARD.

MATT. V. 6; 2 TIM. I. 9; ROM. XI. 7; ACTS VIII. 37, 38; MATT. XXVIII. 19.

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A WORD OF FRIENDLY EXHORTATION TO THE CHURCHES AND INDIVIDUAL BELIEVERS.

All the accounts from the seat of war concur in representing the condition of the poor soldiers before Sebastopol as "heart-rending and horrible."* With what boasting arrogance did England send forth her fleets and armies, and what a humiliating rebuke has now fallen upon her pride! It would be out of place for us to dwell on the miserable incapacity and shameful negligence to which, humanly speaking, much of the present state of our army in the Crimea is due. Looking away from second causes, we would rather view it as a scourge for England's sins and her abuse of those privileges which have been vouchsafed to her above all nations of the earth.

But who can help sympathising with our poor soldiers, almost without shelter or food, though both are in abundance within six or seven miles, melting away, like the snow before the sun, with the worst forms of disease? It is credibly believed that out of 54,000 men who landed in the Crimea, besides all the subsequent reinforcements, scarce 10,000 or 11,000 are now able to carry arms.

Now why should not the churches make this dreadful state of things a matter of special prayer and supplication? Why in this matter should the family of God be behind the formalists whom they condemn? Without fixing any particular day, Lord's Day or otherwise, which we have no warrant or authority to do, why should not ministers in their pulpit prayers, and private Christians at the prayer meeting, in their family worship, and in their closet, bring before the Lord the sufferings which the war has already produced, and beseech him to look with pitying eye on our beloved yet guilty country, and especially on our poor soldiers; and that it may please his gracious Majesty to put a speedy end to this horrid warfare, and grant us once more the blessings of peace?

THE EDITOR.

* We use the words of Lord John Russell, who, we may be sure, would be disposed rather to soften than exaggerate the actual state of things.

A MEDITATION ON THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS.

"This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise."
—(Isa. xliii. 21.)

On awaking at an early hour the other morning, before the time had arrived for man to go forth to his labor, I was much impressed with the above words. The night watches having hushed all terrestrial things into a calm, there remained no hindrance to my being led out into contemplation upon the words which had just dropped into my mind; and, first of all, I took a survey of the millions of Adam's race now in existence on the face of the globe, with all their various religions divided and subdivided, and bearing different titles and appellations, as known amongst mankind. To me how solemn was the thought, that although there appears to be almost an endless list of sects and parties, yet in God's account there are but two classes—the election and the rest; the wheat and the chaff; the sheep and the goats; vessels of mercy and vessels of wrath; vessels of honor and vessels to dishonor; wise virgins and foolish virgins. The election are to be preserved in Christ Jesus and called, the rest left to perish in their own deceivings; the wheat to be gathered into the heavenly garner, the chaff to be burnt up with unquenchable fire; the sheep to return to the great Shepherd and Bishop of their souls, and ultimately be placed at the right hand of God, the goats to be placed on the left, with everlasting confusion upon their heads: "Ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you." The "vessels of mercy, afore prepared to eternal glory," are to be "made meet for the Master's use," a holy habitation for the living God; ("Here will I dwell, for I have desired it;") the "vessels of wrath fitted for destruction," are to be dashed in pieces like a potter's vessel. The vessels of honor are to bring a revenue of glory and praise to a triune Jehovah when time shall be no longer; the vessels to dishonor are to be clothed with shame and ignominy. The wise virgins are to be brought to the King, in raiment of fine needle-work, clean and white, a chaste spouse, not having spot or wrinkle, unblameable, and presented before the Father in love, comely through the comeliness put upon them; the foolish virgins are to come short of the promised rest. And how could it be otherwise, O foolish virgin, seeing thou wert content with "a name to live," while thou wert dead—with a formal profession, whilst destitute of the oil of grace in thy heart; with the shadow, without the substance; with the shell of religion, and despising the kernel, which is "Christ Jesus formed in the heart, the hope of glory?" Yea, didst thou not rest upon thy flashy joys and airy fancies, in place of the solemn realities and teachings of God the Holy Ghost in the soul; and in thy own deceivings didst thou not set down thy own fleshly excitement for the work of the Spirit? Therefore "your house is left unto you desolate;" for "the lamp of the wicked shall be put out."

Seeing, then, that there are but two kinds of people on the face of the earth, how important is it to know whether I belong to those who are to show forth the praises of God, or to those who were

made to be taken and destroyed. The word expressly says, "This people have I formed for myself." Then it is evident they are a people differing from all others,—a peculiar people, called to be saints. And it follows there must be certain characteristics whereby this people are known from those who are enveloped in darkness.

I will endeavor to commit to paper some of the thoughts I had, as I lay musing upon the matter in hand, in respect to "this people;" but more particularly in their showing forth God's praise. And may the Lord keep me from advancing anything which cannot be proved from his holy word by Christian experience. For, what is a Christian without certain marks and evidences, but like a marble statue, which, however it may resemble a human body, yet lacks the main thing,—life? It has features and limbs well proportioned, fashioned by the ingenious hand of the sculptor; but there is no breath, no warm life-blood flowing from the heart to the various parts of the body, no hunger nor thirst, no longings or desires. Such is man in an unrenewed state,—dead in sins.

It is very evident from the records of divine truth, that the Lord has made all things for himself and for the ultimate glory of Jesus Christ; hence that firm compact and glorious covenant of grace, "ordered in all things and sure," entered into by the great and holy Three, on behalf of "a number which no man can number, out of every kindred, and nation, and people, and tongue."

While musing over the acts of the sacred Trinity, before time began, my soul desired to lie prostrate in humility on such high and lofty ground, and not wilfully presume to pry into matters which "the angels desire to look into," but with becoming reverence and solemnity of mind.

I may observe, then, that the salvation of the church occupied the thoughts of Jehovah from eternity. This is very plain from the Scriptures. Jeremiah had a manifestation of this: "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." "I have betrothed thee unto me for ever; yea, I have betrothed thee unto me in righteousness and in judgment." These passages speak in the past tense; therefore (according to my judgment) it will not be wandering upon forbidden ground to look up to those everlasting hills where the glorious plan of salvation originated in the heart of Jehovah; when the impassable gulf was fixed between the righteous and the wicked, and the decree of electing love stepped forth from eternity to eternity by God the Father, and the "sheet knit at the four corners" thereof took in all the objects of his free favor and choice, including "all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air;" and all this before time began. "For the children being not yet born, neither having done good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth." Thus, in purpose and decree, might the Father say, while looking on the objects of his choice, "This people have I formed for myself; they shall

show forth my praise." But that they might be doubly secure, they were chosen "in Christ, even in him."

" ' Christ be my first elect,' he said,

Then chose our souls in Christ our Head ;"

"for the Father hath committed all things unto the Son ;" which is beautifully figured forth of him under the character of Wisdom, in Prov. viii., "I was by him as one brought up with him ; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him, and my delights were with the sons of men ; yea, I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." Here, then, was Jesus Christ set up as the great Head of the church, and voluntarily became, by covenant, the Husband of the bride : "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me." "O my dear Son, who art full of grace and truth, and hast dwelt in my bosom from everlasting, and in whom is all my delight, wilt thou receive 'this people' at my hands as thy peculiar treasure ; and in the event of their coming into a state of poverty, degradation, and woe, wilt thou provide out of thy riches for their destitute case ? Wilt thou work out a righteousness to hide their shame ? Wilt thou raise them up from their forlorn state to inherit the throne of glory ? for it hath pleased me that in thee 'all fulness should dwell.' Thou knowest, my Son, that Lucifer, the son of the morning, when I brought thee forth, saying, 'Let all the angels of God worship him,' was inflated with pride and jealousy, murder and envy, and would not bow down before thee, but moved myriads of the angelic host to combine against thy sovereign sway ; whom thou, therefore, in thy just displeasure, didst drive from paradise, and with the breath of thy mouth didst pursue down to Tophet, 'which was ordained of old,' and didst bind him and his company in chains of darkness, reserved unto the great day. This our implacable foe will surely mar our fair creation in man, for he 'goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.' The righteous law which we shall give unto man will be violated by this arch-enemy presenting his diabolical temptations before his soul, and thus our image will be defaced, our authority usurped, and our government and counsel set at nought. Seeing that this will come to pass, wilt thou condescend to become incarnate, by taking upon thee the seed of the woman, that thou mayest bruise the serpent's head, and restore that which thou tookest not away, by magnifying the law and making it honorable ? And as thou hast married this thine Hephzibah, art thou willing to be tempted in all points like unto thy brethren, and thereby become a merciful High Priest over the house of Israel ? to be despised and rejected of men ? to be rich, and yet have not where to lay thy head ? to be the mighty God, and yet the babe of Bethlehem ? to have legions of angels at thy command, and yet to take upon thyself the form of a servant, and to learn obedience by those things thou must suffer ? to take the lowest place, and to be made sin for my people ? to be made a curse for them ? to suffer all that vindictive justice shall inflict upon their account, and to bleed upon an accursed tree on their behalf, and thus remove their iniquity in one day ? to be laid in the grave ? to extract the sting of

death and rise again a mighty conqueror over hell and the grave? to ascend and sit at my right hand until all thy enemies be made thy footstool? to see the travail of thy soul and be satisfied?—art thou willing to do all these things, O my Son?" "O righteous Father, thy love to me hath been from ever of old, and as a further proof of it, thou hast given me a people as the stars of heaven for multitude; yea, thou hast given me (in purpose) 'the heathen for mine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for my possession.' I do most gladly receive this thy gift with delight, for thou lovest them even as thou lovest me, and my delight is to do thy will, O my God: Yea, thy law is within my heart. Thou hast made me the Man of thy right hand, even the Son of man, whom thou hast made strong for thyself. I do therefore accept 'this people' whom thou hast formed for thyself, with rejoicing, even this my sister, my spouse; and 'I will rejoice over them to do them good.' All that I am and have shall be theirs; and as thou hast treasured up in my Person an inexhaustible fulness of grace, they shall not want for any good thing. I do therefore betroth 'this people' unto myself for ever, and that in the presence of thee, O Father; and thou, Eternal Spirit, art heaven's witness of this transaction. And seeing that man will surely fall from that primeval innocence in which we shall create him, I do hereby pledge myself to redeem them from under that direful bondage into which they shall come; yea, I will restore all the honors of thy law, magnify it, and make it eternally honorable; and to this end, when the fulness of time shall come, I will take into union with my divine nature the seed of the woman, and in that nature I am content to be made under the law, and through my active and passive obedience to the same, I will surely redeem those who are under it, that they may thereby become dead to it. I will show them a more excellent way, a way worthy of their God; a way that shall be approved of thee, O righteous Father, in which thy justice will be everlastingly satisfied on their account; a way in which mercy and truth can kiss each other, righteousness and peace embrace each other; for through my obedience, sufferings, death, and resurrection, every obstacle shall be removed out of the way that would impede their progress to the kingdom which I have in reserve for all those whom thou hast given me, for 'Thine they were, and thou gavest them me.' I do hereby covenant to bring them all to see thy face with joy; not one shall be lost, save the son of perdition; not a hoof shall be left behind of all thou hast given me; for, 'O righteous Father, I will that all they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory;' and if I fail to bring them hither, then will I bear the blame for ever."

The Blessed Spirit, who is one with the Father and the Son—one in essence, one in power, and one in will—now set his broad seal of approbation upon the glorious plan of salvation, and in covenant engaged to quicken all those who should be heirs of salvation by his invincible operations upon their hearts, by bestowing that light which should lighten every man who should be born into the kingdom of

grace, by which he would "convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come;" of "sin," because they believe not on him whom God hath sent into the world, but would say, "We will not have this man to reign over us;" of "righteousness," because that God can "in nowise clear the guilty," but through the righteousness of another; and which "this people" will despise, in going about to establish their own righteousness. "My work," says the Holy Spirit, "shall therefore be to convince them that their own coverings are but as filthy rags, and that God can by no means clear the guilty on such dishonorable grounds, but would be just in their eternal condemnation from the presence of his glory. Of 'judgment to come,' because that God hath appointed a day in which he will 'judge the world in righteousness,' and the people with his truth, by that Man whom he hath ordained, even by him whom God hath appointed heir of all things, and unto whom all judgment is committed. My office shall be to convince 'this people' that there is a necessity of their being judged in this world, that they be not finally condemned with the world hereafter; and to this end I will apply the holy law of God to their conscience, whereby they shall be cast, and condemned, and brought to the place of stopping of mouths; and when they shall be looking for the just indignation of God against sin, and the penalty of eternal death to be executed against them, *then, even then*, in this their extremity, will I reveal Jesus as the Way, the Truth, and the Life. They shall see his beauty, and greatly desire him; they shall see such a suitability in him as a Saviour as to meet all their necessities; his blood to cleanse their guilt, his righteousness to justify, his holiness to sanctify, and his grace to save. Faith shall be given them whereby they shall believe in him to the saving of their souls. Their only hope shall anchor in Jesus for acceptance; through him they shall be justified from all things. Yea, I will undertake to take of the things which are thine and reveal them unto babes; and I will not depart from them, but abide with them, and that to lead, to direct, and to bring them on in the ways of Zion, from strength to strength, until every one shall appear before God. Thus shall 'this people' be formed, quickened, prepared, and ultimately be brought to bliss and blessedness, to show forth thy praise."

O believers, what can harm you if ye be followers of that which is good? If you have been favored by grace to "make your calling and election sure," all the provisions made in this covenant are yours, and they are unalterable, "for God is not a man, that he should lie, nor the son of man, that he should repent;" nor will he "alter the thing that is gone out of his mouth," but will bring all things to pass, according to predestinating love, mercy, and favor. When the spark of grace in your soul scarcely glimmers, and your past evidences seem to be well nigh forgotten, and your present standing precarious, then to have the eye of faith directed up to "the everlasting hills, from whence cometh all your help," is very cheering; and to venture all your concerns, whether of body or soul, things temporal or eternal, upon an immutable and promise-performing God,

is nothing short of the work of the Blessed Spirit to produce. This is indeed the work of faith and the labor of love. My soul desires to live in some measure upon that bond of love subsisting in the heart of a triune God, and flowing forth to all the living in Jerusalem, that threefold cord which cannot be broken,—the Father's electing love, the Son's redeeming merit, and the Spirit's powerful application of the work of Christ to the heart and conscience.

Poor sinner, all your demerit and shortcomings shall not make the promise of none effect, for it was given prior to the law, even to Abraham, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;" and if you have faith but as a grain of mustard seed, you are "blessed with faithful Abraham." The promise given to Adam, that "the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head," was but the manifestation of what was in the heart of Jehovah before time. He loved his people before the fall, and this was the outlet whereby the work of redemption should flow to the election of grace, wherein that wonderful mystery should be brought about, "God manifest in the flesh."

"God, in the person of his Son,
Hath all his mightiest works outdone."

I have been at times well nigh lost in contemplating this "great mystery,"—the union of Christ to his members, from which source all felt communion flows; he the Head of influence; the church the recipient of his love, and out of his fulness receiving "grace for grace," the grace of repentance, humility, self-loathing, faith, hope, love, patience, meekness, contentment of mind while suffering wrongfully for the cause of Christ or for devotedness to him, being reproached for his sake. But, bless his dear name, he has said of all those whom he has formed for himself to show forth his praise, that "if they suffer with him, they shall also reign with him." See this in the history of Bible saints. Although many nominal professors around them, concerning faith, made "eternal shipwreck," yet these all endured to the end, and well they might, for he that keepeth Israel "neither slumbers nor sleeps." The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards him: "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." What can finally harm those whose record is on high, whose strength is in the munition of rocks? "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one; and there are three that bear witness on earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood, and these three agree in one." And all who have felt in any measure the sweet influences of the latter are surely interested in the former, for these are the fruits and effects of the first.

But perhaps it will not be amiss to look a little at the work which is accomplished in the hearts of God's people, whereby they show forth his praise; for they are his witnesses upon the earth, to show that the Lord is upright in all his ways towards fallen man. Let us, then, just glance at the poor publican who cried out under convic-

tion, "God be merciful to me a sinner." What a short and yet very comprehensive prayer; what weighty words pressed from a heart made contrite before God!—"a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." The purport of this prayer by the publican is as though he should say, "O most holy God, look in mercy upon a poor undone and forlorn sinner, who has ruined himself by sin! My transgression is ever before me; mine iniquities have gone over me as a burden too heavy for me to bear. O, in the midst of deserved wrath, remember mercy! I acknowledge thy justice, if vengeance should pursue me; but if there is a way whereby mercy can flow, Lord, let that mercy come." This prayer shows that he had God's holy law applied to his conscience, "for by the law is the knowledge of sin." It also shows that he was persuaded of the holiness, purity, and justice of God. He puts in no claim, but smites upon his breast, leaving it with the Lord to acquit or pass sentence. In this way "Wisdom is justified of all her children." It also shows that his prayer was indited by the Holy Ghost, for he was led where alone mercy could be had. If his convictions had been only natural, he had gone to the creature, or carnal amusements and gratifications, or to blind guides, who cry, "Peace," where no peace is. But no; he had heard of the King of Israel as being a merciful king: "For there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared." And he was not denied, for he "went down to his house justified, rather than the other." In this way all coming sinners show forth praise to God, by waiting for mercy, pardon, and peace to be applied to their troubled conscience. Not so the Pharisee, who can talk of his good deeds, (so called;) and withal has stones to cast at the publican. But the wise man says, "A prating fool shall fall;" and so will all who rest upon their own performances. By so doing, blind Pharisee, you virtually despise the righteousness of Christ and contemn the Most High: "He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

Again, the gifts and callings of God are without repentance, and that poor sinner who can relate his call out of darkness into light may rest assured that he stands amongst those who are interested in the declaration, "This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise;" and these blessed characters are exhorted to make their "calling and election sure." Although election is infinitely prior to calling, yet calling is here put first, which seems to say, "Trace out your calling, and you prove your election;" and it must be so. But—What does calling grace do *for* a man? What does it do *in* him? and, What does it do *by* him?

1. What does calling grace do *for* a man? The apostle Peter explains it thus: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." So that these people, who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, have seen a great light, which is a proof that this calling brings light into the dark understanding of a man, by which he sees himself in the glass of God's holy law. To such a

one "old things have passed away, and all things have become new," in the strict sense of the word. He has become a living man; his feelings are acute. He feels sin to be exceeding sinful and the commandment to be exceeding broad; and while he suffers the terrors of the Lord, he is distracted. He is now a seeing man; he has eyes given him to see the majesty of God in a broken law, his own ruin by nature and by practice, and as yet sees no way of escape from the "wrath to come." The command is given, "Bring forth the blind who have eyes, and the deaf who have ears." The blind man had eyes before, but could not see, by reason of the scales which were upon them; but when a man is called out of darkness, these scales fall off, and he is enlightened with the light of the living. He had ears before, but was deaf. Having made a covenant with death and an agreement with hell, he had virtually called the prince of the power of the air to his aid, who had planted a strong guard against "ear-gate," lest he should hear, and be converted, and healed. But when justice comes with its battering-ram, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words, with a "Pay me that thou owest;" or, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them;" or, "He that offendeth in one point, is guilty of all,"—I say, when a sinner is brought here, his ears are open to discipline; he is now one of those of whom it may be said, "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law; that thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity." "This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise." But in this stage of divine discipline it would be useless to try to persuade a man that he was showing forth God's praise, yet it is a fact notwithstanding; for "Wisdom is justified of all her children." When a man can say from the heart, that God would be just and righteous in sending his soul to hell, he praises the justice of God. When he can with unfeigned lips say, "Behold, I am vile," he shows forth praise, and sets to his seal that what God had said of man is true to the letter, and he is not offended at such passages as these, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;" and that the thoughts of every man in his natural state are "only evil, and that continually;" and he shows forth praise when he can say, "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him." In this state there is a watching and waiting to hear what God the Lord shall speak; for he well knows the sentence must come from the Majesty of heaven, whether it be for his condemnation or salvation. He is betwixt life and death, hope and despair, riches or eternal ruin, a kingdom or a prison, heaven or hell, a Father's smile or a Judge's frown.

(To be continued in our next.)

He who cannot live in an actual resignation of himself, and all his concerns, unto the sovereign pleasure of God, can neither glorify him in anything, nor have one hour's solid peace in his own mind.—
Owen.

LETTER FROM MISS E. MORTON TO MR. W.
HUNTINGTON.

Dear Sir,—In reading your last favor, I was much struck with the propriety of its contents. I am happy that God inclines you to reprove in me what you see inconsistent with his will. Nor will you wonder at the instrument in my apartment, when I assure you that music has ever been my predominant charm. There has been a time when (to my shame I write it) I have sat four hours in a day at a harpsichord; nor was it in the power of any person living to draw me from it. However, Sir, this I can now say, from my own conscience, that since it has pleased God to make me feel his wrath, and the vileness of my corrupt heart, I am thoroughly weaned from this vanity, as well as from many others. My heart is, indeed, and of a truth, thoroughly sick of all these vain enchantments. God is witness, that I desire more and more to be “pressing forward toward the mark, for the prize of our high calling;” that I sincerely crave to forsake all these things, to take up my cross, and to follow Christ. If you did but know my present state, and feel the real distress of mind I now labor under, with the horrors of an embittered conscience, which I almost continually feel, too powerfully to be expressed, you would not suppose that I have the least delight in amusing myself with “a rattle of the devil’s.” I find time too precious to employ it in this unprofitable manner. I feel my heart and conscience too deeply impressed with matters of greater importance than to take any delight in a musical instrument. I see you still doubt of my sincerity; but God knows it, and knows also the truth of what I am now penning. Indeed, had I been the same, I should have been very apt to have judged of the matter as you have done. But, believe me, this instrument was not brought to this house on my account. There I found it; and it was by the desire of a friend that I played upon it. God knows that my heart was by no means inclined to it, for I am convinced this is not glorifying God; quite the reverse; and for that alone do I desire life. However, I will tell you the effect your letter has had on this subject. God crowns with a divine power every advice you give me. I have read attentively Dan. iii. and Amos vi., and find that your book of conscience (in this respect) and mine tally so exactly, that I am going to-morrow to order the immediate removal of this “rattle of the devil’s.” You will pardon me for smiling at this expression. My friends say that I am an Huntingtonian with a witness, and are much delighted that your advice has such weight with me. I tell you what, Sir, I view you as a mere instrument, and no more; (though, blessed be God for such;) and, as I before observed, I feel that God sends with a divine power to my soul what he inclines you to write. So that, if ever I see you again at my house, you shall never see that instrument there any more, nor any other.

I shall have the privilege of being at Providence Chapel next Lord’s Day; and, if I mistake not, we shall have you at Jewin Street that evening, where I hope to attend, and shall be glad of your

answer to this when convenient; and so conclude, in humble acknowledgment of your just reproofs, faithful dealings, and tender care,
Your obedient, dutiful, and affectionate daughter,

ELIZABETH MORTON.

[The above letter, it will be perceived, is an answer to that inserted in our last December Number. Mr. Huntington's objection to the harpsichord, the predecessor and parent of the modern piano, was, we presume, grounded on the inconsistency of a person in soul-trouble rattling over the keys and amusing herself with carnal tunes. Here, no doubt, he was perfectly right. But how far a person who has already learned to play on a musical instrument may or may not use it in the service of God, must, we think, be left much to a person's own conscience. That in itself there is no sin in playing on a musical instrument is clear from David's example and David's words: "Praise him with the sound of the trumpet; praise him with the psaltery and harp. Praise him with the timbrel and dance; praise him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise him upon the loud cymbals; praise him upon the high-sounding cymbals."

In the public service of God, under our new and spiritual dispensation, musical instruments are certainly out of place; but whether a person called by grace commits a sin if ever he touch a musical instrument again, is another matter. Luther was not only exceedingly fond of music, and composed tunes some of which are sung to this day, but in singing the praises of God or pouring out his complaints, was accustomed to accompany himself on the lute. Take the case of a Christian family where one or two of the daughters can play. Is there any objection on a Lord's Day evening to the singing of a few hymns, and if accompanied on the piano, are they the worse? Is it not better thus to spend a part of the evening, after the Scriptures have been read, than to waste it in vain conversation or walking about the fields? It is well when by these means, in a grown-up family, sons and daughters can be kept quietly at home, and preserved from those numerous temptations which are ever spread to entangle their feet.

Not being able to sing or play ourselves, we think we can give on these points an impartial opinion. It is easy to condemn a thing outright; but we think it more consistent with Christian fairness, to look at both sides of a question.—Ed.]

At length the first among the causes for which the Lord called Paul to Philippi appeared. A poor woman of the name of Lydia, who earned her bread by selling purple, (not a wearer of purple,) (1 Cor. i. 26,) came to the spot of Paul's preaching; she heard; she listened to what those servants of the most high God were delivering, of the way of salvation; and it is concerning her "whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things spoken by Paul." Here, then, we behold the blessed effects which follow, when the Lord's word and the Lord's Spirit work together, upon the hearts of the Lord's people. But the church of Christ to this hour has reason to bless the Lord for sending Paul to Philippi; for we have proofs of the Lord's planting his church there; and we partake in the blessedness of it from that divine epistle, which the apostle afterwards wrote by inspiration, to the church of the Philippians.—*Hawker*.

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN MR. BOSTON AND
MR. DAVIDSON.

Dear Sir,—There is no appearance of the dissolution of the cloud that for several years now has been over my wife. We have made a new essay this season in the use of means for her help; but all hitherto serves for nothing but to discover that “vain is the help of man” in the case. She has not wanted seasonable supports from a higher Hand; and when several coals were by a wise and holy providence cast together into our furnace, she who behoved to be waited on and served before was even helped to wait on and be very helpful to others in distress; and then the clouds returned after the rain, and now she comes little out of the bed at all. But all is necessary; and he is infinitely wise who has the managing of all in his hand. It is a very sweet view of affliction to view it as the discipline of the covenant; and so it is indeed, and nothing else, to the children of our Father’s family. In that respect it is medicinal; it shines with many gracious purposes about it; and, end as it will, one may have the confidence of faith that it shall end well. And O, how happy would it be if we could always maintain the confidence of faith! The soul in that case would be like the babe in the shipwrecked woman’s arms on the plank, smiling amidst the waves, unconcerned with the hazard.

I desire to remember and be remembered by you.

I am, with cordial respects, yours, &c.,

Aug. 8th, 1724.

T. BOSTON.

Very dear Sir,—Yours bearing the resolve about the sacrament came to hand some weeks ago. Difficulties taken away in holy, wise providence from your own circumstances, as likewise from those of your ordinary assistants, I make no doubt have caused various thoughts not a little perplexing to every one of us. I would fain hope, the Lord our Head, as the breaker up going before, will make the way clear. ‘When we are saying among ourselves and within ourselves, “Who shall roll us away the stone?” he will possibly show us the stone, though very great, rolled away. The account of your weakness, and your wife’s distress, gave me no little pain. Infinite wisdom and love make all things work together for good. His ways and thoughts are above ours. In due time the perplexing riddles shall be fully expounded, and it shall then be seen, what we are now to believe, that our God and Guide has not taken one wrong step, and that unquestionably he had a very good reason for whatever he did. We must account that our Lord has ever gone the best way that could have been gone in all that is past, and we should have no doubting thoughts about what he will do afterwards.

Very dear Sir, yours affectionately,

May 11th, 1730.

H. DAVIDSON.

The soul is never safer than when it is, as it were, overwhelmed with infirmities.—Owen.

A LETTER BY THE LATE MR. GOULDING.

(Concluded from page 58.)

I now come to my third general head, viz.,
 III. To show what is *election*.

Election, as I have frequently told you, signifies choice; and, respecting the Lord, it signifies that he did from everlasting fix an eternal love upon a part of Adam's fallen offspring, though there was nothing at all in them to merit his favor, for they were just as bad as those passed by. Nay, we generally find some of the very worst of sinners called. Hence we read of this number, chosen according to the free sovereign will of God, under the title of "a remnant according to the election of grace;" and sure "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of the Lord only and alone, that showeth mercy." To all appearance these are "children of wrath, even as others," until the Lord is pleased to make them manifest by effectual calling and conversion; for let a person prove his calling, and then it is as clear as a sunbeam he is elected, for if he was not of that number, he never would have been called at all. "For," says Christ, "my sheep hear my voice;" but none else. And "whom the Lord foreknew" with a knowledge of love and of special grace, with a knowledge of choice and acceptance, "them he did predestinate," or fore-appoint, to receive grace here and glory hereafter; and "whom he did predestinate, them he called" to the knowledge and fellowship of Christ; and this is the first beginning of the manifestation to us of our eternal election. This is a plain proof of our election; for, had we not been chosen in Christ and loved in him with an everlasting love, we never should have yielded the obedience of faith, or have been changed in time. A change wrought in a sinner's heart in time, is a fruit and effect of the Lord's purpose and decree from before time; for he gave us life in Christ Jesus before ever this world was made, and ordained that we should bring forth fruit to the honor and glory of his holy name.

But how am I to know that I am one of the elect? Thus: The elect are said to "cry day and night" to be avenged of their adversaries; and the very moment the Spirit of God convinces them of sin, that very moment they begin to pray, and will keep on at it, and never give it up. Thus the elect are praying, crying souls. A sure and infallible mark also is this,—when the heart of a sinner is circumcised to love God. Then such a one is evidently a chosen vessel; because, as I said before, the Lord's love kindles ours, and we never could love him unless he were to shed abroad his love in our hearts. When this then is done, the Lord has loved that soul with an everlasting love. "But," say you, "how can I know the love of God from natural affection?" Thus you may know it. Natural affection always fights against the sovereignty of God, and it can never love a real child of God, who contends for the power of the Spirit's work upon the heart. Such a soul will pity all the reprobates we read of, and enmity will arise in such a heart against the Lord, for a display of his discriminating grace, in passing by

some and in leaving others to perish in their own corruption. And this is all the love the Arminians have got. It is nothing more than natural affection, for they are sworn enemies to election or the grace of God.

Now spiritual love, when it operates, will lay the soul low in self-abasement; it will admire the Lord's dealings in choosing such a hell-deserving sinner, and will justify the Lord in leaving others to perish in their sins; and it will find a union with all those that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and in truth. Where, too, the truth is faithfully and fully preached, it will receive the whole of it, and rejoice in it. And when this operates, it will for ever and effectually exclude the soul from all boasting, and will ascribe all salvation, from first to last, to the free, sovereign, and special grace of God.

Thus, therefore, if I love Christ; if I love all them that love him; if I love the truth, and find it come home with power to my heart, I am one of the Lord's elect, and one of the called according to his eternal purpose. This Paul declares, when he writes to the Thessalonians, "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God." But how did he know it? Thus: "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." This was a proof of their election; for it showed that they were quickened, and had life and feeling. Now this was found out by the saints of old, and so it is by them in this day.

Job said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." David could say, "The Lord hath made with me an everlasting covenant, well ordered in all things and sure; this is all my salvation, and all my desire." John could say for himself and all his brethren, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." Paul could say, "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." These all found these things out, and certainly did make their calling and election sure. And we have the same God to go to, and as many or more promises to plead than they had. Blessed be God, we do know that these things are to be known in this life by every heir of promise. And when once we are brought to close in with Christ, and with the testimony of our hearts, and the witness of the Spirit can say, with application to ourselves, "He loved me, and gave himself for me; my beloved is mine, and I am his," then we have made our calling and election sure. The Lord declares that all his people shall know him, and have a sensible knowledge of salvation, by the pardon of all their sins. In that day "they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." And, indeed, if this knowledge is not granted before we go out of this world, we shall as surely be damned as the word is true, for the unrighteous and the unholy cannot enter the kingdom. "Wherefore, the rather, brethren,

give all diligence to make your calling and election sure, for if ye do these things ye shall never fall;" which brings me to my fourth general head, viz.,

IV. "For if ye do these things ye shall never fall."

When a person is thus brought to know that he is called and elected of the Most High, he is as sure of glory as if he were already in it; he has got grace in his heart, that is the earnest of glory. The Lord has promised that his people shall never perish; that they shall be saved in Christ, and that with an everlasting salvation. Mansions in heaven are prepared for them, and "to Zion they shall all be brought, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads." They, therefore, are so fixed by the decree and promise of God, so fixed by the blood and righteousness of Christ that is upon them, so fixed by the indwelling and effectual working of the Holy Spirit of promise, that they shall never fall. They are all built upon Jesus Christ, the Rock of Ages, so that the gates of hell shall never prevail against them. When the rains descend and the floods come, and the wind blows upon this household of faith, it will stand and withstand, for Zion shall never be moved. "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall;"—ye shall never fall away from the truth; ye shall never be severed nor separated from Christ; ye shall never fall away from the hope of the gospel; ye shall never be separated from the love of God, Father, Son, and Spirit; ye shall never fall into black despair; ye shall never fall under the curse of a broken law; ye shall never fall under the wrath of God; ye shall never fall again under the reigning power and dominion of sin; ye shall never fall under the dominion of Satan; and ye shall never fall into hell and be damned. No, never. We are saved from all our enemies in the Lord Jesus Christ; we are "complete in him," "entire, lacking nothing," who is "the Head of all principality and all power." And blessed are the people that are in such a case; yea, "Blessed are the people whose God is the Lord." They are the jewels of Jehovah, the apple of his eye, his peculiar and choice treasure; and, being thus exalted to the Lord's favor, they shall,

V., and lastly, not barely find an entrance into heaven, but an *abundant* one: "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you *abundantly* into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

Some think that at the day of judgment there will be a very critical and strict inquisition made with the elect; but as their judgment passes in this life when brought to believe in Jesus, they will find no scrutiny at all. All that they will hear will be this, (for their Saviour is their Judge,) "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;" for so "an abundant entrance" shall be ministered them into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus. It will be,

“Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in;” for, “where I am,” says Christ, “there also shall my servant be.”

The kingdom of heaven is set up in every believing heart here, which consists in Christ's presence, “in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” But here this kingdom is much disturbed by wars and rumors of wars,—the law in the members warring against the law of the mind. The world, the flesh, and the devil at times all come upon us in quick march and harass us much, until we are enabled to fix and charge bayonets, and then they are obliged to file off and step out well, in order to avoid the two-edged sword of the Spirit, which alone can cut Rahab and wound the dragon in the sea. And in this war we must be engaged until this “abundant entrance” into the everlasting kingdom of Christ takes place; then it will be an eternal halt and rest; then it will be for ever “stand at ease” from all war with the old man and the devil. O that goodly land, and that glorious mountain of the Lord of Hosts! O what an eternal banquet shall we have there! where we shall hunger and thirst no more; where we shall be filled with the Spirit, perfectly happy in Christ's presence, and completely in the enjoyment of the eternal love of our heavenly Father? “Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee?” so highly blessed and favored. “Who is a God like unto ours, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage.” Then “The Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory; thy sun shall no more go down.” “For so an entrance (at death) shall be abundantly ministered unto you into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” To whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, three divine and distinct persons, but in unity of essence one God, be all the honor, glory, and praise of all our salvation now and for evermore. Amen and amen.

Thus have I endeavored, according to the ability God has been pleased to give me, to go through my text; and may the Lord put his blessing upon it and apply it with power, so far as is consistent with his sovereign will, that our calling and election may be sure and clear; for if we do these things we certainly shall never fall; “for so an entrance shall be abundantly ministered” unto us both “into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;” “Whom having not seen, we love; in whom, though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”

I have delivered your message to John; but I have no absolute promise to communicate to you. I am glad of it. Why so? Because absolute and unconditional promises can only be made by the Lord, and not by the creature. I think the best way is for you to write, and then he probably will send an answer. That this may find you well in every sense of the word, that the blessed Spirit may speak to your heart by it; that it may be a means of showing you

where you are; that the power of our God may attend it, with the witness of the Spirit, and give you an increase of faith, hope, and love; that it may be a "word spoken in due season," and "a nail fastened in a sure place" by Jesus Christ, the ever-blessed Master of Assemblies, is the desire and prayer of

Yours, in all Christian love and affection, ever to serve,
CHRIS. GOULDING.

I would pray thee, O heavenly Father, to apply this, as far as right, with power to his heart, that his soul may be benefited and thy holy name glorified! Grant, O Lord, that this may be the case, for Jesus Christ's sake.

P. S.—There are many imperfections in this; but I do honestly declare that they are all mine; for the words of the Lord are pure, and so is the work of the Spirit. You have no right to expect a perfect epistle from me, as I never could say with some, that I have arrived at sinless perfection. I wish I was at it; but in this life I know I never shall. Adieu. Fare thee well.

O thou ever-blessed God and Father! By this epistle may he hear the voice of the Holy Spirit behind him, saying, "This is the way; walk ye in it;" and that thy power may be present to heal! Grant this, Lord, for Christ's sake. Amen.

God promises David to give him the kingdom, and anoints him to it. (1 Sam. xvi. 12.) What, notwithstanding all possible inter-veniences? Yes, for the promise is absolute: "Hath the Lord said it, and shall he not do it?" If, therefore, Saul cast a javelin at him (unsuspected) to nail him to the wall, a sharpness of eye and agility of body shall be given him to discern and avoid it. (chap. xviii. 11.) If he determine evil against him, Jonathan shall advertise him of it. (chap. xix. 7.) If he send messengers to Naioth to apprehend him, they shall forget their errand and fall a prophesying; and if he send others, and others after them, they shall do likewise; yea, Saul himself shall turn prophet for a day and night together, that David may have time to escape. (ver. 20-24.) If he be in a city that will betray him, and not a friend among them to advise him of it, the Lord himself will be his intelligencer, and send him out. (chap. xxiii. 12.) If Saul's army have encompassed him, and no way left to escape, the Philistines shall invade the land, and tidings shall come in the very instant, and take him off. (ver. 26, 27.) If a host encamp against him, he will not be afraid. (Ps. xxvii. 3.) Why so? The Lord had made an absolute promise; and therefore, if no help on earth, "he shall send from heaven, and save me." (Ps. lvii. 3.) Yea, David's wavering at times and the weakness of his faith shall not hinder it; and the reason of all was this, the Lord took him to be ruler over his people, and therefore he was with him wheresoever he went. (1 Chron. xvii. 7, 8.)—*Elisha Coles.*

"IF THE SON SHALL MAKE YOU FREE, YE
SHALL BE FREE INDEED."

Dear Sir,—I must send you a few lines, just to tell you how it was with me after the Lord had blessed and delivered my soul.

Most of those who knew me soon saw a remarkable change, so much so that one in particular said, "How is it you appear so different now to what you did a short time since?" Ah! Sir, who can attempt fully to explain the amazing difference between a poor sinner with all his sins lying on his pierced conscience, trembling on the brink of endless despair, expecting to be sent to hell, (and that he knows justly he has deserved,) and an immediate revelation of a precious Saviour crucified for him? Now, no free will nor all the bishops or doctors in theology can effect this; no, nor all the men in the world. But it is the blessed Spirit's work, when the set time arrives, to favor Zion individually. In he comes with an almightiness which no felt unworthiness nor objection on the part of the poor sinner can turn aside. It is of no use to say, "I am so vile, it cannot be for me; my sins are too great ever to be pardoned." "O no," says the precious Visitor, "I am come on purpose to relieve you. You are a great sinner, it is true; but there is precious blood, that cleanseth from all sin, shed on purpose to cleanse such as you. You who feel your need of cleansing, you who feel your need of pardon, this precious, precious blood I bring to you. It was shed on purpose; it can never be refused by any for whom it avails in the high court of heaven; for no poor sinner was ever made to see the immense value of this blood and cast away at last. No, my word declares this; and therefore, whoever would attempt to persuade you to the contrary, be assured they know nothing of my teaching, and are not worth a moment's credit; no, not if an angel should attempt to start such a thing. I wish you to be of this mind, that should all the world turn Arminians, do you remain still proclaiming that it is free grace alone can make a real Christian; and no power, however strong it may appear, can ever thwart my almighty power, which I exert on behalf of the elect. Therefore, attend you to my word, and 'make your calling and election sure;' having done this, 'ye shall never fall.'"

How often do I notice young men going the same way as by nature I took, and with a deep sigh say, "O Lord, that I could speak a word that thou wouldst own and bless. They are blind, Lord, and I cannot open their eyes; but thou canst do it, and none other. Do show them, Lord, their danger, and lead them to repentance; bring them out of darkness to light, and 'to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.'" How a former despiser of this precious blood is astonished to think God has not cut him down, when his eyes are opened to see whom he has been fighting against all his life. This seems to break me down into real contrition, when reflecting upon my past life, and compels me to say,

"O how could he so sweetly smile
On such a wretch as I;

I who his name did once revile,
And his dear truth deny?"

But grace is free, and overtops all. No matter, poor sinner, if you see and feel yourself to be the vilest wretch upon this earth, if you are sick of self and sick of sin, you shall see what Mount Calvary shall do for you, and hear that sweet and precious voice echo in your ear, "It is finished!"

"O what pleasure do these cheering words afford;
Heav'nly blessings flow to us from Jesus Christ the Lord."

"O blessed sight, O lovely form,
To sinful souls like me;
I'd creep beside him as a worm,
And see him bleed for me."

Yes, bless his dear name, he says, "If ye seek me, let these go their way." For any to say, then, there is no such thing as chastisement for sin in a believer, is to me a strange doctrine indeed, when I feel daily knocked down almost to see so much in me to this day, and I often go moping on account thereof.

That the dear Lord may condescend to bless and make useful the "Gospel Standard," is the prayer of
Yours in the best of bonds,

A BELIEVER.

Whatever particular proportion or correspondence you may observe between this or that circumstance in your affliction and your former transgressions, be especially careful to act according to that more peculiar and express voice of the rod. Then you may perhaps have speedy and remarkable reason to say, that "it hath been good for you that you have been afflicted;" (Ps. cxix. 71;) and with a multitude of others, may learn to number the times of your sharpest trials, among the sweetest and the most exalted moments of your life.—*Doddridge*.

Various things are meant by the word Spirit in the Holy Scriptures; as wind, the spirit of beasts, and the souls of men, and angels both good and bad. But the Holy Ghost is distinguished from all these, being emphatically called God, not in a figurative or metaphoric, but in an absolute sense; to "the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ." (Col. ii. 2.) In which passage the Holy Ghost stands first in the holy Trinity, and he is distinct from the Father and from Christ; and surely, if he were not essentially God, to all intents and purposes, he never would have inspired the apostle to name and place him as God before the Father. The church also is called "the temple of the Holy Ghost; as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them." No spirit whatever that is mentioned in all the book of God is ever numbered with the persons in the holy Trinity, or ranked with the Father and the Son, except the Holy Ghost. Nor is the church the property, the temple, or the habitation, of any but God alone; and, as the church is called the temple of the Holy Ghost, the Holy Ghost must be God.—*Huntington*.

TO THERON ON FAMILY WORSHIP.

BY JOHN NEWTON.

Sir,—A neglect of family prayer is, I am afraid, too common amongst professors in this day. I am glad that you consider it both as a duty and a privilege, and are by grace determined that when you shall commence master of a family, you will worship God with all your house. It was Abraham's commendation, that he not only served the Lord himself, but was solicitous that his children and household might serve him likewise. I trust that he who inclines your heart to walk in the footsteps of faithful Abraham will bless you in the attempt, and give you peace in your dwelling,—a mercy which is seldom enjoyed, and which indeed can hardly be expected, by those families who call not upon the Lord.

Though I readily comply with your request, and should be glad if I can offer anything that may assist or animate you in your good purpose, I am afraid I shall not answer your expectations, with regard to the particulars of your inquiry concerning the most proper method of conducting family worship. The circumstances of families are so various, that no determinate rules can be laid down, nor has the word of God prescribed any; because, being of universal obligation, it is wisely and graciously accommodated to suit the different situations of his people. You must, therefore, as to circumstances, judge for yourself.

You will do well to pursue such a method as you shall find most convenient to yourself and family, without scrupulously binding yourself when the Scripture has left you free. We have no positive precept enjoining us any set time for prayer, nor even how often we should pray, either in public or private; though the expressions of "continue instant in prayer," "pray without ceasing," and the like, plainly intimate that prayer should be frequent. Daniel prayed three times a day, which the Psalmist speaks of as his practice also, and in one place declares his purpose of praising God seven times a day. This last expression is, perhaps, indefinite,—not precisely seven times, but very often. Indeed, a person who lives in the exercise of faith and love, and who finds by experience that it is good for him to draw nigh to God, will not want to be told how often he must pray any more than how often he must converse with an earthly friend. Those whom we love, we love to be much with. Love is the best casuist, and either resolves or prevents a thousand scruples and questions which may perplex those who only serve God from principles of constraint and fear. And a believer will account those his happiest days when he has most leisure and most liberty of spirit for the exercise of prayer. However, I think family prayer cannot be said to be stated, unless it is performed at least daily, and, when unavoidable hindrances do not prevent, twice a day. Though all times and seasons are alike to the Lord, and his ear is always open whenever we have a heart to call upon him, yet to us there is a peculiar suitableness in beginning and closing the day with prayer; in the morning to acknowledge his goodness in

preserving us through the night, and entreat his presence and blessing on our persons and callings in the course of the day; and at night, to praise him for the mercies of the day past, to humble ourselves before him for what has been amiss, to wait upon him for a renewed manifestation of his pardoning love, and to commit ourselves and our concerns to his care and protection while we sleep. You will of course choose those hours when you are least liable to be incommoded by the calls of business, and when the family can assemble with the most convenience. Only I would observe, that it greatly preserves regularity and good order in a house, to keep constantly to the same hours, when it is practicable, and likewise that it is best not to defer evening prayer till late, if it can be well avoided, lest some who join in the exercise, and perhaps the person himself who leads in it, should be too weary or sleepy to give a due attention. On this account I should advise to have family prayer before supper, where people have the choice and disposal of their own hours.

I think with you, that it is very expedient and proper that reading a portion of the word of God should be ordinarily a part of our family worship; so likewise to sing a hymn or psalm, or part of one, at discretion; provided there are some persons in the family who have grace in their hearts and enough of a musical ear and voice to conduct the singing in a tolerable manner, otherwise, perhaps, it may be better omitted. If you read and sing as well as pray, care should be taken that the combined services do not run into an inconvenient length. The chief thing to be attended to is, that it may be a spiritual service; and the great evil to be dreaded and guarded against in the exercise of every duty that returns frequently upon us, is formality. If a stated course of family prayer is kept up as constantly in its season as the striking of the clock, it may come in time to be almost as mechanically performed, unless we are continually looking to the Lord to keep our hearts alive. It most frequently happens that one or more members of a family are unconverted persons. When there are such present, a great regard should be had to them, and everything conducted with a view to their edification, that they may not be disgusted or wearied, or tempted to think that it is little more than the fashion or custom of the house; which will probably be the case, unless the master of the family is lively and earnest in the performance of the duty, and likewise circumspect and consistent in every part of his behaviour at other times. By leading in the worship of God before children, servants, or strangers, a man gives bond, as it were, for his behaviour, and adds strength to every other motive which should engage him to abstain from all appearance of evil. It should be a constant check upon our language and tempers in the presence of our families, to consider that we began the day and propose to end it with them in prayer. The apostle Peter uses this argument to influence the conduct of husbands and wives towards each other; and it is equally applicable to all the members of a family, "That your prayers be not hindered;" that is, either prevented and put

off, or despoiled of all life and efficacy, by the ferment of sinful passions. On the other hand, the proper exercise of family prayer, when recommended by a suitable deportment, is a happy means of instructing children and servants in the great truths of religion, of softening their prejudices, and inspiring them with a temper of respect and affection, which will dispose them to cheerful obedience, and make them unwilling to grieve or offend. In this instance, as in every other, we may observe, that the Lord's commands to his people are not arbitrary appointments, but that, so far as they are conscientiously complied with, they have an evident tendency and suitableness to promote our own advantage. He requires us to acknowledge him in our families, for our own sakes, not because he has need of our poor services, but because we have need of his blessing, and without the influence of his grace, which is promised to all who seek it, are sure to be unhappy in ourselves and in all our connections.

When husband and wife are happily partakers of the same faith, it seems expedient and for their mutual good, that besides their private devotions and joining in family prayer, they should pray together. They have many wants, mercies, and concerns in common with each other, and distinct from the rest of the family. The manner in which they should improve a little time in this joint exercise cannot be well prescribed by a third person; yet I will venture to suggest one thing, and the rather as I do not remember to have met with it in print. I conceive that it may prove much to their comfort to pray alternately, not only the husband with and for the wife, but the wife with and for the husband. The Spirit of God, by the apostle, has especially restrained women from the exercise of spiritual gifts in public; but I apprehend the practice I am speaking of can in no way interfere with that restriction. I suppose them in private together, and then I judge it to be equally right and proper for either of them to pray with the other. Nor do I meet anything in St. Paul's writings to prevent my thinking that if he had been a married man he would, though an apostle, have been glad of the prayers of his wife. If you ask, how often they should pray together? I think the oftener the better, provided it does not break in upon their duties; once a day at least; and if there is a choice of hours, it might be as well at some distance from their other seasons of worship. But I would observe, as before, that in matters not expressly commanded, prudence and experience must direct.

I have written upon a supposition that you use extempore prayer; but as there are many heads of families who fear the Lord and have not yet attained liberty to pray extempore before others, I would add, that their inability in this respect, whether real or whether only proceeding from fear, and an undue regard to self, will not justify them in the omission of family prayer. Helps may be procured. Mr. Jenks' "Devotions" are in many hands, and I doubt not but there are others, excellent books of the same kind, with which I am not acquainted. If they begin with a form, not with a

design to confine themselves always to one, but make it a part of their secret pleading at the throne of grace, that they may be favored with the gift and spirit of prayer, and accustom themselves, while they use a form, to intersperse some petitions of their own, there is little doubt but they will in time find a growth in liberty and ability, and at length lay their book entirely aside. For, it being every believer's duty to worship God in his family, his promise may be depended upon, to give them a sufficiency in all things for those services which he requires of them. Happy is that family where the worship of God is constantly and conscientiously maintained. Such houses are temples, in which the Lord dwells, and castle-garrisoned by a divine power. I do not say, that by honoring God in your house you will wholly escape a share in the trials incident to the present uncertain state of things. A measure of such trials will be necessary for the exercise and manifestation of your graces, to give you a more convincing proof of the truth and sweetness of the promises made to a time of affliction, to mortify the body of sin, and to wean you more effectually from the world. But this I will confidently say, that the Lord will both honor and comfort those who thus honor him. Seasons will occur in which you shall know, and probably your neighbors shall be constrained to take notice, that he has not bid you seek him in vain. If you meet with troubles, they shall be accompanied by supports, and followed by deliverance. And you shall upon many occasions experience that he is your Protector, preserving you and yours from the evils by which you will see others suffering around you.

I have rather exceeded the limits I proposed, and therefore shall only add a request that, in your addresses at the throne of grace you will remember,

Sir, your friend and servant in the gospel,

OMICRON.

[At the request of a correspondent, we have inserted the above letter, which seems stamped with that sound sense and practical gospel wisdom which characterises the writings of John Newton. At the same time we must ever bear in mind the difficulties attending the whole subject; and whilst on the one hand we think it most eminently desirable that family prayer should be attended to, yet that on the other, circumstances will arise where it seems almost impossible to carry it on in a way that shall be edifying to the soul or tend to the glory of God. Take, for instance, the case where the wife is called by grace after her marriage to a carnal husband. Shall she endeavor to get family prayer set up, and get Jenks's prayers for her husband to read? The result must be formality or hypocrisy; and in this instance, is family prayer a spiritual sacrifice, acceptable to God through Christ Jesus? Yet some would almost deny she was a Christian, unless, well nigh by force, she got family prayer set up in the house.—ED.]

Question your soul, believer. Is your desire after Christ sincere? Does it spring from *self-love*, or love to *Christ*? That you may be *saved* only, or that God may be *glorified* as well? Would you consent to the one without the other?

THE DAY OF ESPOUSALS.

My dear Sir,—I am very, very glad to hear from you once more in the wilderness. Your letter has revived my spirit; I hope I may add, refreshed my sinking soul. I sincerely thank you for writing to me once again; for, dear Sir, I have of late more than ever felt as a sparrow alone, without one friend to whom I could open my mind. I have been led to think no one treads such a path as I do. Sometimes trouble seems to humble me; at others, I kick and rebel, and instead of my trials driving me to the throne and giving fervency to prayer, they seem to produce the contrary effect. O I am often led fearfully to exclaim, “Can ever God dwell here?” Not that I sin outwardly, for the world to behold, though I have to mourn over my unwatchfulness. But O the inside wretchedness, the “nest of unclean birds,” the sinkings of heart and misgivings, I am at times the subject of! This is some of my experience, my dear Sir. But, blessed be God, it is not all.

You too, I learn, have been, and still are, in the floods of tribulation. O how grieved I am to hear that you are so ill. It is and must be my earnest prayer, when a heart to pray is granted, that your dear life may be spared and prolonged. My dear friend, I felt such a union of soul to you while reading your note, and also in answering the same, that may I not hope it is “a live coal from off the altar?” This I can say, I do love those most in the family who breathe most of the spirit and most bear the image of the glorious Head.

I should sin against his love, my dear Sir, were I not to tell you what he has been to my self-wretchedness. But words will not tell what I have been blest to enjoy of his precious, precious love. O he has visited my soul again and again; all darkness has fled before him! My poor soul has been crumbled into dust at his dear feet. I have adored him as my all. His precious name has been “as ointment poured forth.” Every doubt has fled, and this heart has loved him above all created good. O my dear friend, these have been solemn times, and fresh trials have generally followed after. Sometimes, when I have been at work, my feelings have been so great that I was forced to get somewhere by myself. Ever since I have known the Lord, I have been favored at times with his felt visits, but never so solemnly as of late—almost too much for the frame; I have trembled from head to foot. I do sometimes really think I could almost die with joy. Yet what a lump of inconsistency the carnal world would consider me; though you, through grace, can understand such changes. What a God is our God; how wonderful in counsel! I believe he will bring every one of his through the fire of tribulation, till he weans them from self and everything but him. Yes, he will reign and make himself dear to the souls he loves.

I do not expect to be able to work much longer, and I am much lammer than I was, but I am in the Lord's hand. O that I might always lie there!

Yours in Christian love,

May 29th.

A. B.

R E V I E W.

An Exposition of the Book of Solomon's Song, commonly called Canticles. By John Gill, D.D. London: Collingridge. 1854.

(Continued from page 68.)

What a gift to the church of God is the inspired word of truth! Next to the gift of his dear Son and the grace of the Blessed Spirit, may we rank the gift of those "Holy Scriptures which are able to make" the regenerate soul "wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." But though it is so unspeakably precious to have in our own language, at our side, in our hands, and sometimes in our hearts, the inspired word of Him who made heaven and earth, of Him in whom we live, and move, and have our being, of Him who by his Spirit and grace enables us to look up to himself as the God of all our mercies, of all our hopes, and all our comforts, yet from the very commonness of the gift, we are apt much to undervalue it. As light, air, water, or even food, raiment, shelter,—those indispensable requisites to the support of natural life,—are little prized because of daily, hourly use; so the Scriptures, which contain in them the food of the soul, are less valued than they should be, because they are a book familiar to us from childhood. Much in the Holy Scriptures which would strike our minds with astonishment, were it for the first time read, has become so familiar, from constant repetition, as almost to fall listlessly on the ear. The creation of the world and of our first parents; the fall in paradise; the flood, with the preservation in the ark; the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah; the history of Abraham; the diversified scenes of Israel's sufferings and victories; or, to come to the New Testament, the simple, touching narrative of the life, sufferings, and death of Jesus, in the gospels,—were these beautiful descriptions less familiar from constant repetition, how they would arrest our attention, how they would charm our ears, and seem pregnant with interest in every line! True it is that then, as now, we should as much need the Blessed Spirit to apply them to our hearts, but we should not read them or hear them read as listlessly as we now too often do.

Have our readers ever considered the wonderful *variety* to be found in the Scriptures?—we mean the varied form under which God has been pleased to reveal his sacred truth? Let us devote a few minutes to the expansion of this thought, as perhaps it may cast a light on that peculiar mode of instruction which is presented to us in the Song of Solomon.

If it had so pleased him, God might have confined himself to *one* form of holy instruction, as, say for instance such positive directions as we find issued relative to the tabernacle. (Exod. xxv.—xxx.) But as in creation, variety of form, size, color, sheds beauty on all the works of his hands, so in the word of his grace, variety gives new beauties to revelation. Let us consider a few instances of this variety, which may serve more fully to open our meaning.

1. The first and most prominent form is that of *history*, forming, both in Old Testament and New, a large portion of the sacred volume. All events being under his control and directed to his glory, and some being stamped with more evident marks of his special interposition, God has seen fit to record such as in his unerring wisdom should be for the perpetual instruction and edification of the church. But what remarkable features are stamped on Bible history, viewed as a special form of revelation!

Consider, first, its *antiquity*; how it stretches back to the beginning of all time; nay, we may say, into eternity itself. What should we know of the creation or the fall, but for the Bible? And if the creation of man in his original purity and his fall into sin and death had not been thus divinely revealed, what a mystery, what a perpetual stumbling-block would this life and this world, with all their sins and sorrows, have ever presented!

But besides the antiquity, what a *certainty* does the historical part of the Bible afford of the circumstances related, and how different in this respect from the fabulous, obscure narratives of heathen historians! What a charming *simplicity*, too, and tender *pathos*, combined, where needed, with *strength* and *energy*, do we find in the historical pages of holy writ! As an obvious instance, how tender, yet simple and life-like, is the history of Joseph. As a mere record of Israel's preservation, a bare outline of Joseph's history would have been sufficient. But what a loss would those beautiful details have been which have given such life and power to that pathetic narrative! The noble speech of Judah, the yearnings of Joseph's heart, restrained till they broke out into such floods of weeping that "the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard;" the tender pathos of those words, "I am Joseph; is my father yet alive?" in which, laying aside all the dignity of the first prince of Egypt, he gave vent to the pent-up affections of 20 years, with a hundred other traits of divine beauty in that touching narrative,—where can we find a parallel in works written by the finger of man? The whole history of David, too, and specially his combat with Goliath, his last interview with Jonathan, his flight from Jerusalem, with his touching self-reproach and submission, his watching at the gate for tidings about Absalom,—Absalom the rebel, the incestuous adulterer, yet still Absalom the darling of the old man's heart,—with that heart-rending cry, when Cush, not daring to tell the whole, yet told enough to fulfil his worst fears, "O my son Absalom, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"—apart from all the divine truths conveyed by this unequalled narrative, who does not feel its consummate tenderness and beauty?

We cannot, from wanting space and other reasons, dwell upon particulars, or in the New Testament we might point out the history of Lazarus with the strongly-contrasted character of the two sisters and the God-Man in the midst, weeping as man, raising the dead as God; the last supper, with the washing of the disciples' feet; the scenes in the garden and at the cross; the walk to Emmaus; the ascension

from Mount Olivet, and a thousand other traits in the gospels, as full of tenderness and beauty, apart from their divine character. So, what simple yet noble pictures have we in the Acts of the Apostles! Paul's miraculous conversion; his unparalleled labors and zeal; his boldness when, at the risk of his life, he rushed into the theatre at Ephesus; his touching parting at Miletus; (Acts xx.) his noble speeches before Felix and Festus; his voyage and shipwreck—what traits of beauty shine through all his history! As in a noble landscape, or an exquisite painting, or a beautiful piece of music, besides the general effect, a thousand single traits of beauty or harmony start forth to charm the eye or ear, so in the word of God, besides the general sublimity and harmony that are stamped on the whole, innumerable features of beauty leap forth to the observing eye. In creation there is not only beauty, but a prodigality of beauty, from the gleaming stars overhead to the kingfisher's breast or the butterfly's wing; and thus in the Scriptures there is not merely an exquisite grandeur stamped on the whole, but an overflowing beauty gushing from every page.

2. But *history* is only one form of divine revelation. There are what we may call *devotional* writings. The Holy Ghost not only inspired men of God to breathe forth prayer and praise, not only taught them to sigh and groan, rejoice and sing, but instructed them to commit to writing those breathings of their soul after the living God. As these divine breathings were usually set to music and sung in the tabernacle worship, they were called "Psalms."* What a manual of living experience, what a standing model and exemplar of vital communion with God, what a perpetual stream of consolation and edification to the church of Christ these divine compositions are and ever have been, it is unnecessary for us here to mention. From the lowest depths of trouble and sorrow to the loftiest heights of joy and praise, there is no state or stage, movement or feeling of divine life in the soul, which is not expressed in the simplest and sweetest language in the Psalms. They are thus not only a test and guide of Christian experience, a heavenly prayer-book, a daily devotional companion, a bosom friend in sorrow and joy, a sure chart for the heaven-bound voyager, and an infallible standard of divine teaching, but a treasury of strength and comfort, out of which the Holy Spirit blesses the waiting soul.

3. But there is *prophecy* also, reaching forth from the first promise given in paradise down to periods still buried in futurity. Here, as in a continually unfolding roll, are written by the finger of God events of the deepest importance, and especially the sufferings and glory of Christ, and, as one with him, the sufferings and glory of the church. Nor are these prophetic strains mere cold predictions, mere dry, formal declarations of future events. Mingled with the strains of the prophetic harp, flow in a full tide of harmony, promises, warnings, threatenings, rebukes, exhortations, all teeming with that

* The word "Psalms," which is taken from the Greek, means literally the soundings of the strings of the lyre, and thence the divine songs which were sung to stringed instruments.

peculiar energy and power which stamp the word of God as truly divine.

Poetry, too, and *oratory*—poetry such as uninspired poet never reached, oratory such as human eloquence never attained to—lend their charms, giving to prophets such as Isaiah language as exalted as their theme. Nor let these be thought out of place. Poetry and oratory, in their purest, highest state, are but the expression of impassioned thought, lofty, burning language being the necessary vehicle of lofty, burning ideas. Thus, as the thoughts of God are higher than those of men, the language of God is higher than that of men; and what is called poetry and oratory being but lofty thoughts in lofty words, poetry and oratory are the necessary vehicles of divine thought. To point out a tenth of these beauties of thought and expression would require pages; but as one instance, take Isaiah lxiii., and read it as a dialogue, which indeed it is, between Christ and the church. The church seeing in the distance a mighty personage advancing, bursts forth with the inquiry, “Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength?” The Redeemer answers, “I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.” “Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel?” again inquires the church, “and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat?” The Redeemer answers, “I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me; for I have trodden* them in mine anger, and trampled them in my fury; and their blood is sprinkled upon my garments, and I have stained all my raiment.” What poetry, what oratory, are here; how sublime the thoughts, how noble and impassioned the language! Similar beauties may be found in almost every chapter.

4. But instruction is also conveyed under a more strictly condensed and *didactic* form, as in the “Proverbs,” where the wisest and deepest lessons of moral teaching are couched under short, simple sentences, alike pithy and pointed, and from their concise, antithetical style, easy to be remembered. Happy the man who could direct his moral conduct, we might add, even his habits of life and business, according to the rules laid down in the Proverbs; happier he who can receive the spiritual counsel veiled under these moral rules, and act up to their spirit and divine meaning!

5. Nor are *letters*—that charming mode of intercourse between distant friends—wanting as another form of divine instruction. The *Epistles*, we know, of Paul and other apostles constitute a large portion of the New Testament. How overflowing with holy affection are these letters to churches and individuals; how pregnant with grace and truth; how richly do they unfold the doctrines of the gospel; how copious are they in promise, how comprehensive in precept, how pointed in reproof; how tender to console, how faithful

* We here follow Bishop Lowth's translation, which indeed the sense requires; for, in answer to the inquiry of the church, the Redeemer tells her *why* his apparel is red already—not what he *means* to do, but what he *has* done.

to warn, how impregnated throughout with heavenly savor and dew! These features are, indeed, so prominent in the Epistles, that it is superfluous to point them out to those who read them with an enlightened eye. But one feature may, perhaps, have escaped the observation of some of our readers, who, dwelling chiefly on single verses, may not have paid much attention to the epistle as a whole; we mean the subtle but strong chain of close *argument* which distinguishes some of Paul's epistles, especially those two masterpieces, the Epistle to the Romans and that to the Hebrews. Take, for instance, the eleven first chapters of the Epistle to the Romans. Were we called upon to do so, we believe we could point out a logical series of the subtlest and strongest reasoning in those chapters so powerful and masterly, that hardly a word does not contribute a link to the chain;—were it necessary, we think we could trace out the deeply-important subject which he there handles, viz., the justification of the believer, and show the gradual unfolding of his argument, the way in which he supports it from the Scriptures, the decisive conclusion to which he comes, the objections he anticipates and answers, the consequences he draws, until he winds up the whole with, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" But how many of the Lord's people have read and re-read those eleven chapters, and with profit too and comfort to their souls, on whom this masterpiece of reasoning, as a complete chain of logical argument, is almost utterly lost. What *oratory*, too, has he poured forth. Read, in this point of view, the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. With what majestic dignity, even in our translation, which is far inferior to the original, it opens; and how it rises and swells, like a noble organ, till it peals forth that full strain, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. i. 14.) Look also at Heb. xii. 18–24. How beautifully are the two dispensations contrasted! How we seem transported, on the one hand, to the foot of Sinai, till we seem to see the very mountain burning with fire and overshadowing the flames which burst through the "blackness, and darkness, and tempest;" and on the other, carried in spirit to Mount Zion, hovering round which we seem to view the "innumerable company of angels," and on the mount itself, "the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven." Apart from the blessed truth conveyed in these verses, what beautiful imagery, what life-like touches, what breathing eloquence, what sublimity of thought, and fulness yet compression of language, shine through the whole. Again, what a picture of human wickedness does the pen of Paul draw in Rom. i. 20–32. How concise, yet how pregnant the language; how damning the catalogue of crimes; how burning the words that denounce them. What a concentration of thought and expression, the very essence of true oratory, is observable in verses 29–31! And in that acknowledged masterpiece of eloquence, Rom. viii. 28–39, how the language keeps rising in power and grandeur, till death, life, angels, principalities, powers, things present and things to come, height, depth, and cre-

ation itself, are all challenged to separate the elect from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord !

6. But we are now brought to another form of divine revelation, which we hardly know how to name, lest our meaning be misunderstood, but we may venture to call it a *Sacred Drama*. By the expression we do not mean anything approaching theatrical representation, but the introduction of distinct persons and scenes, and the carrying on of a dialogue in which the parties express their affections and feelings to each other. Our readers will at once perceive that we mean the Song of Solomon. We do ; but not exclusively, for we have it shadowed forth in other parts of Scripture, as Job i., ii., and Ps. xxiv., xlv. But it is most fully carried out in the Song of Solomon, which is a celebration of the mutual love and delight in each other of Christ and the church.

As we feel half disposed to enter somewhat more fully into this subject, and can hardly do so in our present space, we must defer our examination of this divine Song to a future Number. The commentary upon it by Dr. Gill is not a reprint of his annotations upon it in his commentary upon the Scriptures, but a perfectly distinct work, published, we believe, some years before he sent forth his large work. By most readers and admirers of Dr. Gill, it is, we believe, considered the most edifying and savory of his writings. He has brought to bear upon it his amazing learning, and what is better, his clear gospel light, and that sound, solid judgment which so eminently characterised him, and which, in the exposition of a portion of Scripture peculiarly open to peril, has preserved him, if not wholly, yet in good measure, from that fanciful interpretation which, under the guise of spirituality, is really but often only a giving loose to the reins of a carnal imagination.

The following extract will serve to give some idea of the way in which Dr. Gill handles his subject. It is his exposition of chap. v. 6 :

“It may seem a little strange and almost unaccountable, that Christ at this instant should withdraw himself from his church, seeing he had so importunately desired her to arise and open to him ; had used all methods to win upon her, and by his grace had enabled her to do it ; and yet now it is done, he withdraws himself and is gone ; and therefore it is proper to inquire why he should do so ; which was perhaps—1. To chastise her for her former carriage to him. Had he, as soon as she had opened the door, shown himself to her, and received her with all tokens of love and joy, she would not have thought the offence so great ; nor that he was so much provoked by it, and did so highly resent it as he did ; therefore to bring her to a sense of it, and to correct her for it, by suffering the loss of his company, he withdraws himself. 2. To try the truth and strength of her grace. Her grace was now in exercise, as appears by her rising and opening ; and now, the more to exercise it, and prove the strength of it, he withdraws himself. Thus all our afflictions, temptations, and desertions, are for the trial of our faith, and other graces ; which being tried, appear ‘much more precious than of gold that perisheth.’ 3. To inflame her love, and sharpen her desires the more after him ; which effect his withdrawing from her, in chap. iii. 1–3, had upon her ; and so it had here. Many such instances we have in Job, David, and others ; who being without the presence of God, have the more earnestly wished for, vehemently thirsted, panted, and breathed after a re-enjoyment of it ; (see Job xxiii. 2 ; Ps. xliii. 1, 2 ; and lxiii. 1 ;) and it is usually so, that the want of a blessing not only brings us under a conviction of the worth of it, and so draws out our

affections to it, but also enlarges and increases our desires after it. 4. To endear his presence the more, when she came to enjoy it. When a soul has been destitute of Christ's presence for a time, and comes to enjoy it again, O how sweet, ravishing, and delightful is it! The disciples were without Christ's bodily presence but a few days, and when he appeared to them, we are told (John xx. 20) that 'Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord;' and what expressions of joy and intimations of esteem for Christ's presence does the church give in chap. iii. 4, when she had found her lost spouse! 5. To keep her humble. Had she immediately enjoyed his presence upon her rising and opening to him, she might have thought that she had, by those actions of hers, deserved such a favor at his hands; therefore to hide pride from her, and to let her know the nothingness of all her doings, and that they fell abundantly short of meriting such a blessing, he withdraws himself. Our enjoyment of Christ's presence, and the communications of his love and grace to us, as much depend on his free and sovereign will as the first displays of his grace to us; he gives these favors at pleasure, and that to whom, when, and where he pleases. 6. To show her the odious nature of sin, which was the cause of this, and that she might, through grace, be more on her guard against it, and be more cautious of provoking him to it again. It was sin that was the cause of the angels being turned out of heaven, the place of the divine abode, and of Adam's being driven out of Eden from the presence of the Lord God; and though sin cannot dissolve the union that is between Christ and a believer, nor destroy his covenant-interest in him, yet it is often the cause of God's hiding his face, and Christ's withdrawing his presence from him. 'Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you,' says the prophet Isaiah, chap. lix. 2, to the people of Israel; and it was the church's unbecoming carriage to Christ which was the cause of his withdrawing from her now; and therefore to bring her to a sense of it, and to see the odious nature thereof, he withdraws himself, that when she enjoys it again she might be more careful not to provoke him again by such steps as these; and such an effect it had upon her, in chap. iii. 4, 5, where she not only held him fast herself, and would not let him go, but also charges the daughters of Jerusalem to give him no molestation or disturbance."

* Albeit then that the law kills, yet God uses this effect of the law, this death, I mean, to a good end, that is to bring life. For God seeing that this universal plague of the whole world, to wit, man's opinion of his own righteousness, his hypocrisy, and confidence in his own holiness could not be beaten down by any other means, he would that it should be slain by the law; not for ever, but that when it is once slain, man might be raised up again above and beyond the law, and there might hear this voice, "Fear not; I have not given the law, and killed thee by the law, that thou shouldst abide in this death; but that thou shouldst fear me and live."—*Luther*.

God's children would be very glad if they could "live as they list." How so? Because it is the will, the desire, the wish, of a renewed soul, that is, of the new man, or the believer's regenerate part; (for old Adam never was a saint yet, nor ever will be;) it is, I say, the will and the wish of a renewed soul to please God in all things, and never to sin on any occasion or in any degree. This is the state to which our pantings aspire; and in which, would the imperfection of human nature admit of such happiness below, we "list" to walk. For every truly regenerated person can sincerely join the apostle Paul, in saying, "With my mind I myself serve the law of God;" and wish I could keep it better.—*Toplady*.

POETRY.

THE GRACIOUS SAVIOUR AND THE COMING SINNER.

Lord, dost thou bid me come to thee?
 Eyes, Lord, I have, but cannot see;
 Feet, too, I have, but cannot move,
 Without the grace of faith and love.

My coming doth on thee depend,
 Upon the aid that thou shalt send;
 For it I look, for it I cry;
 Put forth thy strength and bring me nigh.

Thou, Lord, must give a pure desire,
 And touch my heart with sacred fire;
 Then shall I come with zeal and love,
 And all thy grace and mercy prove.

When faith directs to Christ, the Gate,
 Then shall I find the path that's straight;
 Led on and guided by thy hand,
 With all thy chosen saints to stand.

Drawn by the cords of love divine,
 And taught to call thee, "Thou art mine,"
 'Tis then I come and to thee flee,
 And want no other Friend but thee.

Thy promise, Lord, provides a plea
 For me to say, "O come to me,"
 And with me sup, and with me stay,
 And turn my darkness into day!

Thus coming would I ever be,
 And testify thy love to me;
 Stand watching for thy gracious call,
 And own thee Sov'reign Lord of all.

Thus coming prove thy constant love,
 Made known by Father, Son, and Dove;
 The certain pledge of perfect rest,
 For all the sons in Jesus blest.

When thou shalt bid this house dissolve,
 And days and years no more revolve,
 Then bear my spirit up to thee,
 To spend a blest eternity.

Ashwell.

J. C.

To desire the safety of his soul is right in a man; but if desired apart from the glory of God, the spring of the desire is unsound. The two are distinct and may be separate. Many wish their souls safe that could well do without Christ. None who cannot do without Christ need fear the safety of their souls. Those who wish the safety of their souls on right grounds, are those who desire the glory of God. These two are inseparable,—the desire for and seeking after salvation in the right way, as guilty and undone sinners, through faith in the atonement and righteousness of Jesus, and the earnest longing and desire that a triune Jehovah may be and must be glorified in their salvation.

THE
GOSPEL STANDARD.

MATT. V. 6; 2 TIM. I. 9; ROM. XI. 7; ACTS VIII. 37, 38; MATT. XXVIII. 19.

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A MEDITATION ON THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS.

BY NATHANIEL.

(Continued from page 79.)

But secondly, what does calling grace do *in* a man? that is, what are its effects in the heart? for "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." This was verified in the experience of Zaccheus in a striking manner; and that man's religion is but a vain show who does not manifest, in measure, the same effects. But how did grace operate in the heart of Zaccheus when that divine call reached him from the lips of the Prince of peace? Let him speak for himself: "And Zaccheus stood, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. So Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forso much as he also is a son of Abraham." The secret of the call being effectual, was because he was a son of Abraham according to promise, and therefore must be and was blessed with faithful Abraham; and what a change this call made in his heart! Before this, he had a heart of stone, and doubtless was so unfeeling as to act the part of an unjust man and an extortioner; but now, the heart of stone is taken away and a new covenant-heart given him; and this heart of flesh is a feeling one. Dear Hart knew something of this. He says,

"To see sin, smarts but slightly;
To own with lip confession
Is easier still; but O to feel.
Cuts deep beyond expression."

This change in the heart of Zaccheus made manifest the hidden works of darkness which lay amongst the cage of unclean birds. It brought to light his covetousness, and all other wicked practices; but the beauty of it was, he not only had light to see, but also grace to confess and to forsake his sins; therefore the Lord quickly settled the matter by saying, "This day is salvation come to this house." I am a living witness that this teaching will make a man set his own house in order. Where there is a covetous heart, God will give a liberal one; and

"Though self-interest will creep in,
It does not work alone."

If a man has been given to lying in his business, he will have to set a watch on the door of his lips, and to speak the truth to his neighbor; and I am sure grace will never lead a man to resort to the artifices practised by men of the world in a way of trade. There will be a casting of one's body, soul, and circumstances into the arms of a faithful and promise-performing God. But why are all these changes to come to pass in the heart of every vessel of mercy? Because God has said, "This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise."

Thirdly, what does calling grace do *by* a man? The Lord says, "Ye are my disciples, if ye do whatsoever I command you." So that calling grace causes a man both to will and to do of God's own good pleasure. "Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." Fathers and masters in general require certain things to be done by their children and servants; but for want of will or power, there are times when these commands appear to be grievous. Wisdom's ways are declared to be "ways of pleasantness, and all her paths peace;" and when a man's soul is in health, he will prove it to be so. The great Head of the church himself exclaimed, "I delight to do thy will, O my God!" and he affectionately says to his members, "Take my yoke upon you; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Bless his dear name, he not only commands, but gives both power and will; and then how easy it is to follow on. When his followers are weary, by reason of the trials, temptations, and afflictions they meet with in the way, he condescends to be their help, by manifesting his right hand and his holy arm for their defence; as it is written, "Who is this that cometh up out of the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?"

But to the point. When God translates a man out of the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of his dear Son, he does not intend it to be hid in a corner. As no sinner can undergo a change of heart without knowing it, so neither can it pass unobserved by all around. What constituted the grand difference between Cain and Abel, but that living faith whereby he offered up a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, testifying by the same that his own works were righteous and his brother's wicked? And Cain, observing this difference, slays his brother through accursed envy. This living faith will ever separate the elect from the reprobate, the sincere Christian from the hypocrite, the wise virgin from the foolish virgin, and the church from the world. It did so in the first church God ever had in the world; it did so in respect of "the church in the wilderness;" and it will do so now, if it is of the right sort; for God has said that he will put difference between the clean and the unclean, between "him that serveth God and him that serveth him not."

Again, the favorites of heaven are to be, or should be, the living condemnation of the world "that lieth in wickedness." To prove this, the case of Noah might be looked at. He was a preacher of righteousness, "who being moved with fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his house, by the which he condemned the world, and

became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." No doubt but this preacher of righteousness was looked upon with contempt by the old world lying in wickedness, and his testimony treated as an idle tale. From this sprang their just condemnation; for Noah was sent as a light to the world; but "men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." God has always had his witnesses on the earth to testify against the practices of the ungodly, even as Noah did, whom they resist and reject to their own ruin; and through this the whole world becomes guilty before God, and are left without excuse. The Holy Ghost says that "the grace of God which bringeth salvation, teacheth us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world;" and through these things God works by his people both to the confusion of his enemies and to the ingathering of his jewels, who lie buried in the ruins of nature and practice. When a sinner is separated from his old associates in sin and iniquity, men begin to marvel, as they did of old, "who think it strange that ye run not to the same excess of riot" as heretofore; and why? Because the whoremonger has become a chaste person; the drunkard, a sober man; the thief, honest; the liar has begun to speak truth; the busy-body in other men's matters has now learned to abide at home and mind his own business; the thoughtless, to ponder over the solemn realities of eternity; so that these changes excite the astonishment of their old companions in sin. Though they may mock and revile, the man remains unmoved both to their threats and their fair persuasives to return to the country from whence he came out; and though he may have had a sweet relish for the onions and garlic of Egypt and the apples of Sodom, and there seems to be a fair opportunity for him to return, yet the Almighty has put a hook into his jaws, saying, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed;" so that the man cannot do the things that he would. The world, seeing they cannot prevail against him, leave him after a time to indulge in his "fantastical notions and wild and extravagant ideas," as they are pleased to call them. But it may be there are some few more thoughtful than the rest, who begin to feel assured that there is some reality in religion, and these will watch the fruits and effects produced by and flowing from the change which has taken place in their friend or neighbor; and the consistent walk of a Christian will tell more upon these than thousands of arguments which proceed from a judgment merely informed, for soberminded men will say of those who possess a tender conscience and the fear of the Lord, "We see nothing to find fault with in this man, and yet how he fears lest he should commit sin; how he seems to watch his very words, lest he should say too much; how strict and fair is he in all his dealings amongst men; he seems to walk in an even course, and yet he seems to fear whether his religion is of the right kind after all. He appears to walk worthily, and is an ornament to his profession, yet fears he shall not hold out to the end. If this man who walks so tenderly and uprightly before God and man, fear lest he come short of the promised rest, what

will become of us who are thoughtless and unconcerned about these things?" "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" Thus some have been known to ponder the path of their feet and to examine God's holy word, to see how matters stand with them for eternity; through the life and conversation of those who are "as lights in the world;" a candle set upon a table, to give light to all around; "a city set upon a hill, that cannot be hid;" "beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King." It might easily be proved that the cutting winds of adversity, persecution, and trials which have issued from the north and have beaten upon Mount Zion, have done her no real harm, but contrariwise, have turned out for the furtherance of the gospel; for of old when they were scattered abroad through persecution, they went everywhere preaching the word, and the more they were persecuted, the more they grew: "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." "This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise."

There is also another point in which glory and praise are shown to God by calling grace, and that is in taking up one's cross to follow our great Forerunner in the ordinance of baptism. What a cross and a stumbling-block is this to some of the Lord's family! When a poor sinner has been delivered from the curse of the law and the demands of justice by an experimental application of the blood of Christ to his conscience, and his glorious and justifying righteousness imputed to his person for acceptance before a holy God; I say, when this is the case, and pardon, peace, and love flow into his soul, causing him to glorify God and sing of redeeming love and mercy all the day long, I know of no better time than this for one to follow the Lord Jesus in this much-despised ordinance; in fact, such a one is just in the proper position to attend to it, and that scripturally, as it is written, "Then they that gladly received the word were baptized;" and "the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." But I have known some who have neglected to attend to this public avowal of their union to Christ in the days of their espousals, and the consequence has been that the days of darkness have succeeded the sunny ones; desertion, temptation, and trials of various kinds have followed in their train, evidences have been eclipsed, signs of divine life called into question, and in the midst of the din of war it is no wonder that they should be compelled to tarry for a season (and sometimes for a long one) ere they follow their Lord and Master in his own appointed way. Jesus says to his disciples, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." Now there is no glory given to God as a Father, or to Christ as a Prophet, Priest, or King, or the Holy Ghost as a Teacher, a Guide, or a Counsellor, when ordinances are slighted or set lightly by. God says, "If I be a Father, where is mine honor?" The Lord himself says, "Them that honor me, I will honor; and they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed;" and it is also said, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit, whereby ye are sealed," &c. Now there are many ways

of grieving the Holy Spirit; and one is by setting aside or lightly esteeming his kind teachings in the heart, the sweet influential drawings of his love to acts of obedience to gospel invitations and precepts laid down in the word of God. Some people speak as though the living family could not resist or quench the Holy Spirit; but I must confess that I have done it, and that often, to my shame and confusion. For instance, it has been impressed upon my mind to adopt a certain line of conduct, which I have felt persuaded would be for the glory of God to pursue; but I have paid no heed thereto, and I have sensibly felt the withdrawals of my Guide. I have felt his influence prompting me to secret prayer, but have said, Here is this or that must be attended to first, and then I will turn aside; but not being able to retain the Spirit until my opportunity has arrived, hardness of heart, frozen affections, and a lifeless frame of mind have ensued, and no peace have I again found until forgiving love has come over all the mountains of my sins of omission and commission; so that I am satisfied that a Christian can and does grieve the Holy Spirit, and that after they have been experimentally sealed "heirs of heaven." But, on the other hand, it must be confessed that none can resist the more powerful operations of God the Holy Ghost upon the heart in regeneration, in calling, in renewings and revivings, &c. In these matters "none can stay his hand, or say, What doest thou?" But God's people are prone to backslide in heart and to turn again to their idols; and who but a God long-suffering and plenteous in goodness and in truth could bear with them? Many a time have I had reason to bless the dear Lord that my pollution, shortcomings, and aggravated transgressions have been, in a certain sense, known only to God and conscience; for were the secret sins of the living family to be set in the light of man's countenance as they have been in God's, where is the Christian to be found who could hold up his head again in the face of an ungodly world, but would have to say to himself, (what he often feels within,) "Blush, Christian, blush?" I speak not of sins before calling, but of sins committed afterward, and that against love and blood.

Thanks, then, eternal thanks be to a kind and gracious God, who has decreed that these things (for the most part) shall be kept to himself! Fathers in general are not apt, at least they do not delight in telling the faults of their children to their neighbors; so in like manner there are times when the Lord "passes by the transgressions of his heritage," and commands that it be not "told in Gath or published in the streets of Askelon, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised" blaspheme his holy name. But there are instances recorded of Bible saints wherein God has openly visited the transgressions of his people with a rod, and their iniquities with stripes, and that in the sight of men of Belial and before the heathen; but even this has been overruled for the good of the church, and has brought a revenue of glory from the hearts of sensible sinners to that God who has said, "This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise." The falls of Bible saints, with their evangelical repentance attached, perfectly agree with that declaration

where Jesus Christ says, that "all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven the sons of men;" and it has been a great source of comfort to many who have followed after and been entangled in similar snares (planted by the crafty hand of the fowler) to see that God has pardoned rebels, traitors, and blasphemers of the worst kind, and perhaps will pardon them. O what room would there not have been for despair, had not the Holy Ghost given us both sides of the picture, the dark as well as the bright, the fears and the faith, the backslidings and restorings, the falls and recoveries! Was ever there such a biographer as the Spirit of truth? Nay, fallen man, left to himself, would never have recorded his shameful falls; we should have beheld the bright side of his religion, but the dark side would have been enveloped in mystery far beyond our utmost ken. His language in this matter would have been, "Do well to thyself, and all men will praise thee." But God would not have it so. He is determined to bring down all high looks, and humble everything that would tend to exalt the creature. He will not give his glory to another, nor his praise to graven images, but will show poor sinful man his awful state by nature and practice; the depth of misery he has fallen into; his utter ruin, and the boundless love of God in finding a ransom in the person of his dear Son, who has undergirded man's misery, conquered his foes, and raised him so high as to inherit the throne of glory. But before I proceed further, allow me just to observe, that my belief is, that the falls and failings of Bible saints are recorded by the Holy Spirit that two ends might be accomplished; (for "all Scripture is given by inspiration;") one is, that poor sensible sinners who have fled for refuge to the Hope set before them in the gospel might have strong consolation, and that even repenting publicans and harlots might not lie down in black despair, seeing the rich grace, divine love, and boundless mercy which overtopped and brought the saints of old out of all their distresses, caused by their rebellion and departure from the Lord. The other is, that they are to be viewed as beacons or light-houses, to prevent spiritual mariners from running on rocks or on shelves, according to the injunction, "Remember Lot's wife." They never were recorded to encourage believers to sin that grace might abound; God forbid. All who say such things, and live and die in this fatal delusion, their damnation is just. But notwithstanding these signs of danger have been set up in the heavenly chart, there have been some of the quickened family who

"That mariner's mad part have played,
Who sees, yet strikes the shelf,"

and yet have been graciously restored and pardoned; so that the church of God may well exclaim, "Wonder, O heavens, and be astonished, O earth!" at that love which for ever remains unalterable to the objects of its choice. Many a cast-down child of God has been encouraged to hope against hope, in reviewing the mighty arm of God, which has been made bare in rescuing his people from the jaws of the devourer and from the accuser of the brethren; and some of later years have been made very glad that ever Bunyan was prompted

to write his "Grace Abounding;" Huntington, his "Kingdom of Heaven taken by Prayer;" Hart, his own Experience; and the like; for through these things "as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." There have been, through such methods, comfort and consolation administered to the church of Christ.

Now a true church is a company of believers called "out of the world's wide wilderness;" a people out of all people, to reflect the praise of Jehovah; as it is written, "This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise." But there are some vessels of mercy who will not join a church because they cannot find a perfect one. But to me this is saying, "Stand by thyself, for I am holier than thou." Imperfection is stamped upon the brightest Christian as well as the most consistent church, and believers are only perfect as viewed in Christ; in him they are fair and comely; and it is well when Christians are looking after the image of Jesus in each other, instead of perfection in the flesh, for no man ever attained this since the fall of Adam, save the man Christ Jesus. Therefore it is useless to seek for it from "nature's barren soil." Although there is much to be lamented over in the most scriptural and best organised churches in this land, yet there are times when the presence of Jesus is felt in the midst; when we can really esteem each other better than ourselves; when our best Beloved is pleased to walk in his garden to raise the drooping plants, to revive the parched and weary, to replenish every sorrowful soul, and to command the south wind to blow, that "the spices" of love, joy, peace, humility, and godly fear may "flow out" to his honor and glory. Those are blessed times when the church can say, "My Beloved is come into his garden to eat his pleasant fruits;" to hear him say, "Eat, O friends; yea, drink abundantly, O beloved!"

"I have been there, and still would go;

'Tis like a little heav'n below."

But it is to be feared that there are persons of whom one hopes well, who shun joining a church on account of the cross they would have to take up by so doing. They fear to show the colors, or to put on the regimentals of a soldier of Jesus Christ, lest they should be pointed at by the finger of scorn or held up to contempt by a profane or a professing world. Whether they are happy in such a position or not, I must leave. God has said, "My people shall be willing in the day of my power;" and when he is pleased to work mightily, none can let or hinder his divine commands being fulfilled by the objects of his choice. Again, there are others who seem determined that no one shall know what religion they are of; and to effect this they attend a place of worship at a distance from home; so that when their neighbors inquire of each other, "who and what is such a one?" no answer can be given to satisfy curiosity, further than they know nothing of the man, only that he goes out early on a Lord's Day morning and does not return until late at night. He is quiet, moral, and consistent; but to what religious sect he belongs they are at a loss to know. It may be the neighbors' ignorance is the man's bliss, especially if he belongs to that sect which is "every-

where spoken against." However, there was a Nicodemus in the days of our Lord who came to him by night; and there are such now, who are kept back by the fear of man. But I am inclined to think that those honor God the most whom grace emboldens in his cause and makes "valiant for the truth," whatever it may cost them. These remarks will not apply to those sheep who can obtain no pasture in their own locality, (these must of necessity seek for the living bread at a distance,) but only to those who have, as it were, the pure gospel preached at their own doors, yet, in the face of it, wander far and wide, so as they are able to keep their religion to themselves and eat their morsel without molestation; and by so doing perhaps congratulate themselves that they escape all the hard names and the opprobrium cast upon the more open followers of the meek and lowly Jesus.

But to return. The apostle has four beautiful links in one chain, and whosoever possesses the second is become heir to the latter: "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." These can never be separated the one from the other. But, says some poor trembling sinner, "I dare not deny but I have been called out of nature's darkness; and although I am the subject of new feelings and strong desires, yet in the matter of justification, I cannot as yet see my interest. I know that Christ has justified his people 'freely from all things.' O that he would justify me in the court of conscience! This would put more joy into my heart than if I could say that thousands of gold and silver were mine. I have been waiting a long time for this greatest of blessings, and am willing to wait still longer; but I fear that Jesus will never pass by this way, or say unto me, 'Thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven thee.' Mine eyes fail with looking upward in quest of the promised blessing, and my panting soul oft-times ejaculates, 'When shall I come out of myself and appear before God clothed in the righteousness of his dear Son?'

' For this I wait, for this I pine;
This only portion, Lord, be mine.
Be mine this better part.'

This is the burden of my song by night on my bed, and by day in the midst of my lawful employment." For the encouragement of all such, let me observe, that "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent. Hath he said, and shall he not do it?" "Will he bring to the birth, and not give strength to bring forth?" Will he act the treacherous part of a base man, who gains the affections of a young damsel and then leaves her in disgrace to pine away a miserable existence? Never, poor sinner,

"The work that wisdom undertakes,
Eternal mercy ne'er forsakes."

For your encouragement there are left on record "exceeding great and precious promises," and God is "faithful to his promise and faithful to his Son." It may be that Satan puffs at your unrighteousness, at an ill-spent life, at your shortcomings, at your feeble

desires, at your limping pace and slow growth in divine things; but the time is fast hastening when "God, even thy God," shall come forth out of his holy hill as a mighty man of war for your defence; when it shall be said, "For the crying of the poor and for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord. I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him." Though Satan may accuse you of filthy garments and stand at your right hand to resist you in your attempts in calling upon the name of the Lord God of Israel, yet as surely as God appeared on the behalf of Joshua, the high priest, so surely will he appear for you and will say, "Take away the filthy garments from him, and clothe him with change of raiment, and let a fair mitre be set upon his head." "Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?"

Man's self-righteousness stands opposed to the righteousness of Christ; and what a hard death it dies in some believers! I am inclined to believe that it is never entirely eradicated out of the heart of God's elect in this time-state; and it is only as the righteousness of Christ is appreciated, admired, and put on by precious faith, that it hides its hideous head. But this is not come at but through great trials. Hart says,

"To trust to Christ alone,
Midst thousand dangers scared,
And righteousness have none,
Is something very hard."

But as surely as ever a sinner is made to pant and sigh to reach that blessed goal of which the apostle speaks, "That I may win Christ and be found in him," &c., so surely shall he be brought to that elevated spot, and shall glory in the obedience, blood, and righteousness of Jesus. "This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise." When a child of God is brought here, no one need to tell him to praise the name of the Lord; that will flow forth freely from heart and voice, and he will sing, "He hath adorned me with the robe of righteousness; he hath clothed me with the garment of salvation;" and the word says, that "Whosoever offereth praise, glorifieth God; and to him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I show the salvation of God."

(To be concluded in our next.)

Infinite wisdom can so order and overrule, that even the very strength and number of our enemies shall but contribute to the increase of our faith, and to the enlargement of our minds in the knowledge of God. Esau and his four hundred men are of greater service than a smaller number. Two or three men would not have thrown Jacob into such a tremor as so many hundreds. He saw it would be to no purpose to flee; and that he should overcome by an arm of flesh there was not the least probability. By the greatness of the difficulty God not only intended glory to himself, but to make the deliverance the more encouraging in the end to Jacob.—*Timothy Priestley.*

THE SOLDIER AT DRILL.

My dear Friend,—May the Lord in mercy and compassion bring your soul out of the prison-house, that you may praise the name of the Lord once more with joyful lips, and sing aloud of his righteousness.

I was glad to receive a letter from you. I like it much, and see by it that you feel it a mercy your soul is out of a deserved hell ; and although the great enemy of redeemed souls is still going about “as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour,” yet you are still above ground and not yet consumed, nor has the pit shut her mouth upon you. Well, my friend, your soul has been shut up in the prison-house and your feet locked up in the stocks now for many months, and your chains made heavy, your paths crooked, your way hedged up with thorns, and darkness set in your paths, with hope at a low ebb, faith buried, confidence shaken, the face of the Lord out of sight, and your feet stuck fast in the mire ; and when your soul cried and shouted, the Lord shut out your prayer. Well, this is the path the fathers trod, the way that strangers and pilgrims travelled, and those who are travelling in the same path are walking in the footsteps of the flock, in the tribulation path down to the grave. Your soul has had a long winter of darkness, misery, death, hardness, bondage, and sorrow ; yet you have been in the school of instruction, with poor Job. He cried out, “Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life to the bitter in soul, who long for death, but it cometh not?” Then he cried, “Why is light given to a man whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in?” Then again he cries, “Behold, I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard ; I cry aloud, but there is no judgment. He hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass ; and he hath set darkness in my paths. He hath stripped me of my glory, and taken the crown from my head. He hath destroyed me on every side ; and I am gone, and mine hope hath he removed like a tree.” So you see you are not the first man who has been in dark paths, rough places, deep pits, and crooked ways ; and although your soul has been in a tried spot for a long time, and with Daniel have had your “comeliness turned into corruption, and retained no strength,” yet that is one of the old and new holes into which the righteous all fall more or less. My soul has been in all these forenamed holes, pits, prison-houses, cells, and dungeons, with the power of unbelief and the devil, with enemies on every hand, all combined together, ready to devour body and soul. Yet here I am, a poor, helpless, worthless, vile sinner, but yet favored with “a good hope through grace.”

I do believe that your soul has been learning some of the most profitable lessons you have ever had burnt into you. You would never have known the length, and breadth, and height, and depth of the salvation of Jesus, through his love and blood, if the Lord had not let your soul sink where he has. A man who is in the way to heaven must know the north side of the hedge as well as the south, God's frowns as well as his smiles, the deep places as well as

the high rocks, the hard and cutting frosts as well as the hot melting sun, the sharp, two-edged sword as well as the sweet and precious promises of the gospel. There is nothing like a man bearing the yoke in his youth and being well drilled under it, and plunged in the ditch again and again, and put into the furnace, to have his dross and sin purged away. This will make him a bright Christian, and make him shine among men, and make him a good hearer, a right judge, a steady traveller, a cautious walker, a fearful stepper, an honest speaker, a faithful follower of Jesus Christ, willing to forgive, ready to communicate, with a tender conscience, a soft heart, a humble spirit, and a peaceful soul; and though burdened with indwelling sin, hated by the devil, scorned by empty professors, and frowned upon by some of the Lord's people, yet loved of God, succored by Jesus, comforted by the Holy Ghost, and led on in a right way to a city of habitation, where they shall be for ever at rest.

Dear friend, I was glad to see that the Lord had put his finger through the hole of the door and peeped through the lattice, so that your bowels were moved for him, and that a word was dropped into your heart in the prison-house to encourage your poor soul, to lift your feet a little up out of the mire, to raise your drooping head above the deep waters, to keep your soul from fainting, and to make it fire and water proof, so that the fire shall not consume, the waters drown, nor the devil destroy.

That the Lord may bless you, comfort you, guide and smile upon your poor soul, keep you on every side, save you on every hand, break every gate of brass, and cut every bar of iron in sunder, is the desire of your unworthy friend in tribulation.

Remember me kindly to your wife and to all the friends by name.

Yours in the truth,

Woburn, Nov. 24th, 1853.

T. G.

Mary Magdalen, the remembrance of the seven devils which once possessed her, and of that love which cast them out; how did it heighten her love to Christ, and keep her heart in a melting frame; "she loved much, because much was forgiven her." (Luke vii. 47.)
—*Elisha Coles.*

If you deny to do that good which you ought with what your God has given you, then consider that, though he love your soul, yet he can chastise, first, your inward man with such troubles that your life shall be restless and comfortless; secondly, and can also so blow upon your outward man, that all you get shall be put in a bag with holes. (Ps. lxxxix. 31-33; Hag. i. 6.) And set the case, he should license but one thief among your substance, or one spark of fire among your barns, how quickly might that be spent ill, and against your will, which you should have spent to God's glory, and with your will. And I tell you further, that if you want a heart to do good, when you *have* about you, you may want comfort in such things yourself from others. when yours is taken from you. (See Jude i. 6, 7.)—*Bunyan.*

REMINISCENCES OF AN OLD PILGRIM.

Dear Sir,—Grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied to you, through the Lord Jesus Christ, the life and strength of our souls, which life we possess through and in him as our ever living covenant Head. I write to you, having a few moments of retirement by myself, and in a spot where the dear Lord has often met and comforted my heart by the divine power of the Holy Ghost, who is the alone witness to our spirits that we are born of God, of an “incorruptible seed.”

Dear brother, I can testify by blessed experience that there is a divine reality in the religion of Jesus, “whom to know is life eternal,” for he is the alone Alpha and Omega ; that whom he loves or has loved from all eternity, he ever loves, nor can he change, for God is love ; and that he ever looks on such with complacency and delight. Although we have much sorrow, darkness, and deadness to complain of in this waste howling wilderness, as we travel home, yet “he abideth faithful,” and whispers to our cast-down minds, “I will see you again, and your hearts shall rejoice.” And is he not faithful? Has he not manifested himself to us in trials, and afflictions, and distresses in our own experience? Is he not the same as he has been in all ages to his believing people? Though we are often “cast down,” we are “not destroyed;” and although our comforts seem all gone, yet “he abideth faithful.”

May the dear Lord cheer our hearts by his own blessed testimony, which alone will bear us up when storms of sorrow fall. O that the dear Lord may grant us a crumb of mercy from his bountiful table! But he is pleased for the most part to keep us on short fare here below, that we may more and more hunger after him, the alone true Bread.

I knew some of the dear old saints at Abingdon about thirty years ago ; at that time we used to travel to Wallingford (and I believe we used to meet in a barn, or something like it, at Grove) to hear the blessed gospel ; and our hearts used to burn by the way, when Jesus met with us. I remember once we travelled to Wallingford to hear dear Mr. Robins, and it was the last time he ever preached, for he was found dead in his bed the next morning. His text was from Ps. lxxi. 20, 21, “Thou hast shown me great and sore trouble,” &c., and the last clause he found to be true, “Thou shalt comfort me on every side.” I think by what Mr. T. told me, they are all gone home to rest with Him “in whose presence there is fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore.” Well, I am still spared, bless the Lord, and still waiting and looking for his appearing even here. O for faith to trust in him who is and will be our faithful Friend to the end! Grace be with you.

I remain, yours to serve, a brother in Christ,

London.

MOSES.

“I am shut up and cannot come forth,” in the mouth of a believer, means, I have faith, but cannot exercise it; sin has clogged it; it cannot act.

A LETTER BY THE LATE J. KEYT.

My very dear Friend,—I have for a long season been hindered from addressing a few lines to C——, not for want of a willing mind, but for want of ability, together with various obstacles arising from different sources, by which means my way has been so hedged up that I was rendered incapable of writing to you ; nor is it from want of affection, God knows, for you are in my heart clearly manifested not only as one of the excellent of the earth, but also as an ambassador of the King of kings, having brought good tidings to my heart from the first opening of your commission to the present day. This I feel as a fixed truth, notwithstanding all the obstructions cast in my way by the unwearied adversary of my soul, by manifold tribulations, and by opposition from the wretched body of this death, the law in the members, the worst of all my foes. These many conflicting enemies cause me daily to groan more or less, and this warfare will never come to an end while I remain a sojourner in this hostile land, and these Canaanites have possession of the valley with their chariots of iron. Nevertheless they are not suffered to triumph, though at times they grievously oppress ; but having obtained help of God, I continue to this day a living monument of rich, free, and sovereign mercy, and, with Bunyan's Feeblemind, I am bent upon "running when I can, to go when I cannot run, and to creep when I cannot go. As to the main, I thank him that loved me, I am fixed ; my way is before, and my mind is beyond the river that has no bridge, though I am but of a feeble mind." In the midst of so many obstacles, it is a cheering consideration to be persuaded that wherever the bond of spiritual union takes place, it is nothing less than the workmanship of God ; and where this union subsists there is a habitual desire to enjoy communion. But in this present changeable and imperfect state, many things take place to interrupt and mar this valuable privilege ; so that what with the devices of Satan and the innate pride and deceitfulness of the human heart, the fellowship and communion of saints is rare to be found, especially in such a cloudy, dark, and scattering day as the present proves to be. It was ordained by Israel's God that the passover lamb should be eaten with bitter herbs, and cogent facts prove that the same bitter ingredients are intermingled and served up more or less in the Christian's portion ; but being seasoned with a measure of salt, it renders all palatable and profitable.

One branch of truth that we are instructed in by this diversity in our fare, proves to us that in this imperfect state we are not yet come into the full fruition of the promised rest. No ; that still remains to be possessed, and is reserved until our warfare is accomplished and a complete victory obtained over every foe. When this takes place, we shall be enabled to triumph and shout in the language of David, "O thou enemy, (yea, every enemy,) destructions are come to a perpetual end." Until this victorious period arrives, we are taught by an inspired prophet, that "The just shall live by faith ;" and we learn by experience that when we are blessed with this rich gift of God, all

its actings are entirely dependent upon the power and gracious influences of the Holy Spirit; for though made recipients of this precious grace of faith, we are altogether dependent upon him for every acting of it. Hence the spouse prays for the north wind to awake and the south to come: "Blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out," &c. Thus Peter found it when ready to sink in the boisterous sea, when he cried out, "Lord, save me." This inwrought cry brought in the needful aid by the arm of the Lord revealed, who in compassion said to him, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" This tender expostulation given to Peter has been helpful to me; for in some of my conflicts I have at times been ready to question whether I had any true faith in possession or not. But in these dark trying seasons, when ready to sink in the surrounding waves of temptation and trouble, it has again been drawn forth into act and exercise by the power of God displayed in my behalf; and by these trials of faith I learn in some degree the reality and preciousness of it; for though my measure of it be but as a grain of mustard seed, that grain cannot be lost; and though it be tried with fire, yet it is in the issue "found (as Peter says) unto praise, and honor, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

I thank you, dear Sir, with all my heart for your last kind and very valuable epistle; it has many times proved to my drooping spirit as a flowing brook, fraught with strong consolations, especially in this time of great drought. Your last visitation was blessed to me and to many others. One widow lady, aged 77, who resides at Sheephead, more than one hundred miles off, and never was in London before, (she was an acquaintance and hearer formerly of the Doctor's when he visited the North,) in conversation with me, expressed a great desire to hear you. It so happened that I found means to convey the tidings to her on the Wednesday afternoon. She came and heard you, and went home rejoicing, saying, "This is some of the good old fare, that I love," &c. Before I conclude I will just observe, that two elderly men, members of the dear Doctor's church, have fallen asleep within these few months past; one was the uncle of my dear friend, Mr. Bell, who spoke to you in the vestry on Wednesday evening after preaching. This aged pilgrim was removed from this vale of tears by the cholera, after about thirty hours' severe conflict, during which at intervals he was enabled to utter the language of triumphant faith. A friend that attended him took down several sentences as they dropped from his lips; some copies of his dying testimony I have taken. All these, as a cloud of witnesses, prove that our revered friend the Doctor "did not labor in vain, nor spend his strength for nought." Neither shall you, my dear friend; for the bread of life you have been enabled to "cast upon the waters" shall be "found in due season" to the glory of God and to the comfort of all those who have received the truth in the love of it.

I have little to say in reference to Providence matters. We are scattered as sheep that have no shepherd to lead them, and many of those who are possessed of temporal substance have withdrawn their shoulder and their presence; so that the remnant that is left may be

compared to those in Judah's captivity, whom Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, left of the poor of the land to be vinedressers and husbandmen. (2 Kings xxv. 12.) What the issue may be I know not; therefore, like the disciple on another occasion, "I am following to see the end," if my days are not terminated beforehand.

I am at present in middling health, though feeble, and sometimes ready to faint because of the way; but "hitherto the Lord hath helped me," a poor worm of the dust, and it is by his favor and tender mercy I am what I am. I hope this imperfect sheet will find you in health of body and prosperity of soul, together with the whole of your family and the souls committed to your charge. My negligence in not writing sooner almost precludes me from expecting an answer to this, only a word of Solomon's just occurs to my mind, where he says, "The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression." (Prov. xix. 11.) This word of inspiration encourages me to rest upon your own declaration in concluding your last epistle, viz., "This will serve to let you know that I remember you still," &c.

Entreating you to pass over all that is amiss in this,

I remain, most affectionately yours,

London, Oct. 3rd, 1833.

J. KEYT.

Our grace is but like some little reservoir that would be dried even with a winter's sun; but, as it is in a connection with the ocean above, it is impossible for it to be wholly dried up.—*Timothy Priestley.*

Adam had perfection, but had not perseverance; and thou (poor soul) hast imperfection of grace, but hast perseverance in grace. The most violent and impetuous flood of corruption shall not quench the least measure of true grace; the least spark of true grace, the most boisterous blast of temptation, shall not extinguish this poor smoking flax; not one drop of this divine ointment shall be spilt as water upon the ground. Comets may blaze awhile, and then they fall, to show that it was a comet, and not a star. True stars do not, cannot fall. O then bless God, who, though in his anger "he breaks the nations like a potter's vessel" with an iron mace, (Ps. ii. 9; Rev. ii. 27,) yet such is his tenderness over weak believers, he will not break the bruised reed; and though he put out the candle of the wicked, yet he will not quench the smoking flax. The seeming graces of the hypocrites shall perish and come to nothing, when true graces shall hold out. The painted face decays soon, but the natural complexion lasts. A child of God may be tossed, by reason of corruption and temptation, on a troublesome sea; but that ship shall never be shipwrecked whereof Christ is the Pilot; the Scriptures, the compass; the promises, the tacklings; hope, the anchor; faith, the cable; the Holy Ghost, the wind; and holy affection, the sails, which are filled thus with the gales of the Spirit, &c. "Fear not," therefore, "little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."—*Christopher Love.*

TRAVELLING HOMEWARD.

My dear Sister F.,—Being the Lord's prisoner, I embrace this opportunity to address a few lines to you, praying the Lord to make me a humble instrument in his hand of imparting some small degree of consolation. Should such be the case, we will mutually render all the praise to our covenant God and Father.

In sitting down to write, these words fell on my mind with some sweetness, so I will send them to you, with the earnest prayer, that the great and only effectual Teacher, the Holy Spirit, may make them an abundant blessing to your soul. The words referred to you will find in John xiv. 1, 2, "Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." I was struck with the love and condescension of our dear Lord, in his readiness to meet his dear children in times of trouble. How unlike some of our friends in this world, who, when they see us in sorrow and trouble, are glad to pass by on the other side. Not so with our merciful High Priest. He hears the plaintive cries of his dear children, and, blessed be his name, he comes down, by his Spirit, power, and word, to deliver us from all those enemies who are too strong for us. With what gracious majesty he speaks, "Believe also in me;" showing himself worthy of our entire confidence. As God over all blessed for ever, he has all along proved the Friend of his poor disciples. They had often seen glorious displays of his divine power, and proved the omnipotence of his voice in calling them out of darkness into his most marvellous sight. Thanks to his eternal name, he has made us to hear the voice of the Son of God and live. Well, then, it is to such he here addresses himself: "In my Father's house are many mansions." This to me is a pleasing thought. Although now travelling through the wilderness, and made to feel, to a painful degree, the force and sharpness of the thorns and briars, and made oft-times to groan under the keen sensibility of a heart too much like a cage of unclean birds; doomed to carry a body of sin and death, and very often made to mourn over the sorrows and difficulties of the way, and, what is worse than all, not unfrequently left to mourn the loss of our best Beloved;—these and many more things combined, impede the way, and tend to cast down the soul. Yet still we are travelling homeward to our Father's house; and as certain as we have been called to enter on this journey from Egypt to Canaan, so sure we must be called to enter into our possession, our Father's house. There is the blessedness; there our inheritance is safely preserved, all put in the custody of our heavenly Joseph. In him is treasured "all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;" all love to feel for his members; all grace to supply their many needs; light to spring up in darkness; wisdom to show the way, when we lose the road; and a glorious robe of righteousness, in which he will attire his bride, by which it shall be known that she is the Lamb's wife.

Dear friend, seeing that things are really so; seeing it is asserted

by the word of God, and as we have had the sealing witness of the Holy Ghost assuring our hearts of the truth and testifying to our part and interest in them; surely these things, when attested by omnipotent authority, are sufficient to quell all fears, to overcome the world and all enemies, and, when called thereunto, shall overcome death itself. Then shall we clearly see the pearly gates thrown wide open, and Jesus at the head of the way, waiting to welcome home to his Father's house every poor way-worn traveller, there to possess those mansions prepared from before all worlds for those who love his appearing.

My paper is full before I was aware; so may the Lord the Spirit be to your soul's experience ere you are aware. May he prove as the chariot of Amminadib, filling your heart with joy and peace; granting you a holy anointing from the Holy One.

I should have answered yours much sooner, but have been prevented by great affliction. Make my kindest love and my dear wife's to your dear husband.

I pray the Lord will appear for each of you this trying time. May you be enabled to look to the full heart and hand of Christ, and so verify the truth and extent of that great declaration, "My God shall supply all your needs, out of his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Trusting this will meet you all well, I finally commend you all to the great Captain of our salvation; and we remain, in sincere regard and affection,

Yours, in bonds eternal,

New End, Hampstead, Dec. 11th, 1842. N. & M. JELLIMAN.

God did not create the world to leave it to an uncertain event; to stand by and to see what would become of it; but the same power and wisdom that produced, still attends it, powerfully pervading every particle thereof. To fancy a divine providence, without a continual energetic operation, or a divine wisdom without a constant care and inspection of the works of his hands, is not to form apprehensions of the living God, but to erect an idol in our own imaginations.—*Owen*.

In matters of less concern, we find the Lord so laying his work, that it cannot miscarry; if, therefore, it be his good pleasure to ordain men to salvation, his wisdom requires that it be in such a way as is sure to succeed; and that all sorts of impediments be either prevented, or so overruled, as not to interrupt but become subservient to his great end. Having counted his cost, and paid it off, and also began to build, it behoves his wisdom to see that his work be done, and brought to perfection, (Luke xiv. 29, 30,) and accordingly to provide suitable instruments, such as he knows will do, and yet not overdo the thing intended; much like to the husbandman's sorting his seed to the nature of the soil, and threshing instruments to the capacity of his grain. He will not use a wheel, where the rod will serve; nor a rod, where the wheel is needful; and this he has from his God, "who instructeth him to discretion." (Isa. xxviii. 25, 28.)—*Elisha Coles*.

"HE LED HIM ABOUT, HE INSTRUCTED HIM."

When the Lord takes us ignorant creatures in hand, (who then know nothing savingly of him or of his truth,) we may possibly, nay probably have, some ideas and notions of what is called the way of salvation, which have been gathered from one source and another, to make up something like an appearance of religious profession, and so pass us off in the professing church as safe for heaven. In some this consists in one thing and in some another, but no man knows anything savingly of the truth in the love and power of it, until God himself instructs him and makes him know it: "For what man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God."

Now much of the instruction which the children of God receive is by being "led about," led out of one thing and led into another, through all manner of difficulties and against all sorts of foes; and yet, notwithstanding all, they gather instruction from every circumstance and are sure to overcome every difficulty. The reason is, because it is He that leads them and he that instructs, and he only. Our own wisdom and natural sagacity are all worthless, and we, so far as sensible understanding of our path is concerned, are blindfold to the future; so that, being held and guided by our Leader in the way that we should go, we tread on step by step, not walking after the sight of our own eyes, nor judging according to our own understanding, but guided by the Lord who alone leads us, and there is no strange God with us.

The Lord will lead all his people more or less out of themselves and into his dear Son, I mean experimentally; for all that we have naturally is in opposition to his dear Son. Our wisdom and understanding, our power and ability, our creature goodness and performances, our intentions and resolutions, and a variety of other things which men prize and vamp up as something of their own, I am bold to say, are greater hindrances to our reception of Christ than all our sins and vileness; and I believe it is these things which the apostle speaks of as the "strongholds" which the power of the gospel has to cast down. And strongholds indeed they are; for there is nothing holds out stronger against the power of the gospel than the fancied abilities and performances of mortals; "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God," says Paul, showing how the vain imaginations of man in nourishing "high thoughts" of himself is the stronghold of Satan to keep out the power of the gospel. Till, therefore, these things are cast down, there is no room for Jesus in the heart. When, therefore, the Lord the Spirit commences his work to make room for Christ, he begins to pull down some of these strongholds, and makes our fancied beauty consume away like a moth. No matter what high standard of morality a man may have attained to, it weighs nothing in the scale of salvation; for we are not "saved by works of righteousness which we have done;" and

therefore we must be led to see them, yes, even our righteousness as "filthy rags," and to count them "but dung," in order that we may win Christ, and have on the "righteousness of God by faith." In so working in us, the Spirit makes us see all our goodness as the flower of the field, which withers and fades in a day; so that we may be led to appreciate the glorious righteousness of the Son of God, which is upon all them that believe.

The blessed Spirit, in leading us into a knowledge of all our works and doings being filthy and fit for nothing but the dung-hill, does it by revealing to us the filthiness of the source from whence they all flow. He leads us into a feeling sense of our vile heart, and shows us too that we have no power to stem the torrent of iniquity that flows from it. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then," says God, "may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." But when he begins to lead us, then it is a different thing; and as he lights up a light in the soul to discover the hidden things of darkness, we become more and more aghast at our filthy self and plead to be kept from sin and from ourselves, as we would from our vilest enemies. This will lead us to have "no confidence in the flesh," for we shall find that "in us, (that is in our flesh,) dwelleth no good thing," and we shall consequently get warring with it, opposing it, crying out against its attacks, pleading for daily forgiveness on account of daily sin and consequently daily guilt, and pleading to be kept and preserved from it, and ultimately delivered.

Before a man's soul becomes somewhat established in these things, he will for ever be making resolutions, binding himself to self-made rules, and fixing laws for himself to work by. But he breaks them all; the wind blows and the floods come, and down comes his building, because he had founded it upon the sand; then he resolves again, but breaks his resolution afresh, till he has no might against this great enemy that comes against him; neither knows he what to do. And so he is obliged to turn his eyes unto the Lord.

Now, according as a man becomes more and more to be acquainted with himself, he becomes more fit to receive Christ; in fact, there begins to be some room for Jesus to dwell in, and the Spirit begins to reveal somewhat of his suitability and preciousness. And here we learn that though we cannot trust ourselves, yet that Jesus can be trusted with confidence; and that though we cannot trust to our hollow resolutions, yet that his promises can be well depended on, for he never "alters the thing that goeth out of his mouth." Though our strength is utter weakness against our mighty enemies, yet he has almighty power to perform what he has promised; and though our ignorance is such that had we all the other abilities, yet we should no doubt misplace them and make shipwreck of the whole, yet his wisdom is infinite, and matters can be safely left to him. Hence he comes into constant requisition, and is every day needed. No circumstance occurs in which he is not wanted; hence the many names which he sustains, all of them characteristic of what he is and has for his people. He is our Counsellor, to give us advice; our Strength,

to work for us; our High Tower, for our shelter; and our Covert from the storm;—in fact, our “Friend that loveth at all times, and sticketh closer than a brother,” and declares that he watches over us every moment, lest any hurt us. He keeps us night and day; not only natural nights, but spiritual ones, when all is darkness and gloom. According to our conception, it is then night with us; but his watching over us to do us good is equal then to the days of the Son of Man, when he shines about our path, and in his light we see light. Hence Jesus becomes choice, because he is always needed and always at hand to supply those needs; and although night comes over the soul and he seems out of sight, yet neither he nor his bride are happy out of one another’s presence. She cries out in the agony of love that “by night she sought him whom her soul loveth; she sought him, but found him not;” and so goes mourning for him, as those that mourn for their first-born. And he declares that his bowels are “troubled for Ephraim,” until he manifestively have mercy upon him. We little know, nor can we but faintly conceive, the “sounding of his bowels” towards his church, even when his face is behind a cloud. There is nothing more delightful, even in a natural sense, than the mutual embrace of two whose affections are absorbed in each other; each one’s greatest delight being the pleasure and happiness of the object of its affections. And so too with Christ and his bride; she loves his company and he loves hers. She says, “Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth; for his love is better than wine;” and he says, “Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee.” She pleads to know where his flocks feed, that she may feed with them in his presence; and he at once informs her, and says, “Thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels, and thy neck with chains of gold,” emblematical of the graces of the Spirit with which she is adorned. She pleads for the “north wind to awake” and for the “south wind to come,” to “blow upon the garden” of her soul, so that the sweet spices of the graces of the Spirit may “flow out,” and then invites her beloved to come and regale himself with the fruits of his own grace; and he at once complies, and comes into his garden, eats his “pleasant fruits,” and invites his spouse to join in the happy repast, so that they may have a mutual feast. And even this is not enough, but there must be a mutual acknowledgment of each other’s person and property, a mutual embrace and a mutual kiss. Nor is it complete either to the bridegroom or the spouse till the two are absorbed in one, and the exclamation is poured out like oil, “I am my beloved’s, and my beloved is mine.”

Though this, however, is the love of Christ for his people, and they desire to know it is so, yet they often have to be led about and instructed before they arrive at this point; for sometimes they find a drawing out of their affections to the Lord, and are enabled to pour out their heart before him in such a way that they really think the cloud is about to break, the sun to shine, and the perfect day to arise. But perhaps they are only to have the day dawn in the heart, a glimmering of hope arise in their soul, and Christ seems to show himself “through the lattice.” The soul can just see enough to re-

cognise it is He, without being able to get a full view of her beloved ; and this seems the case with the spouse too, when she heard her beloved put his hand in by "the hole of the door," (alluding to the oriental way of having a hole in the door, by which a party coming in put in their hand and lift up the latch.) The spouse heard the hand, and supposed the door was to open, and she to fall into the embrace of her beloved. Some intimation of his sweet spirit, some secret working of his grace, moved her affections, and her hard heart began to melt, and her tearless eye to trickle, and she began to talk with her Jesus as a man would talk with his friend, supposing he was coming in, and that her heart was to rejoice with a full view of him, from his head, which was as "most fine gold," to his legs, which were as "pillars of marble." But lo ! he had withdrawn himself, and was gone. A full deliverance was not then intended. The soul was still to go on longing, panting, hungering, and thirsting again till the time appointed of the Father. Thus they are "led," and thus "instructed."

Again, some of the Lord's children are led on a long time in darkness, without even these glimmerings of deliverance, and have been known to complain most bitterly when so led in the dark ; but they are led quite as safely as those who are led in the light. Enjoyments are not our salvation, nor are they to be depended on. Christ is the only object to depend upon ; he "ever liveth," and is the Fountain of all true enjoyment. And surely the fountain is to be more valued than the stream, for it can throw out fresh streams again and again, according to our need ; but the streams themselves would soon fail if the fountain were gone. Therefore it is the Fountain to which we should look for all we need ; and he exists equally the same for us, whether we can see it and feel it or not. But till a soul is brought into stability in the matter, it will ever be eyeing after enjoyments as his only object ; and when favored with them, will think all is well, but when it misses them, think all is wrong. Therefore, to instruct it differently, sometimes the Lord may hide his face a very long time, and yet still secretly go on leading, guiding, teaching, and upholding the poor soul ; and he wonders how it is he stands so long, thinks he must fall, and give up. But no, he shall not ; he cannot ; for his Jesus still holds his right hand and guides the whole, though in midnight darkness. When the soul is led to a retrospective view of his pathway, as the Spirit will lead him to, he will see that though he has been led by a dark and a trying way, yet that it has been a "right way" to bring him to a "city of habitation." And in providential matters, how mysteriously the Lord sometimes works, in delays, denials, and disappointments. We go on planning and plotting, and expect the Lord to act up to our plans and work out our designs, but find all manner of crooks in the lot, disappointments and denials of the things upon which we had fixed our mind, and thought we could not exist without ; aye, but we can though, and a good deal better than with them ; for we know not what is best for us, any more than we can procure what we want with our own arms. The Lord being in covenant engagement to give us that which is

good, he prunes off an excrescence in our desires here, and lops off another there, till the fleshy part is pruned away, and that is left which is the work of his own Spirit's creation in us, which he will never disappoint world without end.

Now in all these things and in many more we are "led about" and "instructed" by the Spirit to cleanse us more and more from ourselves, and to bring us to look for everything from Christ. It is hard work to be weaned from ourselves, and especially from our fancied abilities and power, but it must be done; and every fresh discovery of our state of nature and the evil workings of the old man of sin will, under the Spirit's direction, open a way for fresh revelations of the suitability, and beauty, and fulness of the Lord Jesus Christ; so that as "the house of Saul waxes weaker and weaker, the house of David waxes stronger and stronger;" and as the sinner is more and more abased, Christ is exalted, extolled, and "set very high." And so the matter goes on, more or less in every saved sinner, and will do, till the end of time.

Hastings, 1854.

O.

This is our "licentious" doctrine: namely, a doctrine which, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, conforms the soul more and more to God; carefully referring, at the same time, all the praise of this active and passive conformity to God himself, whose gift it is; singing with the saints of old, "Thou, Lord, hast wrought all our good works in us; and for all the works so wrought, for the will to please thee, for the endeavor to please thee, for the ability to please thee, and for every act whereby we do please thee, not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name, give glory."—*Toplady*.

Appearances are nothing. Where there is not the work of regeneration, there can be no evidence of any child of promise. We read in the Scriptures of truth, of some "who were once enlightened, and had tasted of the heavenly gift, and been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and had tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come." (Heb. vi. 4, 5.) But in these there is not one feature of the child of the freewoman. They are said to "have been once enlightened." Yes! enlightened in head knowledge, like men studying some art or science; so a head knowledge of divine things, but no heart influence. They are said also to have "tasted of the heavenly gift." Yes, like children taking medicine, and so nauseate it as to spit it out. And "partakers of the Holy Ghost, not in grace, not in the new birth, not in any saving knowledge, but simply partakers in the ordinary means of grace, as Chorazin and Bethsaida were of old." (Matt. xi. 21.) And the taste they are said to have had of the "good word of God, and the powers of the world to come;"—both these are no more than mere *outward* privileges, which belong alike to the children of the bondwoman and of the free. All are without a single mark of grace to denote the spot of God's children. Nothing short of regeneration proves the children of promise.—*Hawker*.

A LETTER BY THE LATE MR. TURNER.

My dear Sir,—* * * May the God of Israel, who accomplishes the greatest ends by the weakest means, to show that the excellency of the power is of him and not of man, condescend to bless the reading of the books sent, to enlighten the understanding, strengthen precious faith, increase undissembled love, and further holy joy, that his great and glorious name may be glorified in you and by you.

“It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto the Most High.” May the good Lord favor us with believing, humble, and loyal hearts, that we may offer up our sacrifices of praise, continually giving thanks to his name, which is the fruit of our lips, and may we ever join thanksgivings with our supplications. He is indeed most worthy to be praised who has singled us out from so many millions of our fellow-creatures to be monuments of his mercy, trophies of his grace, and witnesses of his truth. We who were darkness itself, are now light in the Lord. May he enable us to walk as children of the light, that we may show forth the praises of him “who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.” And our blessed apostle says, “God is faithful to confirm us unto the end, that we may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” As the Keeper of Israel, “who neither slumbers nor sleeps,” has engaged to keep the feeblest of his sheep, so he favors us with those frequent feelings of our own sinfulness, feebleness, and fickleness, which cause us to cry to the strong for strength, and to commit the keeping of our souls to him in well doing as to a faithful Creator. As the Creator, he is omnipotent; and as a covenant God, faithful to his promises, which are all “yea and amen in Christ Jesus,” to the glory of God by us. Nor can that wretched and abominable sin of unbelief, which often besets us and most deservedly distresses us, prevent the accomplishment of the better promises upon which the new and better covenant is established. He cannot deny himself. “Hath he said, and will he not do it?”

With kind love to all that love our Lord Jesus in sincerity and truth, I remain, yours affectionately in Christ,

Feb. 22nd, 1853.

SAMUEL TURNER.

As it is not common with God to give a sense of his pardoning love until we feel our inability to save ourselves, so neither to give much comfort without making us feel how helpless we are.—*Timothy Priestley.*

A reason why you get less now, as you think, than before (as I take it) is, because at our first conversion our Lord puts the meat in young bairns' mouths with his own hand; but when we grow to some further perfection, we must take heaven by violence, and take by violence from Christ what we get; and he can and does withhold, because he will have us draw. Remember, now, you must live upon violent plucking. Laziness is a greater fault now than long since. We love always to have the pap put into our mouth.—*Rutherford.*

R E V I E W.

An Exposition of the Book of Solomon's Song, commonly called Canticles. By John Gill, D.D. London: Collingridge. Price 6s. 1854.

(Concluded from page 101.)

In our last Number we called the attention of our readers to the great *variety* which God has seen fit to stamp on his holy word. We now purpose, with his blessing, to offer a few remarks on the Song of Solomon, which we have ventured to call a *Sacred Drama*.

A little explanation of the term may be desirable to justify our use of this expression, as it may perhaps appear to some of our readers derogatory to the Scripture, the word being usually applied to theatrical representations. This latter idea, which is by no means necessarily contained in the expression, we carefully exclude, and mean by the word Drama* the representation of a course of action which is carried forward by the introduction of distinct persons, conversing with each other in dialogue, or sometimes addressing what we may call the audience.

If this definition grate upon the ear, it is simply from association of ideas, and merely because *that* happens to be the usual form of theatrical representation; but dissociating that idea from our mind, let us view the matter in its pure and original simplicity, as a mode chosen by the Holy Spirit to set heavenly truth before us with greater vividness and beauty.

We have already hinted that examples of this kind are furnished in the Psalms, and we have instanced Psalm xxiv. A few lines, simply to point out the character and structure of this psalm, may serve to explain our meaning as well as illustrate this peculiar mode of composition.

To understand, then, Psalm xxiv. aright, we must view it as sung in the Tabernacle worship, and most probably as expressly composed by David on the occasion of his bringing up the Ark of the Lord and setting it in its place, *i.e.*, in the holy of holies, within the veil. (2 Sam. vi. 12-17.)

A careful examination of its structure will show us that it is mainly composed of questions and answers, and that these are evidently carried on between distinct parties. Viewing it, then, as a musical composition, of which we have now only the words, we may arrange the psalm into distinct parts, of which there appear to be three, which we may distinguish as first part, second part, and chorus. As the psalm is short and particularly beautiful, we will arrange it according to this idea, premising that by A we mean the first part, by B the second part, and by C the chorus.†

* Drama, a Greek word, literally means "an action," thence, "a course of action represented to the eye."

† It is evident that this psalm was sung in parts, and our division of these parts into three is borne out by 1 Chron. xv. 17-22: "So the Levites appointed Heman the son of Joel and of his brethren, Asaph the son of Berechiah;

But to see more of its beauty and suitability to the occasion, let us endeavor to bring before our eyes the solemn scene for which the psalm was composed. Outside the court of the Tabernacle is the Ark, waiting to be brought in, with the Royal Psalmist in front, not clothed in his regal apparel, but girded with a linen ephod, and followed by thousands of his rejoicing subjects. On the brazen altar, immediately before the outer court, the burnt offering is sending forth to heaven clouds of smoke and flame. Within the court stand the Levites, ranged on either hand according to their three classes, and leaving a wide avenue between their thronged ranks. In the holy place are ranged the priests in their twenty-four courses, twelve on each side, the one taking what we have called the first part, or A, and the other, or the opposite side, the second part, which we have called B; the Levites in the court taking the part of the chorus, or C.* Close to the altar of incense, which is filling the holy place with its odoriferous perfume, and clad in his garments of glory and beauty, just before the veil, stands the High Priest, with the table of shewbread on the north, and the golden candlestick illuminating the whole court with its light, on the south side. Now, when the assembly is hushed into solemn silence, there breaks forth the following psalm, which we shall arrange into its probable parts. A voice comes forth from the holy place :

and of the sons of Merari their brethren, Ethan the son of Kushaiah; and with their brethren of the second degree, Zechariah, Ben, and Jaaziel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehiel, and Unni, Eliab, and Benaiah, and Maaseiah, and Mattithiah, and Elipheleh, and Mikneiah, and Obed-edom, and Jeiel, the porters. So the singers, Heman, Asaph, and Ethan, were appointed to sound with cymbals of brass; and Zechariah, and Aziel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehiel, and Unni, and Eliab, and Maaseiah, and Benaiah, with psalteries on Alamoth; and Mattithiah, and Elipheleh, and Mikneiah, and Obed-edom, and Jeiel, and Azariah, with harps on the Sheminith to excel. And Chenaniah, chief of the Levites, was for song; he instructed about the song, because he was skilful." From this it appears, at least as regards the instrumental music, that Heman, Asaph, and Ethan took one part, and Zechariah, Ben, &c., another part, for they are called "brethren of the second degree," or as Luther renders it, "part," and Mattithiah, &c., a third part; for it will be observed that Zechariah, &c., played on *Alamoth*, or the treble, (the word meaning the voice of "virgins;") and Mattithiah, &c., on *Sheminith*, that is, the bass, (literally, "the eighth," or lowest note of the octave,) leaving the tenor to Heman. And that there was besides a chorus appears plain from 2 Chron. v. 12, 13: "Also the Levites which were the singers, all of them of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, being arrayed in white linen, having cymbals, and psalteries, and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them a hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets. It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound," &c. The express mention of Chenaniah as instructing about the song, "because he was skilful," shows not only the union of vocal and instrumental music in the Tabernacle worship, but that this was according to a definite course of scientific instruction, which would hardly have been necessary unless they sang in parts.

It is, perhaps, hardly worth while entering into these points, but we have done so to obviate an objection that we have no authority to divide the psalm as we have done, into distinct musical parts.

* If our musical readers would sing the A and B parts as solos in recitative, and the C part, or chorus, in the usual way, they would, we believe, find additional beauties in this Psalm.

- A. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof ;
The world, and they that dwell therein."

The strain is taken up by the opposite side :

- B. "For he hath founded it upon the seas ;
And established it upon the floods."

The chorus of Levites in the court outside the holy place now takes up the theme, and asks in reference to the entrance in of the Ark—

- C. "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord ?
Or who shall stand in his holy place ?"

The answer is given from within the Tabernacle by

- A. "He that hath clean hands and a pure heart ;
Who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully."

The second part now takes up the response, to show the harmony of sentiment among those who have the charge of the Tabernacle :

- B. "He shall receive the blessing from the Lord,
And righteousness from the God of his salvation."

The chorus, to give its assent to these declarations, now bursts forth :

- C. "This is the generation of them that seek him ;
That seek thy face, O Jacob. Selah."

Now comes a solemn pause, indicated by the word Selah. Does such a man exist—one who may stand in the holy place? No! not one. Where then shall he be found? In "the King of Glory," who dwelleth between the Cherubims of the Ark. The Ark now borne by the Kohathites (Numb. vi. 9; 2 Chron. xv. 2, 15) advances through the ranks of the Levites into the court, but pauses before the gates of the Tabernacle. Then comes forth once more the solemn voice,

- A. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates!"

To which responds

- B. "And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors!"

To which replies the chorus :

- C. "And the King of Glory shall come in."

But the question is again asked :

- A. "Who is this King of Glory?"

Answer:

- B. "The Lord, strong and mighty."

Chorus :

- C. "The Lord, mighty in battle."

The strain is now repeated :

- A. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates!"
B. "Even lift them up, ye everlasting doors."
C. "And the King of Glory shall come in."

The first and second parts now unite their voices :

- A., B. "Who is this King of Glory?"

The chorus, now accompanied by the full crash of all the musical instruments, sounds forth :

C. "The Lord of hosts, he is the King of Glory. Selah."

Upon this the Ark, taken from the Levites and borne by the priests, enters the Tabernacle; the veil is lifted up, and it is carried into the most holy place.

Now we do not mean to say we have arranged the parts precisely as they were sung; but we have said sufficient to show the nature of a composition carried on by dialogue, and instanced in the preceding psalm; and if our readers feel with us, we believe that they will acknowledge it is much heightened in interest and beauty thereby.

But the Song of Solomon differs from the psalm which we have been considering, and indeed from every other book in the sacred volume, by introducing not merely dialogue, but the persons themselves before our eyes by whom it is uttered. This puts, as it were, new life into the subject, and not only sets it in the strongest light, but invests it with the sweetest influence. Nothing can be more beautiful than to introduce the church herself upon the scene, under her scriptural character as a bride, and as such to hear her expressing the tenderest feelings of her heart to her heavenly Bridegroom; and on the other hand, no representation of Christ's love to his church could be more vivid or beautiful than personally to introduce him as addressing himself in language of the purest, tenderest affection to his bride. To hear their mutual expressions of love carried on in a dialogue would of itself be most sweet and expressive; but beyond this, to bring before our eyes various scenes and a course of action by which the alternations of feeling on the part of the bride are brought out in the most varied and experimental manner, must invest the whole with additional beauty. It is as though we were actually present, and heard from their own lips their mutual declarations of love and affection; rejoiced with the Bride in Christ's presence and mourned with her in Christ's absence. It is as though she spoke for us, and in giving vent to the feelings of her heart, gave vent to ours. Thus her expressions of love and affection become our own, and her admiration of the beauty and blessedness, grace and glory of the Redeemer, is but what we feel, but are unable as vividly and warmly to express. If unable to enter into the fulness of her love and admiration, the deficiency is ours. The experience of the church is here revealed and represented in its fullest and most vivid form. If to us mystical, unintelligible, or fanciful, the lack and the loss are alike our own. It is thus, therefore, one of the most experimental books in the whole Scripture, though there are few, comparatively, and they only in favored moments, who can enter into the experience contained in it. But we may lay it down as a most certain truth that the more the love of Christ is felt and realised in the soul, the more will this holy book be understood and enjoyed.

But let us now consider a few points which distinguish the Song of Solomon from every other book of Scripture, and see how far they justify us in calling it a Sacred Drama. Every drama has a *subject*; so has the Song of Solomon. This subject is the mutual love of Christ and his church. Every drama has a *course of action* which distinguishes it from mere dialogue, that being merely the expression of thought or feeling between two parties; so has this divine song its course of action. This consists in the varied changes produced in the feelings, words, and actions of the Bride, according to the presence or absence of the Bridegroom. A drama has also usually an *audience*; and this is another feature which distinguishes it from a dialogue. The Song of Solomon has therefore its audience; but the audience here is not, as in theatrical representations, of which the Spirit of God knows nothing, an assemblage of casual spectators external to the drama, but an audience internal to it; in other words, forming a part of the drama itself. This audience consists of the female attendants of the bride, called in the song itself "Virgins," or "Daughters of Jerusalem;" and we are also inclined to think that, as the bride had her female attendants, so the Bridegroom had his male "companions," as they are termed. (i. 7; viii. 13.) For if our readers will carefully compare Judges xi. 37, 38, xiv. 11, with Ps. xlv. 7, 14,* and John iii. 29, they will perceive that, as the bride was attended by what we may call her bridesmaids, so the bridegroom, at the ancient Hebrew marriages, was attended by what we may term his bridesmen. If this view be correct, we may thus lay out the structure of this Sacred Drama: 1. *Subject*, the Love of Christ and his Church. 2. The *Drama* itself, or course of action, the Vicissitudes of that love as experienced by the bride. 3. The *Speakers*, the Bridegroom and the Bride. 4. The *Audience*, the male and female Attendants of the Bride and Bridegroom. 5. The *Scene*, sometimes the Street of the city, sometimes the Private Gardens belonging to the Bridegroom, and sometimes the King's Palace, situated in or near these gardens. 6. Besides these constituent parts of the drama, we have to consider the *Language*, which, as suitable to that species of composition, is highly poetical and metaphorical, and from the nature of its subject peculiarly tender and impassioned.

But we have called it a *Sacred Drama*; and so indeed it is eminently and peculiarly, for it sets forth a subject above all others holy and heavenly, namely, the mutual love of Christ and the church. Would we then draw near this heavenly book, we must put our shoes of carnal sense and reason from off our feet, for it is eminently holy ground; and indeed we here need a double caution, for as the language is much borrowed from the expressions of human love—that tender, we may say, inflammable spot of our heart—our corrupt nature may soon turn food into poison. Two things are, therefore, indispensable to a right understanding of and spiritual entrance into this holy book: 1. To have experienced some measure of divine

* The word "fellows" here is the same in the original as that translated Cant. viii. 13, "companions."

love, so as to understand and feel the sweetness of the tender and impassioned language made use of. 2. To approach it in that holy, heavenly, and spiritual frame of mind whereby carnal thoughts and suggestions are for a while subdued, and divine realities alone enthroned in the soul. Read spiritually, felt experimentally, enjoyed unctuously, this holy book affords a "feast of fat things full of marrow; of wines on the lees well refined." Read carnally, interpreted rationally, felt sensually, it may become poison and death.

A short analysis of the first chapter may suffice to show its general character. The bride, surrounded by her female attendants, is waiting in the king's palace the advent of her Beloved One. She has been musing over their mutual love and affection, till her heart being full, she suddenly breaks forth, (i. 2,) "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth; for thy love is better than wine." The church here expresses her desires after the manifestations of Christ's love. And observe the sudden transition of the person from "him" and "his" to "thy," so expressive of that tender warmth of love whereby the object is first long and fondly thought of, and then at once addressed. But to show its purity, and that it is not like earthly love, individual, and unadmitting any others to share it, she adds, "Because of the savour of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee. Draw me, we will run after thee; the king hath brought me into his chambers; we will be glad and rejoice in thee; we will remember thy love more than wine. The upright love thee." Observe the expressions, "The *virgins* love thee; *we* will run after thee; *we* will be glad and rejoice in thee; *we* will remember thy love," &c.; "The *upright* love thee." What a heavenly purity do these expressions cast over the whole subject! Earthly love admits only of one object, and allows no rival. Heavenly love embraces the whole family of God, and delights in sharing with them the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge. Earthly love is bashful, silent, uncommunicative, locking up in the secret recesses of the heart the consuming fire. Heavenly love is free, open, communicative, and lays freely bare to the family of God the inmost feelings of the soul.

"Without, unspotted; innocent within;
It fears no danger, for it knows no sin."

But the question perhaps arises, Who are intended by these virgins, these daughters of Jerusalem, to whom the bride addresses herself? We understand by them those amongst the family of God who are sincere in their desires after Christ, and have a love to him and his truth, but have not as yet been favored with the same rich manifestations of his love as the bride. They are seekers and inquirers, separate from the world, (therefore called "virgins,") sincere and honest, (therefore called "upright,") and having an interest in the gospel, (therefore called "daughters of Jerusalem;") but not yet favored with those blessed manifestations which give the bride sweet union and communion with the Lord Jesus. To these she now turns; and lest they should mistake her experience, and think because so indulged she is almost as holy as an angel

in heaven,—a common supposition with these “daughters of Jerusalem,”—she says, “I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon. Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me: my mother’s children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept.” “Black!” yes, scorched and blackened by the sun of temptation, so as to be as dark and begrimed as the camel-hair tents of Kedar; yet still, as washed in the Redeemer’s blood and clothed in his righteousness, “comely as the curtains of Solomon.” “And think not,” she adds, “that I have attained to the enjoyment of a knowledge of my Redeemer’s love by my own diligence, or have by my own exertions maintained that sacred flame alive in my breast. O ‘look not upon me,’ nor scrutinise me too closely, ‘because I am black.’ ‘My mother’s children,’ indeed, through jealousy, ‘were angry with me,’ because more favored than they, and attributed to me such zeal and diligence as if I were fit to take the general oversight of all the churches; but alas! alas! I have failed in every particular, and have not kept my own vineyard free from thorns, weeds, and briers!” Smitten now with compunction and filled with longing desires to be fed by Christ alone, and to rest under the shadow of his embrace; weary of wandering, distrustful of self and all earthly guides, and desirous to know and to do what was pleasing in his sight, she turns to her Beloved, and sighs forth, “Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon; for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?” Hitherto the Bride alone has spoken; but now the Bridegroom breaks in. He does not chide her for the faults she confesses, but first gives her a word of instruction, and then tells her how fair and comely she is in his eyes: “If thou know not, thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherds’ tents.” The footsteps of the flock—the path in which the redeemed have ever trod, the path of tribulation—must be her direction to the spot where he gives them rest in himself from the burning sun of temptation which beats down so hotly “at noon;” and the food which he had provided for her soul would be found “beside the tents” of those under-shepherds whom he had commissioned to feed the flock of slaughter. But charmed with the comeliness which he had put upon her, he tells her “he had compared her to a company of horses in Pharaoh’s chariots,” which by their beauty, and grace, and handsome ornaments, drew the admiration of all beholders. “Thy cheeks,” he adds, “are comely with rows of jewels,” meaning thereby that her face—that part in which beauty chiefly resides, and that which alone is visible to beholders—in other words, her grace, as externally made manifest, is only “comely” by reason of “the rows of jewels,” the various gifts and graces of the Spirit, which he himself had decked her with; (Ezek. xvi. 11, 12;) and that her “neck,” that attractive feature, is hung “with chains of gold,” the links of divine love and grace, whereby he has not only drawn her to himself, but put them on

her neck as emblematic of her union in love, and her subjection in obedience. "We," he adds—here mark the three Persons of the Trinity—"will make thee borders of gold with studs of silver." We confess we have no very clear idea of the meaning of these words; though the doctrines of the gospel may be shadowed forth by "the borders of gold;" and the ordinances of God's house, which are, as it were, firmly set in those doctrines, by the "studs of silver." The Bride now speaks to the end of the chapter.

Time and space will allow us only a few words on verse 12: "While the king sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof." The presence of Jesus only in the soul draws forth into exercise the sweet graces of the Spirit. "The spikenard" only sends forth its fragrant smell as drawn out by his being near, or as pressed by his hands.

With every explanation and elucidation, many expressions of this heavenly book will always remain obscure and uncertain. For an earthly guide through these difficult passages, we may safely recommend Dr. Gill. But after all, the best Commentator is the Holy Spirit, and the love of God shed abroad by him in the heart, the best Commentary.

A believer suffering God's righteous judgments and displeasure, should consider; how could it be otherwise? God and sin in the believer must come into contact sooner or later. How, then, can the believing sinner escape the suffering this occasions? Happy is it for him that God deals with his sin in this life and not in the life to come. Let such a man say, conscious of the justness of God's dealings with him, "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him." (Mic. vii. 9.)

If I never write to you more, be these my last words: There is none like Christ, none like Christ, none like Christ; nothing like redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. There is no learning nor knowledge like the knowledge of Christ; no life like Christ living in the heart by faith; no work like the service, the spiritual service of Christ; no reward like the free-grace wages of Christ; no riches nor wealth like the unsearchable riches of Christ; no rest, no comfort, like the rest, the consolations of Christ; no pleasure like the pleasure of fellowship with Christ. Little as I know of Christ, and it is my dreadful sin and shame that I know so little of him, I would not exchange the learning of one hour's fellowship with Christ, for all the liberal learning in ten thousand universities, during ten thousand ages, even though angels were to be my teachers. Nor would I exchange the pleasure my soul has found in a word or two about Christ, as, "Thy God," "My God," for all the cried-up pleasures of creation since the world began. For what, then, would I exchange the being for ever with Christ, to behold his glory, see God in him as he is, and enter into the joy of my Lord?—*John Brown.*

P O E T R Y .

LIFE GIVEN FOR A PREY.

“As dying, and behold we live.”—(2 Cor. vi. 9; Ezek. xvi. 6.)

Scarcely living, always dying,
Groaning, gasping, sinking, sighing;
O the trouble, pain, and strife,
Endured within, when sense of sin
Produces groans and heartfelt moans,
To retain the breath of life!

Days such as these afford no ease,
Nor quarter give, for if we live,
Life is given as a prey;

Prayer is feeble, scarcely able
To lisp or moan before the throne,
Griefs for which we yet must pray.

Thus faint and sick, stung to the quick,
O'erwhelm'd with grief, void of relief,
Unto Jesus let us look;
For once of old, with joy untold,
At such a sight the serpent's bite
Was heal'd; life all partook.

But if unable, if too feeble,
To cast a look to him who took
Sorrows which were ours, and curse;
Perhaps if we thus helpless be,
Cast out in blood, void of all good,
He will cast a look on us.

And passing by, though now on high,
His life will give, and bid us live,
Nor suffer death to sever
From his rich love, here or above,
The sin-sick soul he thus makes whole,
And pities now and ever.

O——.

W. P.

Works done without faith, although they have never so goodly a show of holiness, are under the curse. Wherefore so far off it is that the doers thereof should deserve grace, righteousness, and eternal life, that rather they heap sin upon sin. After this manner the Pope, that child of perdition, and all that follow him, do work. So work all meritmongers.—*Luther.*

Reflect especially on the temper of your mind towards those whom an unsanctified heart might be ready to imagine it had some just excuse for excepting out of the list of those it loves, and towards whom you are ready to feel a secret aversion, or at least an alienation from them. How does your mind stand affected towards those who differ from you in their religious sentiments and practices? To hate persons because we think they are mistaken, and to aggravate every difference in judgment or practice into a fatal and damnable error, destroys all Christian communion and love, and is a symptom generally much worse than the evil it condemns.—*Dodbridge.*

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MATT. V. 6; 2 TIM. I. 9; ROM. XI. 7; ACTS VIII. 37, 38; MATT. XXVIII. 19.

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VOL. XXI.

A MEDITATION ON THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS.

By NATHANIEL.

(Concluded from page 111.)

Now when an elect vessel is brought to offer praise for imputed righteousness, he glorifies the Son of God,—the God-Man Mediator, who is made unto him “wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption,” and his song will be, “Trust ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is righteousness and strength.” “My soul shall make her boast in the Lord; the humble shall hear thereof and be glad.” He also glorifies God the Father, who has predestinated him to the adoption of a son, and has sent forth his Spirit, whereby he cries, “Abba, Father.” His conversation is now in heaven, whither “the great forerunner hath entered for him.” He muses much upon divine realities. When he retires to his chamber, his language is,

“Sweetly I lay me down to rest;
Jehovah is my righteousness.”

Once he feared he should sleep the sleep of death, and his spirit was alarmed with fearful and diabolical dreams. Now the scene is changed; he dreams of heavenly bliss and blessedness, and well he may, for he has had a draught of that wine that goes down so sweetly that it makes even “the lips of him that is asleep to speak;” and with the Psalmist he can say, “When I awake, I am still with thee.” His conversation will be sometimes like this: “I was brought low, and he helped me. I looked for hell; he brought me heaven. By nature I was a child of wrath, even as others; but through the merits of Jesus, I am become a heir of heaven. Through my original sin in Adam and by my own actual transgressions, I became a guilty man in the eyes of the law, and was exposed to its fearful curses; but “the second Adam, the Lord from heaven,” has magnified the law on my behalf and made it eternally honorable, and has delivered us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: ‘For God hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.’”

“What glories, yea, what mysteries,
In this appointment shine;
My breaches of the law are his,
And his obedience mine.”

Now in my judgment this is "ordering one's conversation aright;" and the Holy Ghost says, "To all such will I show the salvation of God." This he does in sundry ways, a few of which I will here enumerate. All the visitations of God to the soul, if sanctified, tend to humble the sinner and lay him in the dust, and he is willing to let Jesus have all the praise, and from the bottom of his heart he "crowns him Lord of all." Now when a man has received pardon full and free, the blessed Spirit is pleased at times to lead him into that path and into those ways whereby the salvation of God may be viewed in all its beauties and grandeur, and boasting for ever excluded on the part of the sinner. To accomplish this, he is led to look at the rock from whence he was hewn, and to the hole of the pit from whence he was digged; and the Spirit says, "Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you;" "Your father was an Amorite, and your mother an Hittite;" "I called Abram alone." He here sees his own base origin; that according to the flesh, the father of the faithful came of idolatrous parents, dwelling in Ur of the Chaldees; that there was nothing in him "that could merit esteem or give the Creator delight," but that God loved him because he would love him. The man is now led to look at his own kinsfolk after the flesh,—those with whom he had been brought up. Perhaps he is the child of unbelieving parents, who despise both the gospel and those who profess it; and it may be they now have him in derision, and cast his name out as evil; but the promise is, "When thy father and thy mother forsake thee, then the Lord will take thee up." He admires the grace of God which has singled him out of the ruins of the fall; it may be that he sees many of his acquaintances in possession of a much more amiable disposition (naturally) than himself, but yet are destitute of the life of God in their souls; this humbles him and obliges him to say of grace, "This I, the worst, receive;" and that if there is any difference, God has passed by the best and taken the worst. He will look back upon his former associates and companions in sin and iniquity, and remember how many of them who were cut off in the days of their ignorance, neither manifesting "repentance towards God nor faith in our Lord Jesus Christ;" and the blessed Spirit will lead him to admire the distinguishing grace and mercy of God, and softly whisper to him those creature-humbling words, "Who hath made thee to differ? and of what art thou in possession which thou didst not freely receive?" and he will respond,

"Why was I made to hear thy voice,
And enter while there's room;
While thousands make a wretched choice,
And rather starve than come?
"Twas the same hand that spread the feast,
That sweetly forced me in;
Else I had still refused to taste,
And perish'd in my sin."

The Spirit then leads him to reflect upon the providence of God in interposing in his behalf, amidst the dangers so incidental to youth, when he had a hair's-breadth escape from drowning, a mira-

culous recovery from some direful disease, a momentary snatch from some unforeseen (and in itself fatal) accident, and he wonders how it is that he has been on the verge of those things that have slain their thousands, and yet he has escaped to the present moment, and remains a monument of mercy. He now sees that a child of God is immortal, and proof against death, until Christ is "formed in the heart the hope of glory." O the wonderful security of the Lord's family, even while dead in trespasses and sins! "Preserved in Christ Jesus, and called."

"See how heaven's indulgent care,
Attends their wanderings here and there."

When the heaven-born soul can sweetly muse over these things, and admire the grace of God, which has brought salvation unto him, all his enemies are quiet. When "the Sun of righteousness ariseth with healing in his wings," all the beasts of the field gather themselves and lie down in their dens. The Scripture says, "When the wicked cease, there is shouting." There is shouting, literally, when a people are delivered from the cruel and iron hand of a tyrant, and are set free by a stronger than he. So it is spiritually. "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace; but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils." Now, no man can call Jesus Lord savingly but by the Holy Ghost. It is therefore his office to give faith; for "faith is the gift of God;" and as faith triumphs, unbelief is put to the rout. As unbelief is one of the most faithful and steady armour-bearers that Satan has, it needs the invincible operation of the Spirit of God to put to flight this potent foe; for although the believer has had little sips by the way of the mercy and lovingkindness of the Lord, yet unbelief has always come in to oppose it, and said that the little soul-meltings, revivings, humblings, and contritions for sin were all fancy and delusion; and Satan, working mightily through this instrument, much was done to discourage and put back the poor coming sinner. The devil said, "Your spot is not the spot of God's people; they are a holy people, zealous of good works;" but your life that is past will not bear inspection; and as to zeal, you are quite destitute of it, for instead of being up and doing, you mope about the house and in the fields, and grope, like the blind, for the wall. It is said of them, that "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day;" but your path is darker and darker; the hope you once had is now perished; your pretended faith has proved to be fancy; your love to the people of God has now dwindled into suspicion and hard thoughts; the gladness you felt under such a discourse, and at such a time, was but the joy of a hypocrite, which is but for a moment; the promise that you vainly hoped was spoken to you on a certain occasion has proved powerless in your case. Promises are for special characters, and you not having had the comfort of it proved in your experience, shows it to be not of God, for "he is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count

slackness." Thus the poor sinner is assaulted on every side by the father of lies, and is driven to an extremity, it being "Satan's hour and the power of darkness." But it is God's opportunity to arise and set the poor buffeted soul up on high ;" for when there is no more strength left in the law-wrecked sinner, and felt necessity has laid him as low as possible in the dust of self-abasement before God, the time has arrived then for the strength of Christ to be made perfect in weakness. It was laying hold of the strength of Christ that made Abraham so "strong in faith, giving glory to God." Nothing short of the operation of the Spirit of God can make weak dust and ashes to be "strong in the Lord," or to glory "in the power of his might." Even the very "name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe;" and this is the name by which he shall be called, "The Lord our righteousness;" "And his name shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins;" for "there is no name given under heaven or amongst men whereby we must be saved, but the name of Jesus;" "For unto us a child is born, and unto us a Son is given, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace." What a wonderful name is this; "They that know thy name will put their trust in thee;" and as God declares that "This people have I formed for myself, they shall show forth my praise," they most assuredly must show forth praise for such a name as this; for the names of Christ are not *mere appellations*, as some of the Pre-existerians would have us believe, but they are very significant, and full of substance, and afford a precious and divine repast for living faith. For instance, this name is compared to a tower; and what a place of security is this in times of war, persecution, and distress. Some of the towers of old were impregnable, and were proof against and invulnerable to those modes of attack in use at that time. All persons were safe who retreated thither, and could very much annoy their enemies, but could receive no serious injury in return. Now, let a man who has the law of God against him, conscience to condemn him, justice to pursue him, and hell to yawn for him; let him, I say, but experimentally run into this strong tower, and he will be safe enough. Not but what he was safe before; but "the bliss of it is known by tasting." While he was experiencing the stormy wind and tempest, and the blast of the terrible one over and about his defenceless head, neither good men nor bad men could convince him he was in a safe spot; though the truth is,

" More happy, but not more secure,
The glorified spirits in heaven."

But when a man feelingly enters this tower, what will be the result? Why it will be just as it was with poor Jonah, when he came forth out of the belly of hell. "Salvation is of the Lord." There will be shouting, as there was with Israel when they had passed through the Red Sea and saw the destruction of their enemies in the great deep. Now when a poor sinner gets feelingly into the tower, there is a grand respite from all hostilities; there is safety, peace,

and plenty. He can ascend to the top of it, and from its summit descry the path he has been travelling; then he is brought into the meaning of that passage, "What thou knowest not now thou shalt know hereafter." The why and the wherefore is now opened up by the blessed Spirit, who shows him that it is the same road by which all the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles travelled to the heavenly Jerusalem; that all the discipline he has passed under is according to divine appointment; ("For as many as I love I rebuke and chasten;") that he has been judged in this world, that he might not be condemned in the world to come. Peace being proclaimed in the sinner's conscience by the pardoning blood of Christ, he has now boldness to enter into the holiest of all, and there he views the riches treasured up in the person of Jesus for his ransomed people, that he was the child born in Bethlehem's manger, and yet the mighty God,

"Whose shoulders held up heaven and earth,
When Mary held up him."

Although incomprehensible to mere nature and reason, yet faith receives and adores the profound mystery, while infidels mock and gainsay, for

"'Tis view'd by mere nature with coldness and scorn,
That God, our Creator, an infant was born."

But the believer views him as the Son given, full of grace and truth, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." His name is Wonderful; it is the joy of saints and the terror of devils and unbelievers:

"This is the name the Father loves
To hear his children plead."

His name is sweet incense and heavenly perfume to the Father; for "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." It has power with God and prevails. He is a glorious Counsellor. Some counsellors have been known to gain an acquittal for their client through the charm of oratory; their eloquence has spared the criminal the gallows, and they have been amply rewarded for making a good case out of a bad one. Not so the church's Counsellor. His own glorious merits give sanction to his claim. Yea, the Lord himself is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our King; he will save us. This Counsellor gave the law on Mount Sinai. He well knew its requirements; that it must have life for life, blood for blood. Having become Surety for his bride, he fulfilled it both by his active life of obedience to its broad commands, and his passive obedience to its awful inflictions upon his sacred and spotless person; for being found in fashion as a man, he suffered death, even the death of the cross, that we might be brought near to God by his own most precious blood, which has given such infinite satisfaction to offended Deity, that even "justice is now for me" and on my side. "The Lord is our judge," and "he will deliver the poor when he crieth, and him that hath no helper." What a merciful Judge he is! Though his carriage towards us may

be for a time rough, it is only to make us sensible of our perilous situation as criminals before him; but as soon as any from real need can say,

"Mercy, good Lord, is all I need,
Mercy's the total sum,"

the voice will soon be heard, "Loose him, and let him go," or "Deliver him from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom." He is a judge between cattle and cattle; he knows the fat and the strong from the weak, the lame, and those that have no might. He will never condemn his own dear children, but will surely say, "Go in peace." His sceptre is a sceptre of righteousness, and his kingdom is established in equity:

"The Son of David holds his throne,
And sits in judgment there."

"The Lord is our King." When the judge has pardoned the culprit, and honorably acquitted him from all law charges, the sinner is willing that Christ should "reign over him as King." His language is, "Other lords have had dominion over us; but by thy name only will we be called." The man becomes a willing subject of King Jesus, and love is all his king asks, and

"E'en that from him we first receive,
For well he knows we've none to give."

He will save us from the reign, power, and dominion of sin, from the love of it, from its cursed consequences, from the will of our adversaries, from the sting of death, and from the judgment to come. He is "the mighty God;" so mighty that he made all worlds out of nothing: "He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." "All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made." So mighty that he overcame death and hell by his almighty power; became a ransom for many, made a way from sin to holiness, from death to eternal life; opened a sacred channel whereby mercy might flow to the vilest of the vile; blotted out for ever the handwriting of ordinances that stood against his people; nailed them to his cross; spoiled principalities and the powers of darkness; "overcame death, and him that had the power of it, which is the devil;" extracted the sting of death, and gave it a mortal wound; rose triumphant from the grave, a mighty Conqueror, for it was impossible that he should be holden by the cords of death. "He is the everlasting Father" of all his adopted family; one who could truly say, "I and my Father are one;" and though he "took upon him the form of a servant, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." This heavenly Father provided all needful blessings for his children before they were born. He well knew what prodigals they would prove, and that their native purity would quickly vanish before the venom of the serpent. Hence he provided a rich garment, shoes of iron and brass, the bread of life, living water, and a home to go to, "eternal in the heavens." He provided "himself," a "Lamb for a burnt offering," that they might go free, and he made intercession for the transgressors and set the guilty at large. He is "the Prince of

Peace." Having made peace by the blood of his cross, every heaven-born soul is willing to ascribe this name unto him. Confusion is contrary to the very being of God; it had its origin in fallen spirits. All God's creation was fair, and was pronounced to be "very good;" but it was quickly blighted by the sworn enemy of God and man, who sowed the seed of discord, confusion, and every evil work. Now, "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, in all the churches of the saints." Whether there be peace in the nation, the church, or the family, God is the author of it. Let not vain man take the praise. Let but the Almighty withdraw the olive branch of peace, and all would be anarchy and strife, and the whole world convulsed. By nature we are at war with God, and if grace has conquered us, it is owing to the Prince of Peace having made us his willing subjects in the day of his power.

When a saved sinner really sees and feels Christ Jesus to be all and in all unto him, he is experimentally amongst those of whom the text says, "This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise." He looks for his enemies, but they are fled; for his sins, but they are vanished away before the efficacy of blood divine; for law terrors, but they are appeased through the merits of his great High Priest; for justice, but it is satisfied, having thrust its naked sword into the heart of the great Surety, from whence flowed forth "blood and water," and

"Justice never can demand
Two payments of one debt."

No, never. He searches for the terrors of hell he once felt in his conscience, but their force is abated, his conscience having been sprinkled with blood. "Who is he that condemneth?" seeing Christ has died for him; yea, rather, who is "risen again" for his justification. At these times there is that peace felt which "passeth all understanding," which none can know but they who receive it. When this is experienced, the soul says, "My mountain stands strong; I shall never be moved." He thinks he shall never more be assaulted by unbelief; he feels unfit for the world, and would most gladly "depart and be with Christ, which is far better." But God intends him, before he leaves this world, to understand the meaning of the other side of the question, "Thou hidest thy face, and I am troubled;" "Verily, thou art a God who hidest thyself;" and if he keep back the face of his throne, who can behold him? He is not always to be dandled on the knees of divine consolation; for the Lord says, "I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms;" and again, "Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts." Generally, when a child has been weaned, it is taken by the arms and is taught to go alone, and by these means the tender little bones gather strength. So it is spiritually; there is to be a walking by faith, so as not to be tossed about by every wind of doctrine. Now a weaning time is a very trying time with the soul. It is no small trial to lose the enjoyment of the first manifestations of Christ to the soul; to be called

away from the sunshine of that countenance which is better than life; for joy to have great bitterness; for love to be superseded by jealousy. To walk by faith instead of feeling, is a riddle to the soul at first sight,

"But 'tis our Father's will,
And we must be content."

The plaintive note of a soul when weaning time comes on will be,

"Where is the blessedness I knew,
When first I saw the Lord?
Where is the soul-refreshing view,
Of Jesus and his word?"

There is wisdom displayed on the part of the Most High in these changes. Were we without changes, our scent would remain in us, and we should bear a resemblance to the children of Moab. Were we to be always on the mount of enjoyment, what sympathy would there be towards the tried, afflicted, and soul-deserted children of God? Not any. Could we comfort them with the same comfort wherewith we had been comforted of God, if we had passed through none of their trials? No, never; but on the contrary, must of necessity stand in the front of those ranks who profess never to have had a doubt of their interest in the work of Christ since they were called; who live so high in the air, that doubts and fears cannot reach them; and some are so fat and strong, that they have not had a doubt or a misgiving (if you can believe them) for 20 years. These, then, are, as it were, out of the gunshot of the devil—a pinnacle I never expect to reach while I am in the body—and some of them can prate very fluently upon the covenant of grace, sin a nonentity, God's eternal election, the security of the church, the glories of heaven; and they can talk so fast, that they seem to be head and shoulders higher than anybody else. If a low and dejected child of God comes alongside and asks them how they gained such a lofty summit, they will very likely say, "I am doing a great work, and I cannot come down unto you."

Thus, a poor tried believer "is as a lamp despised in the thought of him that is at ease." But for my part I would much rather take the prey with the lame, than divide the spoil with those who appear to be rich, and have need of nothing.

There are many professors to be found who will praise the work of Christ without them. But God's dear people not only have to do this, but likewise to show forth praise for the work of Christ within them. When they cannot see their signs, they have many questionings as to whether they have really been born again of the Spirit; whether they took up religion, or whether God began with them; whether their faith was of the operation of the Spirit of God, their love unfeigned, and they see very much to be condemned in themselves; whether they shall indeed endure to the end, seeing how many have been in a fair way of reaching the heavenly Canaan, but have fallen short at last; whether their lamp will not go out in death, and they sink in eternal infamy and oblivion.

To counteract these fears, God has, in rich mercy, left on record

many striking deliverances which his grace has effected on the behalf of his tempest-tossed family. Added to which, he qualifies by his Spirit ministers of truth, whose office it is to trace out the path of the living in Jerusalem; to go before the people; to cast up the highways; to remove the stumbling-blocks; instrumentally to comfort mourners in Zion; to "say to such as are of a fearful heart, Be strong;" to confirm the feeble knees; to set bread before the spiritually hungry, the water of life before the thirsty; to reconcile seeming contradictions; to unfold dark sayings; to explain spiritual riddles; to detect hypocrisy of the heart and the sincere affections of the soul; to describe the workings of unbelief, and the triumphs and victories of living faith; in a word, to make "crooked things straight, and rough places plain." When these things are done, it can be with truth said, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" These are ambassadors from a far country. "We then are ambassadors of Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God." And their messages, in brief, often are, "Be ye reconciled to God." Does God chasten you out of his law, lay sin upon your conscience, bring you back when you stray from his fold, lay affliction upon your loins, suffer the enemy to tempt and harass you? "We beseech you, be reconciled unto God;" who does all these things in love to your immortal souls: "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." Thus, while the servants of the Most High God are led to justify the ways of God to man, they occupy no mean place amongst those who shall show forth his praise in their day and generation; and many a one is highly esteemed, having been instrumentally as eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, and a guide to the lost; so that in all these things God has been glorified.

But being well nigh lost in viewing the almost infinite variety of ways in which God gets praise from sinners saved by grace, I must leave the subject for abler hands. Suffice it to say again, "This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise." There is no *may be* about it; they *shall* do it; in conviction for sin, as the publican; in calling, as in the case of Abraham, Zechariah, and the disciples; in justification, as with Joshua, the high priest, and others; in chastisements, as Ephraim and others; in patience, as Job; in tribulation, as Paul; in restoring mercy to backsliders, such as David, Peter, and many of this day; in raising from the dead, as Lazarus; in giving sight, as the blind man in the gospel; in recovering of leprosy, as in the case of him who returned and gave God the glory; in the case of those who "wait for the consolation of Israel," as good old Simeon; yea, all things are brought about for the "lifting of Jesus on high." For him the world was created, and all things therein are subservient to bring about his divine and unalterable purposes. His elect family must be brought forth in a time-state,—all those who shall deck his

medatorial crown out of every nation, kindred, and tongue. This world is the place wherein the mighty God displays the riches of his grace in translating sinners out of the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of his dear Son. By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; but Christ came "to destroy death and him that had the power of it." The first man, Adam, was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." This quickening work most assuredly must go on, and the election of grace, which lies buried in the ruins of the fall, must be raised to newness of life; for Christ must reign till all his enemies be made his footstool. When the last vessel of mercy shall be born into the kingdom of grace, "then cometh the end,"—that end of which "Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh, with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all;" that end which was questioned by the ungodly centuries ago, when they said, "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were at the beginning of the creation." But notwithstanding the scoffings of reprobates and vain unbelievers, God's people can say with Peter, "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for a new heaven, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." "Seeing, then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" The last enemy which is to be destroyed is death, that which has been such a terror to some of the weaklings in faith, that they have been subject to bondage all their life through fear of it. But it will shortly be "swallowed up in victory;" for there shall be no more death: "O death, I will be thy plague! O grave, I will be thy destruction!"

When all things shall be gathered together in one, even in him, "then cometh the end." When he shall have delivered the kingdom up to God, even the Father; when the angel shall place one foot on the earth and the other on the sea, and "swear by him who liveth for ever, that time shall be no longer;" when all worlds shall stand before his bar; when the dead in Christ shall rise first; when those who are alive on the earth shall "be changed, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead in Christ shall be raised incorruptible," to inherit everlasting happiness, but the wicked to the resurrection of eternal damnation; then shall the sheep be divided from the goats, one company on the right hand, with a "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," and the rest on the left hand, with a "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in poverty, and ye visited me not!" But the non-elect will even boast they have done all things here enumerated, and many things beside, it may be such as distributing tracts, giving alms to

the poor, supporting missionary societies, evangelising the heathen. But in the midst of all these wonderful doings they never administered spiritual bread and water to the hungry and thirsty, or lodged one of those who were strangers and pilgrims in a barren wilderness; never pointed the naked to the robe of righteousness, but were pleased to call it "imputed nonsense;" never visited those who were in soul-sickness and were crying, "Stay me with flagons; comfort me with apples; for I am sick of love;" never spoke a word of encouragement to those who were mournfully crying out, "Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name;" but tauntingly said, "O it is easy to believe; it is easy to take God at his word; it is your duty to do so." Although some of them may have performed a kind office to some of the saints, yet not having been done in faith and in love to the Lord, but with an eye to their own merit, it shall surely be said to all such, "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of these, ye did it not to me." But instead of the righteous vaunting and boasting of what they have done for the Lord, they will well nigh have forgotten the kindness they have shown to his dear people. Hence the inquiry, "Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?" And the King shall answer and say unto them, "Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." It was not done for price nor for reward of merit, but out of real love to them as the children of God, because the image of Christ was stamped upon them, proving them to be the favorites of heaven, "known and read of all men;" "for if we love him who begat, we shall love them also who are begotten of him."

At the last day it shall truly be seen that "This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise;" when the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the firmament, and the faces of the wicked gather blackness. Who can tell the infinite worth of a good hope through grace, that after we have done with the trials, afflictions, and bereavements of this life, we shall stand in our lot in the last days?

"Then shall he own my worthless name,
Before his Father's face;
And in the new Jerusalem,
Appoint my soul a place."

May this be the happy lot of both reader and writer, so prays,

NATHANIEL.

Sinners can do nothing but make wounds, that Christ may heal them; make debts, that Christ may pay them; make falls, that Christ may raise them; make deaths, that Christ may quicken them; and spin out, and dig hells for themselves, that Christ may ransom them.—*Rutherford.*

FRAGMENTS OF A DEPARTED ONE.

* * * Through a kind providence I am still about. My cough is but poorly.

O my dear son, what a warfare this life is. What a mercy there is a rest for the people of God. This poor body wants rest, but for wise ends the Lord stirs us up from our rest, and brings us to cry out, "O wretched man that I am!" You feel this, I have no doubt. We serve the best of masters. How can we describe his faithfulness and worth? O praise him that ever he brought us to his feet to love and adore him! O the love of God, that ever he should give us such a gift as his dear Son! The more we think of his greatness and goodness, the baser we appear. But I cannot attain what I want. I want to be holy; to hang on Jesus, and to look at him standing in the article of death. "The sting of death is sin," and "if sin be pardon'd, we're secure." Thanks be unto God; how worthy to be praised! The more we know of his love, the greater he appears.

May we live near to him; go to him in all our affairs, spiritual and temporal, and cast our burdens upon him. O what a great burden-bearer God is, and he is our God! * * * We are going on much the same, covered with mercies. Let me hear of your welfare, and may we pray much one for another. O that we may be a family bound up in the bundle of life; not one be left out! So prays your loving mother.

Belgrave Lodge, Nov. 7th, 1851.

* * * Through a kind providence I am better this winter than last. How good the Lord is. I have never found him a barren wilderness; a land of drought. How great is his mercy to me who am so undeserving. I desire to rest all my care on him. Perhaps I am leaning too much to creature comforts, and the Lord is taking them from me, that I may have my all in him. * * * What a thing it is we want so many comforts here. Jesus was a man of sorrows. His kingdom was not of this world; and however painful these things may be, they shall all work together for good to them that love God.

Belgrave Lodge, Jan. 30th, 1852.

How many times are some men put in mind of death, by sickness upon themselves, by graves, by the death of others! How many times are they put in mind of hell, by reading the word, by lashes of conscience; and by some that go roaring in despair out of this world! How many times are they put in mind of the day of judgment! And yet they fear not God. Alas! they believe not these things. These things, to carnal men, are like Lot's preaching to his sons and daughters, that were in Sodom. When he told them that God would destroy that place, he seemed unto them as one that mocked, and his words to them were as idle tales. (Gen. xix. 14.)—*Bunyan.*

A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT TO A MOURNER IN ZION.

My dear Sister,—We received your welcome letter this evening. I have it now before me whilst writing. I can and do sympathise with you, for I am not a stranger to your feelings or to a depression of spirit. May it be God's sovereign pleasure to use the language and spirit of this letter as a balm for your wounds and a cordial for your fears.

You say, in your letter, "The Lord knows my heart." What a consolation this affords to the soul when cast down: "My Father knows my heart." Yes, indeed, he does: "He hears the sighing of the prisoner; he also looseth them that are appointed to death." None of your sighs and cries have escaped your Father's notice. He knows the meaning of them all; and, blessed be his holy name, he will deliver you from all your troubles. Dear sister, I can enter into your feelings. I know the burden of sin upon the conscience. But these are the footsteps of the flock. Not one of the Lord's children ever escaped this footpath. I say footpath, because you and I cannot walk side by side here; it seems as if we were called to walk alone. We may know the burden of sin as we feel it; but the Lord, our gracious loving Father, sees fit, for wise ends known only to himself, to cause the burden to sit closer and heavier on some of his children than on others. "Surely he knoweth our frame," as I have often heard you say; therefore he knows best what to lay upon us. May God the Holy Ghost, the blessed Comforter, lead you by a precious faith to see your Father's hand in all those trials your mind is exercised with. Remember, it is the Lord's hand; I tell you *it is your Father's hand*. Read Isa. xliii. See how Israel had sinned; look at verses 22–24. Observe God the Holy Ghost speaking by the prophet. The Lord had not let their sins pass unnoticed. But he brings their iniquities before their eyes; to declare, in the face of all their sins, (in the 25th verse,) that "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions," &c. I refer you to the word of God, because it is adapted, under the blessed unction of the Holy Ghost, to teach you where to look. Do not despair, let your crimes be mountains high. I know you have not the assurance to know they are all blotted out; no, you feel the effect of sin and transgression, and you fear the Lord has left you to fill up the measure of your iniquity and then send your soul to hell. I say, sometimes this is the case with you; it is with me; it is with all God's taught children. My eyes are up unto God, begging him to teach me what to say to you. O may he be pleased to make use of such a poor instrument as the means whereby comfort shall flow into your soul.

If you were not the Lord's, you never would feel as you do. If you did not love God, you would not mourn his absence from your soul. But you do mourn his absence. Like Job, you say, "O that it were with me as in months past, when the candle of the Lord shone round about me, and when by his light I walked through

darkness." Every child of God has dark seasons, and so, my dear, have you and I. By this shall you know they are of God, when you feel these very trials sanctified to your soul. They will produce, first, a seeking after God, if his will, to have them removed, and a feeling sense that he does all things well; and by thus seeking him you will, in his own time, have to sing of salvation through the God-Man Mediator, who is for his people all they can possibly want for time and eternity. And you and I, having Christ, possess all things :

"If he is mine, and I am his,
What can I want beside?"

Join with me to praise rich, free, sovereign grace :

"Grace all the work shall crown,
Through everlasting days ;
It lays in heaven the topmost stone,
And well deserves the praise."

I thought I could spend my time in writing to you better than going to chapel. May my Father seal this with his sanction ; if so, your heart shall rejoice and magnify the Lord God of your salvation. Amidst all the trials I am called to pass through, (and I can assure you they are trying to flesh and blood,) I am mercifully upheld and graciously supported by the arm of the covenant God of Jacob. The Lord has led my soul to see a preciousness in Christ. My hope is in God ; from him cometh all my salvation, both temporal and spiritual.

I trust I enjoy communion with our Father. I never forget you, and trust you do not us. I pray the Lord to "lead you into all truth," to enable you to "cast all your care upon him," knowing that "he careth for you." O ye weaklings of the flock, Christ calls to you. He will bear you up. If you fall, you shall rise again ; if it is dark, it shall in God's time be light ; if you are cast down, you are not destroyed ; if Satan is permitted to worry you, he shall never destroy you. Does your heart and conscience condemn you ? Christ will speak peace in his own time ! He calls you to pass through these floods of water and fires of temptation, to fit your heart and soul for his dwelling. He will be glorified in his children. He was in Peter, when he even denied his Lord. What a lesson the Lord taught Peter ! He would not believe, before he had experienced it, the weakness, folly, and sinfulness of man ! But none of these set Christ against him. No ; he loved him ; and no doubt it was the means of Peter loving the Lord more and more.

I say it in the fear of God, whose I am, and whom I profess to serve as well as yourself, that if you are Christ's, all the powers of hell shall never damn your soul ; for "ye are hid with Christ in God." But "shall we sin, that grace may abound ? God forbid. Know ye not that his servants ye are to whom ye obey ?" All this my soul has passed through, and a thousand times more. But I have to record the fact that

"I have been upheld till now.

Who could hold me up but thou ?"

My dear sister, cleave close to the throne of grace. Pray that your affections may be set on things above. Ask the Lord to conform you to his image. I hope neither the vanities of time nor the company of the world may draw your heart away. We are called upon to come out, to be "separate, and touch not the unclean thing." The pleasures of this world are transient and short. I know the Lord can keep you; but I feel for you. You are exposed to more temptation than you think for. This makes it more dangerous. I commend you to God and to the word of his grace.

May his blessing rest upon you, and may you through divine grace show forth his praise wherever you are. Remember your chief end is to glorify your Lord and Master, who has done so much for you.

Burwell, July 26, 1846.

A PILGRIM.

A LETTER BY THE LATE MR. BROADBRIDGE.

My dear Friend and fellow-traveller in the path of tribulation,— Though I must say and do feel that mine is but light compared with yours, yet our coward flesh shrinks at trials and troubles of any kind whatever. But O what a mercy it is to be found in that path! for as our friend P. says in one of his sermons, "If we are out of the path of tribulation, we are out of the promise of the covenant." Yes, dear friend, One who has been our strength and stay in all our troubles to the present moment, and will be in the roughest path that we may be called to tread in, (for he is faithful to his word of promise, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be,") what a legacy he left to his sorrowing disciples, after a long and sweet conversation with them! And not for them only; no, but for all his tried and tempted family now travelling through this waste, howling wilderness. This legacy is mentioned in John xvi., and the chapter closes with those comforting words, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer. I have overcome the world." This chapter I have found very precious to my soul many times. God is a God ever near and ready at hand to hear our complaints, though not always to send deliverances in our time. No; his time is the best; and so we have found it. He often sees fit to try our faith and patience, to prove the faith he gives us. He is the Author and Finisher of faith. O that we may ever be looking and crying unto him, to "increase our faith," and to confirm and establish our hearts more and more in him! The blessed Spirit by Paul says, in Rom. v., "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

This portion has been indeed sweet to me many times, and I found it so in reading the chapter and a "Portion" of Hawker's this morning. I found it a lift by the way to my poor soul; and I feel it so impressed on my mind as to write it down for your perusal. And I do hope the blessed Spirit may apply it to your heart, and give you a sweet lift by the way in your trouble. It is from part of the 3rd verse of Rom. v.: "Knowing that tribulation worketh patience:" "Have former trials been blessed to thee? Why, then, depend upon it this, be it what it may, will be also. The covenant love and faithfulness of God in Christ are both the same now as they ever were. If the Lord hath hitherto been making all things work together for good, so will he now. Thy God is the same God as ever, is he not? And his love to thee the same, because it is in Jesus; his covenant the same; his promises the same; the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus in efficacy the same. Well, then, as all the perfections of God are engaged for God's people, certain it is, that no trial to his people can arise which he knew not; nay, which he appointed not, and for which he hath not made a suitable provision." Here, my friend, is comfort for a poor tried and troubled soul, when applied by the ever-blessed Spirit in time of need.

I was very sorry to hear of your troubles, but they will in the Lord's hand work for good at the end.

Believe me to be your affectionate friend and sincere well wisher,
Faversham, Dec. 16th, 1851. G. BROADBRIDGE.

It is no more possible for believers to miscarry finally, than for Christ himself to be held under the power of the grave; there is one law for them both. It is a faithful saying, "If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him." (2 Tim. ii. 11.) "If we suffer with him, we shall be glorified together." (Rom. viii. 17).—*Elisha Coles.*

"Well, then," says an Arminian, "if these things are so, I am safe at all events. I may fold up my arms, and even lay me down to sleep; or, if I choose to rise and be active, I may live just as I list." Satan was the coiner of this reasoning, and he offered it, as current and sterling, to the Messiah; but Christ rejected it as false money. "If thou be the Son of God," said the enemy; "if thou be indeed that Messiah whom God upholds, and his elect, in whom his soul delighteth, cast thyself headlong; it is impossible thou shouldst perish, do what thou wilt; no fall can hurt thee; and thy Father hath absolutely promised that his angels shall keep thee in all thy ways; jump, therefore, boldly from the battlements, and fear no evil." The devil's argumentation was equally insolent and absurd in every point of view. He reasoned, not like a serpent in his wits, but like a serpent whose head was bruised, and who had no more of understanding than of modesty. Christ silenced the battery of straw with a single sentence, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." So said the Messiah. And so say we.—*Toplady.*

HOW GREAT IS HIS GOODNESS AND HOW GREAT IS HIS BEAUTY.

My dear Friend,—Peace be with you. I just write to say that I am still alive, crawling, worthless worm as I am. The patience of God is great to me; I cannot bear with myself, and still I am spared. “It is of the Lord’s mercy that I am not consumed;” for, if dealt with according to my sins, hell would long since have been my portion. O how great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty! His goodness is great, in that it was ever made known to me. I know he was good to me, even when I knew it not, yea, when a slave to the devil, fulfilling, as far as I could, my sinful desires, despising God and goodness, hating him with all my heart. But truly, my friend, all this could not change him who rests in his love.

I have had such views and feelings before now of the goodness, mercy, and forbearance of the Lord to me when I was dead in sin, that I have trembled from head to foot. This, I say, I have seen and felt since he has made me to know something of my state as a sinner before him that is to be feared. As he was good to me then, so surely he has made his goodness to pass before me in some measure, and in it I have at times felt glad. O my dear Sir, when something is known and felt of the goodness of the Lord in my heart, it makes me say, “O how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!” What deliverances he has wrought! What power he has made known! What favors he has bestowed! What helps by the way, what tokens for good, what invitations, victories, mercies, by which we know that he favors us, because he “suffereth not the enemy to triumph over us.” First. His goodness is *pure*; Second. It is *free*; Third. It is *great*; Fourth. It is *everlasting*. And this goodness of the Lord appears in many ways: 1. In quickening the souls of his people from death unto life; 2. In causing his own truth to meet that life, so as to bring them into trouble, guilt, and distress of mind; 3. In helping them to confess their sins; 4. In giving them grace to forsake them; and 5. In blessing them with a heart to receive the glorious gospel of the ever-blessed God; so that such are in a good state indeed, for “Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance.” The gospel is to them sweet in its promises, which are “yea and amen;” they are all free, made and fulfilled by a faithful God, who has said, “So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” Run its way it must and will, and be glorified. It is all in the hands of a good and gracious God, who “speaks, and it is done; commands, and it stands fast.” “The Lord gave the word,” the gospel, “and great was the company of them that published it.” The gospel comes, (it is not fetched,) “not in word only, but in power, in the Holy Ghost,

and in much assurance," proving that it comes from God; for "where the word of a king is, there is power," even to heal, strengthen, comfort, and deliver poor wounded, weak, and prison-bound sinners. He sent his word and healed them, and delivered them from all their troubles. Now in all this the Lord is good, very good; is he not, my friend? I know he is, and that is the best of it. O how often he has helped me, when all other help has failed! When ready to perish, he has made bare his own arm, which has brought salvation. O how sure I am that salvation is of the Lord in all its branches, both out of the man and in him too! And yet, my friend, what a fool I am! This is my character. "Fools, because of their sins, are afflicted." How prone we are to depart from the living God, the Fountain of all good, even goodness itself. But his goodness further appears in that he will not suffer us to remain always from him, for "he restoreth my soul, and leadeth me in the paths of righteousness, for his name's sake. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." The backslidings of his people he heals, and he loves them freely, even because he will, and not because we deserve it. In his love he rests, and joys over his people. He loves to do them good. When in trouble, he comforts them; when cast down, he will raise them up; when afar off, he will bring them near; when in darkness, he will command light which is sweet to the soul; and through the worst he will help them, never leaving nor forsaking the objects of his everlasting, unchanging love. But all this he will do in his time and way. They must feel their need, or they can never prize his help; and "when the desire comes, it is a tree of life," even Christ, in his fulness and saving benefits, "who is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength, mighty to save," determined to save, willing to save, "even to the uttermost, all that come unto God by him." There is in God a fulness of goodness. Great and merciful God, grant us more of thy goodness felt in our souls, for thy mercy's sake. Amen.

Peace be with you and yours, from the God of peace.

Bury, Dec., 1853.

T. C.

There may be a great deal of speculative knowledge, and a great deal of rapturous affection, where there is no true religion at all. The exercise of our rational faculties upon the evidences of divine revelation, and upon the declaration of it as contained in Scripture, may furnish a very wicked man with a well-digested body of orthodox divinity in his head, when not one single doctrine of it has ever reached his heart. An eloquent description of the sufferings of Christ, of the solemnities of judgment, of the joys of the blessed, and the miseries of the damned, might move the breast even of a man who did not firmly believe them; as we often find ourselves strongly moved by well-wrought narrations or discourses which at the same time we know to have their foundation in fiction.—*Doddridge.*

INQUIRIES.

Messrs. Editors,—Will you be kind enough to insert the following queries in your next periodical.

1st. Was the soul of Adam in his first created state mortal or immortal?

ANSWER.

Most certainly immortal.

2nd. Did his soul die and become annihilated when he departed this life?

ANSWER.

Who but an infidel could ask such a question? An immortal soul cannot die, or be annihilated.

3rd. Did the human soul of our Lord Jesus Christ die when he gave up the ghost, and so become annihilated, or not?

ANSWER.

What a question to ask! Did not the Lord Jesus himself say to the penitent thief, "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise?" What is this "me?" Not Christ's *Deity*, for that is present everywhere; nor his *body*, which was on the cross or in the sepulchre; but his soul, that human soul of which he himself said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death;" (Matt. xxvi. 38;) and the travail of which it was promised he should see and be satisfied. (Isa. ciii. 4.)

4th. Are both the bodies and souls of the wicked to be finally destroyed and become annihilated, or not?

ANSWER.

The Lord's own words decide this point beyond all doubt or controversy: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal." The fire and the punishment are as everlasting as the life and the happiness.

5th. Are the wicked, the devils, and hell to be finally destroyed and annihilated or not?

ANSWER.

This question is sufficiently answered by the preceding.

Yours for the truth's sake,

We are fairly ashamed of inserting and answering such Inquiries; but we have done so very much to give our readers a specimen of what questions are sometimes submitted to us for answer. Perhaps the next Inquiry will be whether the Bible is the word of God, or whether there be a God at all.

Dear Sir,—Has not Mr. Rusk, in the beginning of his sermon on 2 Pet. 1-4, in last month's "Standard," fallen into a mistake, in

supposing the apostle to signify that he was an apostle only to those who had obtained like precious faith? •

Yours faithfully in Christ,

Leicester, Dec. 9th, 1854.

G. H.

ANSWER.

A distinction, we think, may be drawn between Peter the Apostle as preaching the word, say, as he did, on the day of Pentecost, and Peter the Apostle as writing an Epistle to "the elect strangers." As a *preacher*, he would "commend himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God;" and in that sense he was an apostle to others besides those "who had obtained like precious faith;" but as a *writer* to the church of God, we have the testimony of his own pen that he wrote to them only, for his letter is specially—we may say, solely—addressed to those who were "begotten again unto a lively hope." Paul declares (Gal. ii. 8,) that Peter's apostleship was "of the circumcision," that is, he was sent to preach the gospel mainly, if not exclusively, to the Jews. Now, these Jews, when they first came under the sound of his ministry, were doubtless unregenerate; and yet he preached to them, or in their hearing; but when any of them were called by the grace of God under his preaching, they ceased to be Jews distinctively as such, being united to that body "where there is neither Greek nor Jew, but Christ is all and in all." In this sense, therefore, his apostleship certainly extended beyond those who were believers in Christ, and as such, had "obtained like precious faith with himself" and the saints of God.

The case of a pastor of a church, which is almost analogous, may set this in a clearer light. As a *preacher* to the congregation, he addresses himself to men's consciences generally, besides his ministry of edification and consolation, reproof or instruction, which is directed to the called and quickened specially. But as a *pastor*, he speaks or writes to the church alone, his very name implying that he feeds the sheep only. Adopting this view, Rusk seems partly right and partly wrong; right when he speaks of Peter as an inspired writer to the church of God; wrong, if he limit the apostolic office to the believing church of God only.

Dear Sir,—Is it scriptural for a Particular Baptist church to admit members of General Baptist churches to the Lord's table, upon a well-founded supposition that they are the Lord's children?

An answer to this would greatly oblige, Sir,

Yours in the Lord,

BETA, DELTA.

ANSWER.

All Particular Baptist churches consider such a practice subversive of their principles, and a sanctioning of error and disorder. As some really God-fearing persons in our churches may not clearly see this, we will devote a few words to the subject.

We fully admit that it may seem, at first sight, narrow and rigid, and to some almost unchristian, not to allow members of General Baptist churches, assuming they bear marks of grace, to sit down with

the members of Particular Baptist churches. But what we are to consider is not so much *individuals* as a *principle*; and then what seems harsh as regards persons, may appear quite right as regards things. Now, as a principle for a church to act upon—and here we must consider not the private feelings of individual members, but the church, as “the pillar and ground of truth”—is it right in a church, as Christ’s representative, to sanction error and erroneous men? But this it certainly does whilst it admits members of erroneous churches to sit down at the table; for in sanctioning the members, it indirectly, if not directly, sanctions both the church and the minister. Besides, what evidence have we that, whilst they hold such errors, which we must assume they do as long as they continue members of a general church, they are partakers of grace? The General Baptist churches are sunk in free will, and are for the most part deadly enemies to a free-grace gospel. How, then, can we welcome to the Lord’s table those who deny his finished work, are not stripped and emptied of self, and fight against those precious truths whence we derive all our hope? If it be answered that these members do not, we may reply, their minister does, and the church with which they stand connected; and whilst in union with such a church, the voice and acts of the church are their voice and acts; for were they to testify against the doctrines held by the minister and the church, their membership would come to a speedy end. But would we admit their ministers to our pulpits? Why, then, admit their members to our table? “Can two walk together except they be agreed?” How then can the friends of a particular redemption walk with the friends of a universal one, or the lovers of free grace unite with the lovers of free will; or how can those who cleave wholly and solely to Christ’s righteousness, walk with those who hold with part of their own? At the Lord’s table, we want love and union, to be joined together in one heart and one judgment. But how can this be the case, when members of general churches unite with us at this solemn ordinance? If they be children of God, and have received the truth in the love of it, why do they still sit under error? why still continue members of erroneous churches? why not “come out and be separate,” as the Lord bids?

But why do they want to sit down with the Particular Baptists? Have they not a table of their own? Why do they not keep to it? Why do they want us to sanction their errors? Most probably the reason of their continuing members of dead churches is some flesh-pleasing cause, or some worldly, self-indulgent motive. Why should this be sanctioned and covered over, and they thus really strengthened in their evil-doing? If they are one in heart with us, why not unite with us openly? If not one in heart, why do they want to sit down with us? By making a stand against their sitting down at the table—not from any prejudice against the individual, but on the ground of truth and conscience—we may lead them to consider their ways, which are not good; and thus our seeming harshness be really more profitable to them than flesh-pleasing softness. As long as churches of truth countenance error by word or deed, in

principle or practice, it will be thought of little consequence. Thus truth and error get confounded, the church and the world insensibly mingled, the barriers set up against false doctrine pulled down, and separation from all evil eventually nullified. The only way is to make a stand at the outset, and not give way in this apparently little thing and the other seemingly mere trifle, as men estimate them—as if any part of God's truth or worship were a matter of indifference—but to resist the entrance of all error and all evil from the beginning, as one would at once stop a small leak in a ship, or trample out a spark in a room, lest the former sink the vessel and the other burn down the house. A Particular Baptist church that does not stand firm to its faith and order will soon tolerate other innovations, till at last it loses all its distinctive features, and sinks down into a mere worldly church, a wreck and ruin of what it once was. As in individuals sin begins by littles, and one thing leads on to another, till crime is consummated; so in churches error and declension usually commence by "Is it not a little one?"

Upon these grounds, then, we resist the introduction of the members of General Baptist churches to the Lord's table, as sanctioning error, breaking down our faith and order, and opening a way to a union with the world and all its evil results.

I find under anguish and deep heavings after pardon and peace with God, and deep and inward cries for blood sprinkling and cleansing, that with all these inward throes and convulsive throbbings after Christ, there will be wicked, blasphemous thoughts about Christ injected into my mind. Now, as both these cannot come from Satan, it is clear the latter must. Ought we not, then, to take comfort and be encouraged, that the former are not the hopeless utterances of deep despair, but proofs rather that the Spirit and grace of God have not quite deserted us? But by thus "stirring our sorrow within us," we are being brought again through deep waters once more to the bosom of Jesus, the resting-place for our souls.

Every part of my old tabernacle has felt this severe winter, except the old man of sin, who is insensible of all pain; an utter stranger to all fear; never tires, faints, nor grows weary; nor is he ever absent when good should be done, nor inactive, whether I am asleep or awake. Paul calls him "the old man;" but I am sure he is neither stiff, infirm, bowed down, decrepit, nor in the least decayed through age; for he is as alert as a stage player, as diligent as a miser, and as amorous as a boy of 18. He is a plague to me; but hell itself will never plague him, though it will plague his father, and all who have been constantly nursing him.*—*Huntington.*

* This extract will answer an inquiry addressed to us privately, "Whether the carnal mind still remains enmity against God in the quickened elect?" It may be subdued, but changed it never is, any more than lust or pride. To this the Scripture bears witness: "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God; neither indeed can be." (Rom. viii. 7.) And so does the bitter experience of many a groaning saint.

R E V I E W.

A Treatise on some Important Subjects, viz., On the Church of God, &c.
By C. H. Coles, late Pastor of the Baptist Church, Old Brentford.
Price 4d. London: James Paul, 1, Chapter House Court, St.
Paul's Church-yard, and Paternoster Row.

*The Spirit of God Grieved, and the Church of God Sleeping. A
Letter.* By C. H. Marston. Price 1½d. London: W. Yapp, 4,
Old Cavendish Street, Oxford Street; Houlston and Stoneman,
Paternoster Row.

A ministry without power never was, never can be, profitable or acceptable to the church of God. In what striking language does Paul declare what his own ministry was as regards this point, and the effect produced by it in the hearts of those to whom it was blessed: "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." How carefully does he here distinguish between the "word" and the "power" as regards his own ministry; and, speaking of that of others, how he examines it by the same decisive test: "But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power. For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." This, then, is the grand distinctive and decisive difference between the ministration of "the letter" and of "the Spirit,"—that the one is an empty sound, a mere babbling noise, and the other a life-giving power; that the one genders to bondage and death, and the other ministers grace to the hearers, and works effectually in those that believe. But if a man has never felt the power of God in his own soul, how can he minister power to others? Life and power, dew and savor, must be in a man's heart before they can be on a man's lips. For this special gift and grace of heaven there can be no substitute. Learning, abilities, and eloquence, are not to be despised or set aside, for they may be dedicated to the service of the sanctuary; but they are miserable substitutes for that live coal from off the altar with which God touches the lips of his sent servants. Paul, Augustine, and Luther, had all these three gifts in an eminent degree; nor did they make Paul a less able apostle, Augustine a less admirable expositor, or Luther a less intrepid or successful reformer. But far above and beyond all these natural gifts was that divine power which rested upon them and clothed their words with a heavenly influence to the souls of men.

Now if this, to us fundamental principle, be not deeply grafted in a minister's heart, and there kept perpetually alive by the teaching of the Spirit, he will be fully satisfied with a mere letter drift; or if for a while he seem to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints," he will almost inevitably, sooner or later, be

drawn aside from the path of experimental truth. This, then, is, or should be, the feeling of every servant of God, "I am nothing but by God's making; I have nothing but by God's giving; I know nothing but by God's teaching; I feel nothing (aright) but by God's inspiring; and I can do nothing but by God's working." The deep and daily sense of his own thorough helplessness and insufficiency, combined with a living experience of the grace and strength of Christ made perfect in his weakness, will keep him on experimental ground; and as the blessed Spirit works in him fresh and fresh discoveries of sin and salvation, misery and mercy, ruin and recovery, hell and heaven, so will he give out what is given in; "his heart will teach his mouth, and add learning (the right kind of learning) to his lips." Every trial and temptation, furnace and flood, every assault from without or within, every rising venom of indwelling sin, and every fiery dart from the artillery of hell, will only root and ground him more deeply in experimental truth, as every storm roots and grounds the oak more firmly in the soil; and every beam and ray of the Sun of righteousness, with every drop of dew upon his branch, and every shower of rain on his root, will draw him more and more out of pride and self into the light and air of heaven. Thus, night and day, winter and summer, storm and sun, cold and heat, the lowly valley's gloom and the shining mountain top, all combine in grace, as in creation, to carry on God's work, and strengthen and ripen the tree of his right hand planting in the church of God.

As long as a man is thus graciously dealt with, he will be held on experimental ground; and his soul being kept alive by the power of God, and he being *in* the things of which he speaks, a life, power, and freshness will accompany his word; and this will not only commend itself to the conscience of the family of God, but be conveyed with a sweetness and savor to their hearts. But let a minister of truth get into a smooth and easy path, let sin cease to vex him, Satan to plague him, the world to hate him, professors to slander him, and God to bless him, his preaching, though still on the same basis, and still dealing outwardly with the same things, from inevitable necessity will get dull and dry. This leanness of spirit and barrenness of ministry, unless wonderfully puffed up by pride and conceit, he will soon begin himself to feel. He becomes sensible by degrees of a sameness in his preaching. The supply in the tank being so often drawn upon and not fed again and again with a rising spring, gets lower and lower, and the water more vapid and tasteless, till it seems almost to breed corruption and death in himself and the hearers. Now here is the turning point with him, whether he is all his days to be to the church of God an old, useless, worn out rain-water butt, or a flowing brook. If left still unexercised, he will soon have little else but staves and hoops; if God turn his hand a second time, and once more deal graciously with him, living water will again flow. But assume the former case. Let the rod and the kiss, the frown and the smile, the affliction and the consolation, the trial and the deliverance be alike suspended; let the

Lord for his own wise purposes leave him to settle on his lees; let him remain cold, barren, and dry in his soul, such will be his ministry; and those divine realities in living experience which he once found sweetness in declaring and the people in hearing, now becoming dead and lifeless to him, it comes to this point, that either he must keep going over the same ground over and over again, till, like a tethered ass, his teeth and hoofs have worn out every blade of grass, or he must break his tether and get something new, for his leanness rises up in his face, and his own barrenness is evidently starving the people. Some men, either too blind to see it, too dead to feel it, or too proud to confess it, resolutely hold on to the same ground. Lord's day after Lord's day, there is the same dead dry prayer and the same dead dry sermon. Not only is the same old tale told, but in almost the same words, with nothing new but the text. Now this may be called preaching experience, and so in a sense it is; but it is a preaching which beggars the soul; and we do believe that much of the lean and miserable state of many experimental churches is owing to this feeding them on the picked and gnawed bones and the old dry crusts of a dead, worn-out experience. No wonder that such preaching as this is despised, and that persons are prejudiced against experimental preaching, when this is considered experimental. But this no more resembles real experimental preaching than the manna which bred worms and stank resembled the manna which fell with the morning dew, or the dry and mouldy bread of the Gibeonites was like the cake baked by the angel for Elijah, or their old shoes and clouted were the same as the shoes of iron and brass which God puts on the feet of his people.

Many mistakes are made on this point. There is a creed of experience, as there is a creed of doctrine, which may be learnt exactly in the same dead and dry way; there are certain generally recognised and almost consecrated terms, a set of current phrases, which, having been used in time past by real experimental ministers, have been handed down as a religious Shibboleth, a ministerial stock in trade; and he that has learnt this key and obtained these pass-words, comes forward as an experimental servant of God, and puts himself at once, or is put by others, on the roll of the divinely-sent ambassadors of heaven. But as a man does not become the Queen's ambassador to the Court of Austria because he can speak a little German, nor to the Court of France because he can gabble a little French, so it is not a set of experimental phrases which makes a man an ambassador from the King of kings to the Court of Zion.

But many weak, timid children of God cannot see through words into things, and though sensible of increasing deadness and barrenness under the ministry of such men, take all the blame to themselves, reverencing, with almost abject superstition, the minister, because he is a minister, and believing his words must be words of grace because they are pronounced in a certain way, and are so familiar to their ears that they have become consecrated in their eyes with a kind of religious value.

But words at best are but words; and unless there be something

more than word, however consistent it be with truth, such a ministry will but make empty the soul of the hungry and cause the drink of the thirsty to fail.

But it is hard to come down from the pulpit to their fit place—the pew; thus they still keep on preaching and still maintain the name and credit of being experimental ministers; and highly offended they would be if told they were more of a burden than a benefit to the church of God, and rather plundered than fed the flock of slaughter.

Perceiving this evil, seeing how dead and dry a thing experimental preaching has much become, and observing how lean and impoverished the church of God gets through it, others long to break through the narrow circle in which they have already walked. "We want," say they, "more enlarged views of God's word: Why should we be ever treading the narrow circle of doubts and fears, comforts and blessings? Why be ever tracing out marks of grace, and talking just as our poor old minister used to talk in years gone by? Why not break forth into something different from what we have heard over and over again till we are weary of the very name of experience?" Now just as a man is in this state of mind, not held down to experimental things by inward trials, but weary and ashamed of his own leanness and the leanness of others, the letter of God's word seems to open a door out of this worn-out pasture. Some new view of doctrine, or some light upon prophecy, or some fresh discovery, as it appears, of church government, or some insight into the precept, or some entrance into the types and figures of the Mosaic dispensation,—it matters not what it is, but a new light seems to break in on his mind. His views, once so narrow and contracted, become enlarged; he reads and studies the Scripture and seems to gather with every reading more and more knowledge. Nay, the light which thus breaks in, as he thinks, on his mind, is attended with a power which he had not for some time felt. His zeal is kindled, his mouth opened, or his pen seized, and he cannot but give vent to his views and feelings.

This new view of doctrine may be but a revived heresy or a long-exploded error; his light upon prophecy may be merely borrowed from books and authors, or gathered up by himself from a comparison of parallel passages, without one word got on his knees or dropped into his soul; his principles of church government may be altogether visionary and impracticable; and his insight into types and figures partly stolen and partly fanciful; or to put it in the most favorable light, all his views may be quite sound and in accordance with the letter of Scripture. But whatever they be, they are not wrought into his soul by the power of God; they are not *burnt* into him in the furnace; they are not made his own by the teaching of the blessed Spirit; they are not revealed and applied to his heart, and thus made part and parcel of a living experience; nor are they received in much affliction with joy of the Holy Ghost. At best they are but opinions floating in the brain, views presented to the eye of an intellectual religion scanning the Scriptures as a map-

maker or a landscape painter scans the features of an outstretched tract of country; or a theory gathered from the word, much as a student of history gathers up facts from chronicles and gazettes, and welds them into a compact system of political narrative.

Why, the remedy is worse than the disease. Whilst on experimental ground, he was so far safe, that if he had but little to say, that little was sound. He could coast along the bays and headlands, and knew something about where he was, though the voyage did not reach very far, and was but a going from port to port along the shore. But now he has left all his old landmarks and well-known buoys and boldly pushed out to sea, sailing up and down the letter of the word, far, far away from the ancient track. A man thus suddenly starting forward, may think himself wonderfully advanced, a very giant compared with his former dwarfish stature and the stunted forms of others. But he has made a sad mistake in this matter. Letter is not Spirit, knowledge is not grace, light is not experience, word is not power, head is not heart, parallel passages are not applied promises. One would think that a man's own conscience would convince him that all this suddenly-acquired knowledge lacks that sacred dew and heavenly unction which ever accompany the teaching of the Spirit, and that it is too rapid to be real. One would think that a man possessed of godly fear, instead of sailing along in this confident way on the letter of the word, with flowing sheet and outstretched sail, would rather tremble at every rising cloud lest it forebode a storm that might sink his ship, and shrink from the approach of every man-of-war, lest as an unlicensed sea rover and pirate, he should be summarily strung up at the yard-arm.

We speak of what we know and have felt, and are not writing upon these matters in the dark or at a distance. Did our conscience permit, we could sail along with the best of these sea rovers, hoist as high a mast, and spread as wide a sail; but we have a silent monitor within which keeps us on experimental ground—the only ground on which man or minister, preacher or writer, can safely keep. We could, if we were so minded, sail along with them on the sea of unfulfilled prophecy, explain the historical meaning of the Scriptures, fire shot and shell at all doubt or fear, dive into the mystical signification of type and figure, proverb and parable, heap text upon text and parallel passage upon passage, and skim over the surface of the letter like a revenue cutter. A very few minutes would suffice to give us all their faith and all their confidence; for we well know the men and their communication. But what would conscience say within, and what should we feel to stand up before the church of God in Saul's armor? Could we get it on, like David we should soon gladly put it off, and come to the weapons we can handle, and of which we have proved the efficacy—the sling and the stone, and the shepherd's simple garb. We look, then, at all this heap of words, and we put it at its right figure—0. A cipher will sum up its full value. Men may preach, and write, and set off their enlarged views with appeal after appeal to the written word; text after text may stud their writings, as dew drops the

grass, but if they have not learnt what they preach and write in the furnace of affliction, and by the teaching of the Spirit, all such knowledge is worthless and vain. They may think or call it what they please, but we unhesitatingly say, unless learnt in the path of tribulation and through the power of God in their soul, Ichabod is its name and Tekel its value. Bring, then, before us what you may, unless it be stamped by the power of God, we may boldly say, This is not religion; this is not gracious experience; this is not tasting and handling the word of life; nor is it a part of "the secret of the Lord," which is "with those that fear him." "But," say they, "we got quite tired of experimental preaching." Very likely. "And we saw that the people were getting tired of it too." More likely still; that is, of *your* preaching. "And now we are all life." Most likely of all as regards yourself; though we doubt whether the people of God are as lively under your new preaching as you.

But this is no proof that the thing is of God. Ranters are lively; Mormonites are lively; and Sisters of Mercy and fresh-cloistered nuns are lively. Such is the very constitution of the human mind, that all new things sensibly affect it; and therefore new views in religion electrify it out of torpor and dulness. But this is merely a stirring up of the animal spirits, an effect produced upon the mind, the intellectual principle, as distinct from the gracious and spiritual principle. "Ah! but we preach with more power than we did; our hearts are more in it, and we are more earnest and warm." Now, suppose that you had been converted to Popery. Would not there have been the same earnestness, the same fixing of the mind on eternal things, the same warmth, and zeal, and fervor? Most probably much more; but we mention this extreme case to show the effect that any change of views produces on the mind. We learnt a lesson on this subject about 25 years ago which has been of wonderful service to us. It was just at the time when Irvingism broke out with its gifts of tongues, miracles, &c.; and an intimate friend of ours, then a leader and preacher of name and fame, fell headlong into it. He had gone to London, witnessed what were called "the manifestations" in Mr. Irving's chapel, and came home as confirmed a believer in the divine origin of these things as ever Irving had. But the most striking part was the visible effect produced upon him by the change. Praying and fasting day after day, reading the Scriptures incessantly, preaching and visiting the sick continually, and a most unwearied striving after inward and outward holiness, so wrought upon his mind and body, that the poor man in a few weeks was but the ghost of himself.* And what produced all this? What he him-

* When he was in this state of mind he went to his sister-in-law, a person advanced in middle life, who had been confined to her bed for some years, knelt down by her bed-side, prayed, rose from his knees, and turning to her, said, "Mary, get up." And in truth Mary did get up, and never went to bed again, except as other people do when bed-time comes. The doctors indeed had said all along that nervousness was Mary's chief complaint; and her appearance—none of the thinnest, for we knew her well, and have often visited her when so confined—showed she had no serious disease. But after a few weeks, as this miracle succeeded, another was attempted upon a poor

self after awhile renounced and denounced as a delusion of Satan. Thus being an eye witness of what a wonderful effect new views can produce, it gave us an insight into natural religion and the deceptiveness of mere zeal, fervor, and fleshly holiness, which has helped us to read some enigmas in the professing world which might otherwise have puzzled us to decipher.

The two ministers, the titles of whose pamphlets we have given at the head of this article, have recently abandoned the views and principles held by the Particular Baptist churches, and have adopted wholly or in part those professed by the Plymouth Brethren.

Now, we do not mean to say that the process which we have sketched out as usually that undergone by those who abandon experimental ground is applicable to those two individuals; at least, thus much we can say, that it is not intended to apply personally to them, nor were they in our eye when we traced the progress of the mind from truth to error. Not knowing what their mind has passed through, and being ignorant what their preaching now is, except so far as we presume it agrees with their writings, we should be but libelling individuals were we to present the above sketch as a representation of them. We take higher, purer, and safer ground in delineating *characters* as distinct from *persons*, and sketching the history of a mind instead of the history of a man. All that we have before us is this simple fact, that A. or B. has abandoned experience for the letter. This to us is clear, for the system of the Plymouth Brethren is nothing but the letter of Scripture, tacitly if not openly ignoring, setting aside, or denying the main branches of gracious experience. It matters not to us who A. and B. are. They may live in England or New Zealand; be men of influence or obscure individuals. We have to account for the fact of their adopting these views after professing others more in accordance with the experience of the saints. Thus, without a tinge of personality or one unkind reflection upon the individuals themselves, we, for the benefit of our readers who might be, perhaps, perplexed with this change of views, have endeavored to bring before them the result of our own observation without and within, what we have seen in the churches, what we have felt in our own mind, and the conclusions to which we have come. We have not been an inattentive observer of the churches of truth for now many years, nor is this the first time that men of whom we hoped well have changed their views. But we have taken notice of this,—that such men's preaching is ever after a blighted bough to the church of God; that all power, dew, and savor, are thenceforward dried up in their preaching; and that, whatever they may be to others, the tried and tempted, the distressed and exercised, as well as the favored and blessed,—in a word, the choicest of the flock, can hear them no

young girl dying of consumption, and said to be in a very happy state of mind. Consumption, however, baffled the attempted miracle, and the young woman, who was rather distressed than elated by the endeavor to raise her to health, soon passed out of time into eternity.

more. And we have further observed, that the wider they have sailed on the letter without the power, the farther they have sailed from the experience of the saints, till at last they have sailed not only out of their sight, but out of their affections, mingled and lost, as it were, in the general fleet.

But if our remarks on these points are considered personal, may we not say, "Is there not a cause?" Is not truth a sacred deposit, which is to be scrupulously guarded from all invasion? And if we have any influence with the churches; if any individuals look to us for a word of counsel to help them in their perplexity, as we know is the case in this instance, are we to remain silent for fear of being considered personal, and shrink from the post of duty lest we pain individual feelings? Over and over again has truth been sacrificed to these considerations, as if it were better to fail in faithfulness to God than in tenderness to man. We are most jealous of any departure from experimental truth, and especially when those who did seem to run well turn aside from the Spirit to the letter. They may seem to themselves wonderfully grown and advanced, but thenceforward, as regards the church of God, their ministry is a blank, if not worse. Their enlarged views, as they consider them—an enlargement, by the way, of the head, not of the heart—their new doctrines, which they seek to enforce by text after text; their labored attempts to explain the reasons of their alteration; the totally different class of people, chiefly the young and the inexperienced female portion of the flock, mere boys and girls as regards age naturally and spiritually, whom their preaching suits; the barrenness and death which the tried and tempted are sensible of under their ministry; with the grief and sorrow of the experienced saints of God at the change which has come upon the preaching and the place, with all the confusion arising therefrom; all these circumstances combined throw a people into the greatest perplexity where the minister abandons what he once so zealously held, and pulls down what he once labored to build up.

We have come forward then to explain, without reference to individuals, how men are often drawn aside, and to beseech the churches not to be entangled in the same snare, but to hold on to the experimental truth of God, for it is our life, and if we abandon it for the bare letter of the word, we let go our faith, our hope, our all.

If from soul-experience, as the matter has been wrought into our conscience, we have come to certain conclusions, may we not impartially lay them before our readers as words of caution and counsel, without an atom of personal feeling against individuals, one of whom we scarcely know even by name?

If our words, then, have any weight or influence, we would affectionately say, Churches of experimental truth; ministers, deacons, and members in those churches; and you that fear God in the congregation, abide by the truth of God, in the power and experience of it on your souls. Be not moved by the example or influence of any man to depart from the things you have tasted, felt, and handled for yourselves. Keep fast and firm to what God has sealed on your con-

sciences. Be your experience little or much, keep it as your most precious treasure; and let no mere opinions or notions draw you from the safe, firm, solid ground on which the blessed Spirit has placed you, to embark on an unknown sea, to be tossed with every wind and wave of doctrine.

Though on a former occasion ("Gospel Standard" for 1842, page 77,) we entered somewhat fully into the views of the Plymouth Brethren, yet we feel disposed in our next number to make a few remarks on some of the distinctive features of the pamphlets at the head of the present article.

For the most part, when we come to deal with God about forgiveness, we hang in every briar of disputing quarrelsome unbelief. This or that circumstance of aggravation, this or that unparalleled particular, bereaves us of our confidence. Want of a due consideration of him with whom we have to do, measuring him by that line of our own imaginations, bringing him down unto our thoughts and our ways, is the cause of all our disquietments. Because we find it hard to forgive our pence, we think he cannot forgive talents.—*Owen*.

As we are altogether passive in the first receiving of the new birth, or spiritual life, so are we in all the after-stages for the preservation of the life. He that is the Resurrection to quicken, is the Source also to keep alive. Hence Christ is divinely suited for saint and sinner; for the sinner to quicken, and for the saint which in time past has been quickened, to keep alive. Christ himself is the resurrection and the life of both; and it is by his holy word and by his Holy Spirit that the souls of the redeemed are spiritually fed and nourished day by day.—*Hawker*.

Almost every remarkable, good man who had appeared in the world, had prefigured the Redeemer and his work. All the noted offices, officers, judges, kings, priests, prophets, Nethinims, and Nazarites among the Jews, and all the ceremonies of their worship, and most of their civil laws, and even their country and capital, were prefigurations of Christ or his redemption. For about 1800 years the family of Jacob had been a people typical in manifold respects. Their deliverance from the Canaanites; from famine; from their Egyptian bondage; from their oppressors under their judges and Saul; from the ravages of Shishak; from destruction by the heathen allies under Jehoshaphat; from Sennacherib and the Assyrians; from Babylon; from the persecution and ravages of Antiochus Epiphanes; nay, the deliverances of David from Saul and Absalom; of the infant Joash from Athaliah; of Hezekiah, when like to die childless, with respect to Manasseh, Christ's ancestor; the preservation of the reduced family of David after their return from Babylon, were all typical, and means of introducing Christ and his redemption. The introduction of Gentile sinners, such as Tamar, Rahab, and Ruth, among the ancestors of Christ, and every one proselyted to the Jewish religion, were prefiguring earnest of the calling of the Gentiles into the gospel church.—*John Brown*.

POETRY.

ALMIGHTY GRACE.

"Crying, Grace, grace, unto it."—(Zech. iii. 7.)

If everlasting Love,
Stoop not to meet my case,
And from his throne above
Withhold his sovereign grace,
Then in sin's dungeon I must dwell,
And sink into the lowest hell.

If Mercy, rich and free,
Ope not the prison door,
Nor bring help to me,
A captive, vile and poor,
A vassal still I must remain,
And groan beneath my galling chain.

If Grace refuse to help,
All other aid is vain,
Still 'neath my load of guilt,
Of sorrow, sin, and pain,
In Kedar's black, uncomely tent,
On ashes must my life be spent.

How I've tried to wash,
And thought me ne'er so clean!
But only daub'd my flesh
With miry clay obscene.
And now I find nought can erase
Those leopard spots, but mighty grace.

My agony of mind
And misery who can tell,
When in myself I find
The seeds of death and hell.
Can th' Ethiopian change his face?
If so, I need not mighty grace.

Thou precious sovereign grace,
O pick me up, I cry;
Turn not away thy face,
But come just where I lie.
Convinced I am, such a dread case
Nothing can meet but mighty grace.

How unbelief, my foe,
Holds me with iron grasp;
It laugheth at my woe,
And holds me still more fast.
Say what can reach this desperate case;
Can aught but free, almighty grace?

Isleworth, Oct. 18th, 1854.

O Saviour, hear my cry;
My bitter groans and tears!
O help me, ere I die!
O stay my trembling fears!
Send forth some word to meet my case,
That nought can reach but mighty
grace.

For I am tied and bound
Firm by the power of sin;
Nought but a mass of wounds,
And leprosy within,
A running sore, a desperate case,
That nought can heal but mighty
grace.

O how my spirit longs
To see a smiling God,
To praise him with my tongue,
And bless him for the blood
That cleanseth every desperate case,
The laver of almighty grace!

Come in thou victor great,
The mighty conquest gain;
Thou doest all things right;
Take thy great power and reign;
For I desire to see thy face,
And to be saved by mighty grace.

O may one little ray
Of hope begin to dawn,
The earnest of a day,
Oped by a glorious morn!
And should I see thee face to face,
I'll shout, "'Twas grace, almighty
grace."

May Zion shout and sing,
And lift her standard high;
Each subject of her King,
Shall gain the victory.
The crowning stone of Adam's race,
Shall be brought home with shouts of
grace.

LOUISA.

I know that I and my friends get on, or we should not meet with so many crosses, and so much tribulation; and it is as true that God has renewed a right spirit within us, or else the devil, the world, heretics, hypocrites, carnal Pharisees, and letter preachers, would not show such desperate envy, hatred, and malice, as they do. Enmity is to them an "evident token of perdition;" and to be hated of such an evident token "of salvation, and that of God."—*Huntington.*

THE GOSPEL STANDARD.

MATT. V. 6; 2 TIM. I. 9; ROM. XI. 7; ACTS VIII. 37, 38; MATT. XXVIII. 19.

No. 234.

JUNE, 1855.

VOL. XXI.

SELF-JUDGMENT.

“For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.”—(2 Cor. xi. 31, 32.)

“For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.”—Here we perceive a judgment to which the saints, and only the saints, are amenable; a judgment belonging solely to this life, exercised by Christ, who is the Judge. To him the church is accountable; every believer is responsible to him for his thoughts, words, and works. Nothing escapes his notice. He walks “in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;” “his eyes are as a flame of fire;” “before him all things are naked and opened;” and he can still say to each and all, “I know thy works.” *This* tribunal is always set; the books always open; from it no believer can altogether escape. Not that the Lord is strict to mark iniquity, or rigorous to punish; if he were, “O Lord, who should stand?” The Lord Jesus has no haste to correct his children; he says, he does it not “from his heart.” And, indeed, the words above contain a most gracious assurance of deliverance from correction, even though they have offended. They seem to say, indeed, that the Lord is slow to chasten, though his children be so faulty. His love to them is such, that not only shall they be delivered from all penal inflictions for sin, (for these he has fully borne for them,) but he would also show them how to avoid his corrections. There is something, therefore, exceedingly gracious in this notice given to the church, “If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged,” tending to confirm our confidence in our Lord, and in his amazing condescension and tenderness. The believer knows he may trust in Jesus implicitly, and confide in him entirely. When the storm and tempest rage the most furiously, he may run into his hiding-place, and find sweet repose from the world, the flesh, and the devil, for “the name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and is safe.”

Now if ever there was a time when this confidence could be shaken, it would be when the saint has sinned; but even then he may, and must, rest his soul on Jesus. Some of the Lord's children, when overtaken in a fault, immediately expect correction at his hands, and through fear of it walk heavily; but the passage above just meets their case. It is a law of our great High Priest, and also our Judge, that “if we would judge ourselves, we should not

be judged;" that is, if we note when we have offended, and go directly to the Judge condemning ourselves, and confessing it to him, he will pardon and pass it by. Wonderful condescension! He will allow the believer to be his own judge. What a proof that the Spirit is within him; yea, Christ himself, the Hope of Glory! Having judged himself, and brought in the verdict of guilty, the believer will feel the paramount necessity of getting the blood sprinkled afresh upon him, and of turning out of the wrong path; and he is thus brought to the point, only more readily and speedily, to which chastening would have brought him. It is, if one might so speak, a nearer and easier way back into the right path; for the Lord only wishes us to walk with him, enjoying his presence and his smiles; and when we turn aside though frailty, the sooner we come back the better. It is not he who would keep us at a distance. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins."

But alas! many walk so carelessly, "at all adventures with God," that they offend, and are not aware of it. They are out of the way, and know it not. They are plainly, therefore, not in a capacity to judge themselves; and as sin must not be on a believer unknown and unconfessed, the good Lord will go after the careless one, and bring him into judgment. He will judge him, since he would not judge himself. But (if such an expression might be used) he would much rather his people should judge themselves. He would have them live so that he might always be present with them; and they might have their Lord continually, if, as soon as they sinned, they detected it and acknowledged it; then they would cease to be guilty, and walking thus in the light, as he is in the light, the fellowship should not be broken, for the blood should "cleanse them from all sin." The believer, thus cleansed and restored to obedience, escapes the chastening, for the end of the chastening is amendment; and if he has arrived at the latter, what need is there of the former? And O how like is this to our Lord! and how kind of him to make it so plain to us! Should we not at least learn thus much from the words,—if he is so graciously desirous to chasten, how very careful should be our walk with him?

Now this was not the case with these Corinthians; they sinned again and again, and seemed to take no account of it. They were carnal; there was among them envying, and strife, and division; still they judged not themselves. The Lord, who is slow to anger, waited long, and they only went further and further astray, till at last, in the abuse of his supper, he was compelled to be the Judge. Perhaps Peter's was a case like the former; he judged himself. His bitter tears told of his guilt and his sorrow, and not a word of upbraiding does he hear. The very angels have a special message for him: "Tell his disciples and Peter, that he is risen," &c. And our Lord was "seen of Cephas, then of the twelve." "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared unto Simon."

Note, the words *guilt* and *guilty*, in the above, have nothing what-

ever to do with the believer's state before God; for in Christ he is as free from the imputation of sin as the risen Surety. But if the washed one offend in neglect to wash his feet, he will bring the sense of guilt into his conscience, which may be so strong as to make him forget he has been purged from his old sins.

The Lord vouchsafes us tender consciences, and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, to which we are elected.

"But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."—In the former words we plainly see that if believers will judge themselves, they will escape correction; so that the conclusion is plain, when corrected, they have failed to do this. It is a rule of Christ's gracious kingdom, that when his children discover their offences, and come and confess them to the Lord, he forgives them at once, and spares the rod; but it is equally a rule of his kingdom, that when a child offends, and confesses not his fault, the Lord will call him to account, and proceed to punish. Then confession comes too late; in fact, it loses the very nature of confession. If a parent says to his child, "I saw your disobedience," the child's confession is only forced; he cannot deny the fact. And so when the Lord Jesus has waited to be gracious, and his erring child has not come, the Lord convicts him, and he is guilty.

"When we are judged of the Lord, we are chastened." He does not always tell us our fault first; we are so selfish and unwilling to suffer, that we are willing then to search ourselves, and see wherefore this evil is upon us. Having sinned and failed to confess, we are laid open to his displeasure; to escape then is hopeless. O the bitterness of provoking him to punish us, our best Friend! that One who poured out his life's blood for us; who endured the sharpest inflictions of justice to screen us; him whose heart is love, and on the sense of whose love all our happiness depends! Yet we forfeit all, and compel him to restrain his lovely smile, put on instead a frown, take the rod in his hand, and chasten us for our folly. Then we cannot escape; smite he will. How long, and how much, we must leave to him. We are completely in his hands; his power over us is supreme, entire; resistance is vain, and will certainly increase the affliction. There is nothing to be done, but humbly to lie down before him, and submit to his will. He may punish severely; he often does. He may punish long; and there is no promise that it shall not be so. The suffering child has but one resource, but one door of hope; it is the love, the exquisite, surpassing love of him who is chastening. On that he throws himself, as Quarles says,

"I turn from Lord to Jesus;
From thyself to thee.

Yes, there is none other. He who inflicts the pain can withdraw his hand; he who has wounded, can bind up; he who has laid us in the dust by his frown, can raise up by his smile. Yes, he can forgive; he can restore; he can heal. "He will not always chide;" he will "turn again," perhaps meaning he will relent, as the parent

when he has punished the child; never is his heart so soft as then. So our Jesus: "Since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord." This is a mercy, an infinite mercy, that we are in the hands of one so tender, so loving, who does not like to put us to pain, who does it unwillingly, and longs to restore us to favor. But there is a still greater mercy in the reason assigned for correction; it is "that we should not be condemned with the world." Ah! it is enough to make one tremble to think of the ungodly, who, never having been chastened here, will hereafter bear the full punishment of all their offences. But it is not so with us; thanks be to God, we are judged here, not there; in this world, not in the next. And it is because we shall be acquitted hereafter, that Christ our Lord must of necessity notice our offences here: "You only have I known," &c. The wicked go free, their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them, for this reason,—their reckoning is future, ours is present.

Let us bless the Lord for his kind care of us, and for not suffering us to take our own way. Let us not rebel against his loving discipline, but thank him for being so particular with us, (2 Cor. x. 5,) seeing that his dealing points to our high destiny, and issues in our everlasting blessedness, to the praise of the glory of his grace.

A SERVANT OF THE CHURCH.

Think how often there has been but a step between you and death, and how suddenly God has sometimes interposed to set you in safety, even before you apprehended your danger. Think of those chambers of illness in which you have been confined, and from whence, perhaps, you once thought you should go forth no more, but said with Hezekiah, in the cutting off of your days, "I shall go to the gates of the grave; I am deprived of the residue of my years." (Isa. xxxviii. 10.) God has, it may be, since that time added many years to your life, and you know not how many may be in reserve, or how much usefulness and happiness may attend each. Survey your circumstances in relative life; how many kind friends are surrounding you daily, and studying how they may contribute to your comfort. Reflect on those remarkable circumstances in providence which occasioned the knitting of some bonds of this kind, which, next to those which join your soul to God, you number among the happiest. And forget not in how many instances, when these dear lives have been threatened, lives perhaps more sensibly dear than your own, God has given them back from the borders of the grave, and so added new endearments, arising from that tender circumstance, to all your after converse with them. Nor forget in how gracious a manner he has supported some others in their last moments, and enabled them to leave behind a sweet odour, which has embalmed their memories, revived you when ready to faint under the sorrows of the first separation, and on the whole made even the recollection of their death delightful.—*Doddridge.*

LETTERS BY ONE WHO HAS BEEN IN THE
FURNACE.—I.

Dear A.,—You doubtless will be surprised that so humble and unworthy an individual as myself should attempt to address you. It is however by no means uncongenial with my feelings, though under a deep sense of my utter inability to do so suitably, but “Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens;” for thou seest every secret and hidden thing, and thou knowest thy handmaid altogether, and searchest all the hearts of the children of men. O minister to her present necessities, though the unworthiest of thy creatures whom thou hast brought up from the pit of corruption, and saved from the lowest hell, and raised from the gates of the grave, to tell her fellow-sinners that thou savest to the uttermost. However low they may be sunk in the mire, thine arm can reach them, and thy salvation set them up on high. Breathe, Holy Comforter! instruct, Holy Teacher! or we shall read and write in vain.

Dear A., you lately desired to know more of *yourself*. But O you little thought what the horrifying sight and awful realisation of evil which the granting of such a desire would bring! Perhaps you hoped for more solid assurances that you were *right* by having your heart turned inside out. But verily such a laying open of ourselves to ourselves makes all appear dreadfully *wrong*. Perhaps you thought that the painful sight would soften you into tears of penitence, and the humbling view lay you gently down in the dust of self-abasement, and that thus, as a polluted sinner, you should weep and love at the dear Redeemer’s feet. But ah! these blessed feelings are more from the joys of salvation than the dark discoveries of guilt; more in being found, than feeling we are lost. To know yourself and what your sin is, methinks you could not bear to the full extent. The corruption of fallen humanity is so offensive, its deceptiveness so deep, its outrage against Omnipotence so daring, and its callousness under all so impenetrable, that surely the fullest sense of it must crush finite worms into despair, and drive them out of existence. But mark, it would never bring them to the mercy seat; it would not fill them with prayer, and hope, and humble cries for pardon. The terrible majesty and holiness of the Being sinned against, and the feeling of his fearful and dreadful power and justice, would strike the soul to a farther and farther distance from him; not in the *softness* of contrition, but in the *hardening* of hopelessness. I do humbly believe, that as would be the effect of discovering the whole depth of our depravity in the full light of Jehovah’s strict holiness, such will be the effect, in a lesser degree, as we discover some of that depravity by some rays of that searching light; for it is “light that maketh manifest.” As Adam, when he discovered his nakedness, did not run to God, but from him; so it is with every soul of man; and so it seems with you; for you say that under insensibility, hardness, and carelessness, you are not driven to the throne of grace, but the contrary. Sin does not bring forth *life*; but sin, when it is

finished, "bringeth forth *death*," and as it works, produces death-
liness of feeling. All do not learn the mystery of iniquity to the
same extent; but it is decreed, every soul that is saved shall feel
something of its painful experience, something of what they are
saved from and out of, as well as what they are saved unto. In
learning this they find a strange work; in this lesson many hard
sayings which they can hardly bear. They have read that the
"heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;" and
"that he who trusts in his own heart, is a fool." But they find it a
very different thing to feel the deceivableness of unrighteousness
work within, and to be brought off from trusting the heart, because
they feel its treachery and vileness. They have *confessed* they were
sinners, and believed it; but to *feel* sin working distance, darkness,
coldness, and hardness, is experimental proof of sinnership, which
feels more like *destruction* than *salvation*, and seems very far from
drawing them to God. Should this present year of your life be
chiefly spent under this dark discipline, you will often feel that
if the blessing *is* coming, it is indeed "cross handed;" and that if
prayer is being answered, it is truly by most unexpected con-
trarieties. Nevertheless, as the stone cast out of the mountain
without hands must destroy all other kingdoms, that it may fill the
whole earth, so must this same wondrous stone break in pieces in
our souls the iron, brass, clay, the silver, and the gold, (Dan. ii. 34,
35,) things that we have counted refuse, and things that we have
held in estimation; all that is ours must come forth to destruction
that we may be saved, and Christ to us "all in all." He cannot fill
us while we are filled, or half filled, with anything else, seem it bad-
ness or goodness; whatever form it may assume, be it not Christ,
it is nought, and is a work of the flesh or the devil. But for this pur-
pose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the work
of the devil. (1 John iii. 8.) He comes to the renewed soul as a "re-
finer's fire and as fuller's soap," but who may "abide the day of his
coming?" (Mal. iii. 2.) None but those whom he has created anew
in himself. All that is of our flesh shall be as stubble before him,
and we need not fear its destruction, for it will ever do wickedly.
And bless his holy name, he will take care of the jewel, the precious
life which he has implanted in the soul, while he dealt thus roughly
with our deeds of darkness. He is only bringing us to what we
often talk about,—to be nothing, that he may be all in all, and that
we may glory in him alone.

You say, how much of self you see working in your past life.
You see truly, but you see not half the abominations of this image
that "provoketh to jealousy." I have been here before you, and I
speak from experience; and though turned again and again to see
greater abominations of self, which were to issue in the "lifting up
of Jesus on high" in my soul, into which he came like the ark into
Dagon's temple, (1 Sam. v. 4,) when his powerful presence caused
the hateful self which I had set up to fall prostrate and lose its
hands and feet, so that now it is good for nothing, and can neither
work nor walk, though it would often pretend. As Delilah said to

Samson, "The Philistines be upon thee;" so would I say to this marring, proud, and hateful self, "The power of Christ's death be ever upon thee." (2 Cor. iv. 10.) Nothing else will ever bring it down; and as the Holy Spirit first leads us through the "chambers of imagery" and reveals the hidden things of our own darkness, so does he afterwards reveal Christ and give us *victory* through him. The Holy Spirit breathes upon our fancied godliness (Isa. xl. 6, 7) to make it wither; so is it that the beauty of the Lord our God (Ps. xc. 17) may be upon us, that we may understand those sweet words, "Ye are complete in him," and that "he that glorieth may glory in the Lord."

You complain that the Bible which you once enjoyed is now to you a sealed book. May not this be another answer to know, or to your desire to know, more of *yourself*? For you find that though yourself may read the word, quote the word, and have some judgment and light in the word, yet you cannot find the word, and eat it, and make it the joy and rejoicing of your soul. Yourself cannot unlock the secrets contained therein, cannot "receive the sincere milk of the word, so that ye may grow thereby," or eat the strong meats when you please. May you not hereby be learning that you are ignorant in divine things, and that Christ must be your Wisdom? that you are powerless, and that he must be the power of God unto you for salvation and instruction in righteousness? May not the Holy Spirit be going forth in your soul like the voice of John in the wilderness, to "prepare the way of the Lord" before him, and to make straight in your seemingly desert heart a highway for our God? And may he not, ere long, say to you with almighty power, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world?" When by faith you behold Jesus as your Surety and Saviour standing in your law place, bearing your sin and guilt, and delivering your soul from punishment, by being himself your ransom, then will your heart dissolve, and tears of thankfulness flow. Having sweet forgiveness, you will love him much, and desire to "know no will but his." "Old things will pass away, and all things become new," and you will become a new creature in a new world, whilst his gracious presence remains with you.

May it please the Lord that your painful exercise may end in this glorious issue. There are those now triumphing in Christ who have travelled mournfully through this wilderness of self before you, and found it a land of darkness and drought and the shadow of death, and thought whilst in it that it was a land which none of the Lord's living ones ever passed through. But he turned for them the shadows of death into the morning. May he also do a sure work in your soul, and give you feelingly to say, "Behold, for peace I had great bitterness; but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption, for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back." (Isa. xxxviii. 17.)

Your letter made me weep well, knowing the bitterness of the "wormwood and the gall." "My soul hath thou still in remembrance, and is humbled in me." I had hoped that the Lord was

going to bring you forth to the light, that you might behold his righteousness. I have not come unto you with smooth things, but having spread yours before the Lord, who "knoweth the end from the beginning." (Isa. xxxvii. 4.) Such as I have, give I unto thee. If he said it, may he bless it to your soul's benefit, and he shall have the glory; if not, may my unworthy self be pardoned.

I remain, yours ever affectionately,

Jan. 20th, 1850.

ONE WHO HAS BEEN IN THE
FURNACE.

CAST DOWN, BUT NOT DESTROYED.

My dear Sister in the everlasting covenant,—I am truly sorry for you, but I know all will yet be well, though I know it is no good for me to tell you that nothing I can say or do will do you any real good unless it is applied by the power of the blessed Spirit; and it may be the Lord does not intend to make use of any instrument, lest you should think too much of them. I do feel at the present moment that the dear Lord will appear again, in his word, or he will come when you are pouring out your heart to him in prayer, and lead you once more into the secret chamber of communion. You are now shut out from communion, but not cut off from union with Christ. O no! His is everlasting love; as it is written, "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." Nothing shall ever separate us from the love of God.

We must ever remember that we are pilgrims; that "this is not our rest;" that we are in the wilderness. We shall not always have the sun to shine upon our path. There will be days of darkness; and the word of God says, "The days of darkness shall be many;" days of fasting and mourning, as well as days of feasting and rejoicing. You say it is a path you do not know. Has not the dear Lord said, "*I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not. I will lead them in paths that they have not known. I will make the darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them?*" The needy shall not always be forgotten, for the Lord has said, "When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them; I the God of Jacob will not forsake them." "He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength." These are not my words, but the words of the Lord himself; and "has he said, and will he not do it?" Yes, rest assured he will. So, then, my sister, cheer up, and with the Psalmist ask, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" I know that nothing short of a fresh manifestation of Christ to your soul will satisfy you; and I am glad it will not. I believe you will come out of this trial as gold seven times purified, but it will be in the Lord's own time and way, which will be the best time and right way; and may you have submission to lie in his hands as clay in the hands of the potter. You will

lose nothing but dross. O what could free-will do for you now? (that abominable system out of which the Lord, by his invincible power, has brought you.) Surely it would prove trash indeed to preach that to you now. All I can do for you is to entreat the Lord to appear again on your behalf. Neglect not to read the word of God; read it and entreat the Lord to "remember his word unto you, upon which he has caused your soul to hope." Surely "he will avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him." And I hope ere this you have had a clear manifestation of your interest in that precious blood "which speaketh better things than that of Abel;" for *that* called for vengeance on the offender, but the precious blood of Christ is peace-speaking blood. O may you stand in his strength, for you have proved your own to be perfect weakness. May you be enabled to say, and with confidence too, "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me." "Turn ye to the strong-hold, ye prisoners of hope." And what is this strong-hold, think you? I believe it is the blood of the everlasting covenant, that is "ordered in all things and sure." Perhaps you will say, "Yes, sure to all the seed." So it is; and you are one of that seed. I have many times thought of Berridge. He says, "A believer seldom walks steadily unless he is well pounced. Without this his zeal is scalding hot, and his boldness attended with much rashness." This may be the case with you, and to keep you from such things the Lord is humbling you and keeping you low.

Your case very much reminds me of the time I was so tried about the doctrine of election; I never could tell one half I then suffered, And then I was where I had no friend to whom I could open my mind. I believe many of them thought me mad; they could not understand me. But you have many who can sympathise with and pray with you. See how long poor — was without any clear manifestations. O that I could see you. I long to know more about your state. I feel great liberty of soul in praying for you; and I know that the Lord has thoughts of peace toward you.

I now conclude with earnest prayer to God that he would bless the reading of it to my dear sister, and restore to her the joys of his salvation, lift upon her the light of his reconciled countenance, give her peace, and enable her to rejoice in him as her God and Father in Christ. Amen.

Dec. 15th, 1854.

C. A. S.

To have a friend when all forsake us, or when none other can help—this is, indeed, making darkness light, and crooked things straight. Not only is the enemy changed, and the danger over, but Jacob is taken into the arms of infinite love. God is not content with delivering us—love will do more. It would not do merely to pardon the prodigal, but he falls upon his neck; he has not only a welcome, but all heaven is called upon to join in the acclamations of joy.—*Timothy Priestley*:

A LETTER BY THE LATE WILLIAM MOORE, CONTAINING SOME REMINISCENCES OF A SERMON PREACHED BY MR. HUNTINGTON.

Dear Friends,—Mercy and truth be multiplied.

“God knoweth I speak the truth; I lie not.” Though now it is upwards of fifteen months since, I was wading through a sea of trouble, the weight and extent of which were unknown to any but God and my weary, weak, fainting soul, which by him was supported, strengthened, and revived. As the Psalmist says, “He remembered me in my low estate, for his mercy endureth for ever.” In the morning I awoke, enjoying sweet peace in Christ Jesus; resting tranquilly in him.

During the day I was longing for the evening to hear the word preached by the Doctor, according to promise, from the latter part of his text, left Dec. 12th, “In whom ye are also builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” (Eph. ii. 22.) This I had in hope, and I was lively and cheerful in my business; but returning to it after dinner, I was suddenly seized with swimming in my head and dizziness of sight, expecting every moment to fall, and perhaps expire. But God be praised for the sweet peace and serenity of mind which attended it, with a submission to his will, whether for life or death. Here Satan failed in his aim; yet afterwards the nervous fever brought me low, and grief followed, fearing I should be unable to reach the chapel in the evening. But God was better to me than all my fears, strengthening me to walk, praying to him in much weakness, and I returned home answered in the power of the Spirit as strong in soul as a giant refreshed with new wine, glad and merry in heart, having been made joyful in God’s house of prayer, under the Doctor’s discourse, from the following words: “For an habitation of God through the Spirit.”

He reminded us of the description he gave the Wednesday evening before, of the manner in which we were builded together, showing that all the materials to build the tabernacle and temple of old were dedicated and consecrated, the gold and silver in the rough from the mines, and all were willingly offered up to the Lord. We are the spiritual material, and are sprinkled, even as was all the furniture, together with the priests’ vestments. And when all things were finished according to the pattern, prayer was made, and God came down in a cloud, took possession, and filled the house. He said the house was a type of Christ and the church in him, and the Holy Ghost the glory that filled the house; and believers are the spiritual materials with which it is built, “an habitation of God through the Spirit.” I am a witness to the truth he preached; for we willingly offer up ourselves to him, sitting at his feet, choosing that good part which shall not be taken from us. But we know it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of his own good pleasure. But further, he spake much of the grace of the Spirit typified by the five different spices put into the golden censer upon the coals; and the glory filling the house, that is, the odoriferous smoke issued forth

as the censer was waved up and down by the priest. He explained these odours thus:—

First, a sense of need, prayer in faith, hope, love, joy, praise, &c.; the fire taken from the altar, was the love of God; the sprinkling of blood set forth the atonement Christ made; and the water, regeneration by the Holy Ghost: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean." Touching the tongue with a live coal from the altar, was taking away all iniquity by the power of the Spirit, and this is the glory. So then bondage, fear, and trouble go farther and farther away; the tender Father falls upon the Son's neck and blesses him, the best robe is put on him, the ring on his hand and shoes on his feet, the fatted calf is killed, there is music and dancing, and making merry. After this he was led most sweetly into the mystery and glorious beauty of the most holy and ever-blessed Trinity taking possession of the believer's soul. And I am a feeble witness of each Person's powerful work on my heart.

But I proceed. He next showed the awful state of those that offered strange fire, a figure of all who mimic the operations of the Holy Ghost, presumptuously claiming God, but never having the Spirit's inward witness. Then he spake for the encouragement of the weak in faith, which was quite in season to me, saying, "If we could of ourselves perform God's work, there would not be a necessity for him to work in us by his Spirit; for if we could claim God ourselves alone, what cause would there be for God to send the spirit of adoption into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. And though many have done it by the Spirit and afterwards begged God's pardon for so doing, yet they have done it again, and will to the end of the chapter. God is our life and light, and "the light of the righteous rejoiceth when the lamp of the wicked shall be put out." Our lamp is God, and the oil is the love of the Spirit, ever burning in Christ, and we are to receive it from him." But when the Doctor spoke of the cloud of glory filling the house, the fire coming down from heaven and consuming the sacrifice, of that fire never going out, of the everlasting love of God in Christ, the fatted calf, the robe, the ring, the shoes, the music, and the dancing, my faith mixed with it; as it came in with power, my soul was filled with the Holy Ghost; and the love of God so overpowered me that I could not send it back again fast enough, but with secret, silent tears of joy held down my head for relief. O how I longed for a corner alone for five minutes! I cried in my heart, "Let me die." I feared at last I must burst out aloud mingled with tears of joy, and fall down helpless; yea, if the Spirit in him had not taken a turn upon bondage; fear, and trouble, God only knows what I should have done. But when he spake of the prophet Isaiah and the Song of Solomon, the name of the books set me off again; and if he had enlarged upon them, I could not have borne up under the glory of what I had in view. I was not fit to be seen for many minutes. I thought I must die. I was obliged to pray the Almighty to stay his hand. But I know if some of our letter-learned wisecracs were to see this, they would turn up their eyes like an

Arminian, and speak as grave as a Spaniard, saying, "O what enthusiasm,—mental intoxication!" But I say, blessed be the God and Father of all our mercies, and the God of all our comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulations. Would to God I might be clothed in the same enjoyment, for when I reached home I could scarce eat or drink, and I thought of the transfiguration of my dear Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and how exceedingly necessary it was for the cloud to overshadow his apostles, and also for Christ to vanish out of the sight of the disciples at Emmaus after he made himself known unto them; for it is impossible to bear it long in this world, in these mortal bodies, in such a powerful way. But when at home, the following set me off again: "The priests could not stand to minister, for the glory of the Lord filled the house." Again, "I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for another house." (We are living temples, or habitations of God.) The thoughts of the fatted calf, the sacrifice, and the silver trumpets praising and thanking the Lord, set my heart on fire of love to God and the Lamb. "It came even to pass as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord, and when they lifted up their voices with the trumpets, and cymbals, and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying, For his mercy endureth for ever; that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord; so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God." (2 Chron. v. 13, 14.) After this I went to bed, but could not sleep until I declared to my partner the kisses of my Beloved's lips, whose love is better than wine; and my soul would have (if it had been God's will) sung for evermore without intermission; but the body being weak, it could not bear it; then I slept in peace.

On Thursday morning, 20th ult., I woke with the savour of this on my mind, and approached the throne of God with joy again, lifting up holy hands without either wrath or doubting, (knowing the value by the enjoyment and loss,) addressing him as the God of love; and in the fore-part of this day at times I was obliged to ask the Lord to stay his hand, his glory was so strong in me. Not that I wished him as my Comforter to depart. O no; but that the glory might diminish or I strengthened to bear it. If not, I could not be seen in my business, but necessity urged: "Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." This was a good day, having rest from my enemies. But soon again they sneered and grudged within, putting questions. However, I knew their aim, not being altogether ignorant of Satan's devices; therefore he was ordered to get behind; he was rebuked. "Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?" The filthy garments were taken away, and change of raiment given; the best robe, the shoes, and the ring, the fatted calf was killed, and the feast was graced with music, singing, and dancing.

After the sermon Hart's 43rd hymn, beginning at the 7th verse, was sung:

"O come, thou much-expected Guest!
 Lord Jesus, quickly come!
 Enter the chamber of my breast,
 Thyself prepare the room.

"For shouldst thou stay till thou canst meet
 Reception worthy thee,
 With sinners thou wouldst never sit—
 At least I'm sure with me."

This hymn I have highly prized, and those two verses I have sung with tears of meekness and earnest desire. But now I burst out in my soul, saying, "He is come, he is come!" I therefore left the congregation to sing, while I gave vent, the waters rushing out of the windows. But the last verse (which I before left out) now again I sang with all my heart.

"When, when will that blest time arrive,
 When thou wilt kindly deign
 With me to sit, to lodge, to live;
 And never part again?"

And "Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built." (Jer. xxxi. 4.) Read Job xxii. 23; Amos ix. 11; Isa. xxv. and xliv.; Jer. xxxi.

That this may again be your happy song of praise to God, together with me, is the sincere prayer of the prodigal returned,

Dec. 9th, 1810.

W. MOORE.

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN MR. BOSTON AND MR. DAVIDSON.

Very dear Sir,—To have owned the receipt of your kind letters, three of them with Mr. Glass's pamphlet, has been often resolved. The delay has been much owing to bodily disorder, by no means to a want of due respect and gratitude. My long silence, after your writing once and again, made it appear necessary to me to say so much by way of apology. The whole of our time is divided between summer and winter, heat and cold, night and day, a constant revolution of storms and calms. There is a shining beauty in the conduct of Providence, that we are not always fed with honey, nor yet is our cup always filled with gall and wormwood. There is a wise mixture in our lot of light and shade, as there is in ourselves of flesh and spirit; there is the mixture of anger and love in the trials of the Lord's children, not the anger of an enemy intending ruin and hurt, as flowing from hatred and revenge, but the anger of a father, which is guided by wisdom and tempered by love, intending the good of his offending child. It is a piece of prerogative royal to have the power of life and death, which God reserves to himself. He only knows when the appointed work is finished; he alone is fit to give the sailing orders, and assign the time when the tossed and shattered vessel shall be laid up in a safe harbor.

Very dear Sir, yours very affectionately,
 Galashiels, Dec. 30th, 1730.

H. DAVIDSON.

Dear Sir,—I rejoice to hear of the success of your affairs, which you take as you ought from him who keeps the balance of trade, as well as of crowns and kingdoms, in his own hands. O but the management of the kingdom of grace must be a great thing, and our Mediator must be well furnished for the managing of it, since the vast and extensive kingdom of Providence is put into his hand as a subordinate, there to administrate in a subserviency to the kingdom of grace, and to carry on the glorious purposes thereof! He sits enthroned in Zion; and as Zion's King, his power reaches through the whole earth, the seas, heaven, and hell! All power is given him everywhere. His subjects in Zion are few; but the whole world is rolled hither and thither for that little kingdom. For their sakes he sent to Babylon, and brought down the Chaldeans, whose cry is in the ships; for it the Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman monarchies, were brought down. O Sir, continue to follow your business in the actual faith of this; and as, when there is a prosperous turn in it, you willingly give it under your hand, you are your Mediator's debtor for it, so, when there comes about an awkward-like turn at any time, labor to believe the same hand does it for the best, for this reason, that he never does anything but what is best done, which will one day be demonstrated beyond contradiction.

As for the discourse on the covenant of grace, I have long ago ended that subject; but I am so engaged otherwise, that I cannot take it in hand for some time to come, for aught I yet see; and my years now appear to me in a manner more than formerly uncertain; and I would fain do, as the Lord is pleased to enable, what I conceive might be of great usefulness, as long as life is continued with strength. I am, dear Sir, &c.,

Dec. 14th, 1724.

T. BOSTON.

Very dear Sir,—Your several letters came safe to hand, and were very acceptable. This comes to inform you that the good old woman, my mother, went home to her own, the better country, this morning, betwixt three and four o'clock. She took to her bed upon the Lord's Day evening; had a fever pretty high, but retained all her senses to her dying hour. How cruel is our love! How blind and inconsiderate is our affection! We would prefer the small advantages or greater gains we reap from their abode with us, to their entire satisfaction and complete happiness; a very great but common solecism in true friendship we are often guilty of. However frightful and ill-favored death may appear to the eye of sense, it is viewed by faith as the messenger of our heavenly Father; and when the Christian opens its hard cold hands, and looks into them, there are to be found gracious letters, full of love, bearing an invitation to come home, a call from the new Jerusalem to come up and see. When death, with the one hand, covers our eyes, and deprives of the light of the stars, with the other it rends in pieces the vail, and so makes way for our being immediately set under the refreshing beams of the Sun of righteousness, without the least appearance of a cloud, through the long days of eternity. Now that his way is

in the sea, and his path in deep waters, and his footsteps are not known, we must believe, lovingkindness in all the mysterious passages of Providence; we shall in due time be able to see a wheel within a wheel, and be taught how to decipher the dark characters; we shall, with an agreeable surprise, perceive an all-wise Providence in all its intricate, oblique, and seemingly contrary motions, to have been a faithful servant to the divine promise, so that we must say "Amen" to heaven's disposals, and cry out in the dark and gloomy night, Hallelujah. * * * *

My affectionate respects to Mrs. Boston, with yourself, are offered by him who is, very dear Sir, yours very affectionately, in the straitest bonds,

Galashiels, Feb. 25th, 1732.

H. DAVIDSON.

Dear Sir,—I understood by yours, that your wife continues in her ordinary tender condition. May it be sanctified by grace to her and you. The different states of persons in respect of health and infirmity, is a piece of sovereign disposal which the afflicted are to reverence and adore. Our Lord himself was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;" and if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him. The heaviest burden of affliction is but light in respect of the weight of glory we have in hope; and the affliction that is of such continuance as the party has forgotten prosperity, is but for a moment, being compared with the eternity of that weight which faith has the view of.

My wife has now kept her bed these five weeks; and, together with her ordinary distress, she has had a fever, with a great inflammation, which began in her face and went up over her head; but he who delivered her in six troubles has delivered her in the seventh also, and it is gone off; but she is very weak. My youngest daughter was frequently ill this winter, but since the return of the spring and warmer weather, she has been better. The rest are as ordinary. * * * But my weakness is nevertheless so felt as occasions thoughts of heart. This is an account of our hospital; but sometimes the voice of melody, of joy, and praise, is heard among us. We are cast down, but not destroyed; perplexed, but not in despair; and are aiming at resignation. This morning the latter part of Ps. lxxi. was very sweet to me.

April 25th, 1726.

T. BOSTON.

[How this simple, affectionate correspondence between two gracious men more than a hundred years ago seems to lift up a veil from the past. Yes; a hundred years ago there were troubles and trials, sickness and death, sighs and sorrows, as now; and there was the same God, and the same Jesus, and the same blessed Spirit, and the same sure promises, and the same sweet deliverances. Sighs and songs, prayer and praise, castings down and liftings up were then, as now, in the houses and hearts of the righteous; and though we believe and know it was so, yet to see them portrayed in letters written under the sensible impression of existing feeling, gives it a life-like vividness and brings it before us with a breathing power which carries with it a deeper effect than a more distant and labored representation.—ED.]

WITHOUT WERE FIGHTINGS, WITHIN WERE FEARS.

The following letter, containing some account of the exercises of the late Mr. Isaac Harrison, of Leicester, respecting the building of his chapel in that town, to which some allusion was made on the wrapper of our last number will, we believe, be found interesting to his friends.

"1839, this was a wonderful year to me. During it I travelled about 200 miles. My chief object was to hear a few gracious, good men preach the truths of the everlasting gospel. The cause of my travelling seemed to be rather singular, but so it was; for I had been roused by your preaching out of a sleepy and dead state, which I had fallen into for the last two or three years. It is now about 11 years since the Lord passed by me, and saw me in my blood, and said unto me, "Live." O, Sir, it was a time of life to me indeed; for then my blind eyes were opened, my deaf ears were unstopped, my poor stammering tongue loosed, so that I could call God my God; my stony heart being dissolved by the good Lord shedding abroad his love within me. My old filthy rags, that I had been weaving together to make a covering to cover me with, were taken away, and change of raiment given me, to hide my shame and nakedness; for at this time I needed one. I was stripped of all, and brought in a very great debtor, but had nothing at all to pay the debt with, when, to my great surprise, my blessed Lord freely forgave me all. I thought then I should have been freed from my own evil heart; but, alas! I soon found a warfare had begun; for I found a law in my members warring against the law of my mind; and when I would do good, evil was present with me. This warfare appears very sharp and cutting; but blessed be our Jesus, he has ordered all our warfare, that we have not one more campaign than is needful for us to go through; for the great captain of our salvation has defeated all our enemies, and gained the victory for us; so that we shall be more than conquerors through him that loved us and gave himself for us. But at times I feel as if I had lost sight of all; feel full of pride and rebellion; begin to quarrel with myself; find Satan very ready to help old nature; everything seems going on wrong; all appears to be ins and outs, ups and downs, crooks and crosses. Cannot rest; feel as if I had lost something. Sit down; no rest. Walk about, hanging down the head. Feel burdened; very sorrowful, crying, "O that I could tell where to find him, then would I flee away and be at rest." Go to bed; sorrow may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning; and so I find it, and very sweet it is. But these refreshing seasons are very short with me; but blessings be to the good Lord and Saviour, they are very sweet and precious to me when favored with them. I was very much pointed out by your last sermon at Zoar Chapel, so much so that, if I had not known the plague of my own evil heart, and the Lord's dealing with me for a number of years, I should have concluded that some person or persons had named the whole of my life to

you ; for I felt within that I was a subject of all those diseases that you named ; but blessed be God, who healeth all our diseases. I was rather cast down at your leaving ; and as the friends seemed to press to speak with you, I thought myself unworthy at the time, which made me give place to the more worthy. But after all this turmoil, the good Lord was pleased to shine forth again, which caused me to be very bold and full of zeal, and made me speak more freely and openly to some of my friends ; but, alas ! I did not know what the world and Satan were stirring up, for in less than a week after your departure, I began to be called into question on account of my proceedings, for I had laid in a quantity of bricks, and the question was, "What are you going to do with them ?" The answer I made was, "I did not know." It was thought very strange to do so, and not to know for what purpose ; but so it was with me, for I was to all appearance completely walled in, so much so that I could not rest, which caused me to cry to him that is able to deliver us from all our enemies, by dividing the waters and removing mountains, for so I found them. When in this state of mind, being burdened, there seemed no way of escape. But I went out for a walk. When on the road, the word broke into my soul with great power and light, which made me cry out, "My Jesus has done all things well." Yes ; and he has done all things well ; and so I found it, to the joy and great satisfaction of my soul, for the wall was thrown down, and the rough places made smooth, so that I went on rejoicing, and praising the dear Lord Jesus, and hardly felt the ground that I walked on, with, at the same time, these words accompanying me, "He that sets his hand to the plough, and turns back, is not fit for the kingdom of heaven."

"These last words were very powerful with me for two or three days, which made me believe it was the will of the Lord that I should begin the building, as I had fresh strength and courage given. The man that I named it to, and thought to have him to help me, set out the building, after agreeing on the spot of ground and the size of the place. On Monday, the 27th of January, we met on the ground. He began to alter and to set it here and there, and quite in opposition to all former proceedings, till at last I was obliged to leave him, for I verily thought that the devil was let loose in the man ; and I began to assist the builder in setting it out ; but as soon as it was set out, Satan began to roar and stir up some very fierce enemies. The building was begun on the 27th day of January, and the foundation stone was laid ; but O, it was a day to me that I never shall forget, for Satan seemed to rage against me with all his fury and malice at the time. When helping out with the foundation stones, I received a hurt on the right breast. Then Satan said, "You have done for yourself ; now you must give it up. What will the world say of you, and what will your friends say ? You cannot hide this from them. You will have to take medicine, and very likely be confined to your bed ; and how shall you go on then ? Now you are in a nice hobble.

Lamed yourself over it!" In the midst of all these great temptations, the blessed Lord Jesus gave me a little faith to call upon his dear name, that I might be delivered. I stayed till the foundation stone was laid; then I went off up to Belgrave. As soon as I started, I trembled and quaked, fearing the enemy should overwhelm me; but in the midst of all this I was enabled, with a little strength, to call on the Lord to stand by me, support me in my sore trial and affliction, and that he would strengthen the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees, that I might prove Satan to be a liar.

"My enemies seemed to come more and more upon me, so much so that I could see no way to escape them; at the same time I feared I had offended the Lord. After this I got alone for a time. I read in the New Testament for some time; all seemed sealed up; nothing for me. I was led to the Old Testament. I opened in Jeremiah, chap. xvii., v. 12-26. O, those words sank deep into my heart, which made me speak out to my sister, and say, I believed it would be according to the word of the Lord, spoken by the mouth of the prophet. But, alas! the next day fear began to rise; fresh attacks of the enemy began to lie hard on me. Seemed almost overwhelmed; could get no rest. Satan coming with his suggestions, "You must give it up; all your friends and everything is against you. You will surely be overturned if you go on." This was the second day after the foundation stone was laid. When I returned home in the evening, when alone, I thought I would look in the Bible again, but hardly durst, Satan coming in with his, "If you do, you surely will be condemned this time." But I turned to reach out the book, with a heavy heart. When I opened the book, I was led to the words contained in Chron. xxviii. 10-20; and they were so powerfully applied to me that I believed the Lord would stand by me and support me in the work; but, alas, alas! I soon began again to tremble, for another fresh enemy appeared as if coming upon me, which made me shake, fear, and tremble. This was early in the morning, on the Wednesday. I began to think that it was impossible for the work to stand, having my eye at the same time looking at the foundation of the three pillars. But the blessed Lord was pleased to shine into my poor soul with such a shining and brilliant light and power, that I could see they were laid in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and I was able to tell Satan that not all the men in the land nor all the devils in hell could overturn them. O, my dear friend, the blessed Lord Jesus gave me such a victory through his name, that I was able to cut through hosts of devils, and cry, "Victory! victory! through him that loved me, and gave himself for me, and washed me in his own blood." This was a day of great rejoicing to me; for the blessed Lord was with me all the day long. After this, he led me to another promise in his word, 1 Chron., xxviii. 10-20. These words were very powerfully applied to me, which gave me great strength and boldness, so that I was able to tell Satan that my Jesus had done

all things well, and that he was able to keep me from all my enemies. Yes; and blessed be his name, he is both able and willing to preserve us to himself. If he permit us to be placed in the front of the battle, he is there; for he says, "I never will leave thee nor forsake thee. When thou goest through the fire, I will be with thee."

"After this, the Lord gave me both strength and courage to go on in his name; and though I was very much bruised in the body, and suffered a great deal from the wound that I received on the breast, I never took any medicine, either inwardly or outwardly, neither did I name what had befallen me to any earthly friend. But my request was to the Lord, that he would look down upon me, and have mercy upon me, and heal me. This was a great trial of faith. For 14 days I did not know how it would end. At times, doubts, and fears, and unbelief would arise; and the enemy coming in at times, the wound seemed worse. On the 13th day I began to sink like Peter; but when sinking, the blessed Lord held out his hand; and on the 14th day I was, by the good Physician, healed of the wound, which made me cry, "Victory! victory! through the blood of the Lamb;" which made me leap for joy; and I was able to tell Satan that he was a liar, and the truth was not in him, so much so that, by the help of the Lord, I was able to stamp him under my feet, and tell him that I had proved him a liar, and that Jesus had done all things well, and would do all things well for those that the Father had given him before the world was formed.

"Yours in the truth,

"ISAAC HARRISON."

The Lord will overlook a thousand transactions rather than expose his name and honor to reproach, as once it was by a temporary suspension; to recover which, and that his name might be sanctified, he will bring them home again; yea, though it be in the eyes of men a thing impossible, and they themselves think so likewise; for, "our hope is lost, and we are cut off," say they; (Ezek. xxxvii. 11;) and, again, my "hope is perished from the Lord." (Lam. iii. 18.) Whether at home or abroad, they still caused his name to be profaned, and for this his holy name, he had pity on them; (Ezek. xxxvi. 20, 21;) for if he should have cast them off for ever, it would have been said that he did not foresee how unworthy a people they would be; or, he was not able to keep them in their own land, nor to bring them back again; or else, that he was changeable in his purposes, and not true to his word, &c. Some reflection or other they would cast upon him, which he would not bear.—*Elisha Coles.*

The office of the law is to kill, and yet so that God may revive and quicken again. The law, then, is not given only to kill; but because man is proud and dreams that he is wise, righteous, and holy; therefore it is necessary he should be humbled by the law, that so this beast, the opinion of righteousness, I say, might be slain; for otherwise no man can obtain life.—*Luther.*

OBITUARY.

. NAOMI HAWKINS. .

Messrs. Editors,—By the request of several friends, I have taken my pen to write to you a short account of the experience and triumphant death of our young friend, Naomi Hawkins, to whom the Lord was pleased to reveal his love and mercy, and pardon her sins in the last extremity.

For several years she had had very ill health; and though in the midst of gaiety and pleasure, yet at times had convictions that this world was passing away, and saw and felt the vanity of all things here below.

Her health still grew worse, and in December last she was obliged to return home. The doctor told her if she went home to her native air, she would soon be well, as he said her lungs were not affected. But, ah, how oft they err! They much more often deceive. For indeed she was in a swift consumption, so rapid that she survived but a few weeks. When on her dying bed, she was asked if Jesus was precious, she said, "No." "What, and have you not a glimpse of hope?" She said, "No; I am afraid the Lord will never hear or answer my prayers. I am afraid my sins have never been laid with weight on my mind." Our dear minister, Mr. W., called one day, and encouraged her much to pray on, and beg on, for the Lord had put a cry into her heart, and he would answer it in his own time. She begged him to pray for her, and entreated him to pray for her when he returned home. Her mother had put up many prayers to the Almighty, to have mercy on her dear child, who appeared to be so soon about to leave this earthly world. Her mother said to her, "Naomi, what shall I do if you leave this world without a hope?" She earnestly said, "And what shall I do?" For several days she seemed to be without a hope that the Lord would ever hear or answer her prayers; and in this state she remained till the day before she died. When she appeared to be in great agony both of body and mind, a friend came to see her, and asked her if she felt Christ precious. She said, "No, she did not, which caused her great distress of mind." Her friend was about to leave her, when she wished him to spend a few minutes in prayer. She felt it much, and seemed to be in secret prayer. After some little time her mother and a friend entered the room, when she said, "My dear mother, what shall I do? what shall I do, my dear mother? Do get some one to help me." Her mother replied, "My dear child, do beg the Lord to help you; there is no one else that can." She seemed after this to be in earnest prayer, and in the bitterness and agony of her soul cried out, "Lord, have mercy upon me, a miserable sinner. Do, Lord, help me, or I perish." She then felt very calm. A friend who was sitting near, inquired how she felt. "O I know that the Lord has answered my prayers; yes, Jesus is precious to me, and has pardoned all my sins." She called to her mother, and said, "Mother, kneel down, and thank the Lord for what he has

done for me; praise the Lord; tell it unto sinners round what a dear Saviour I have found. O if I could stand on my feet, how I would praise him for his goodness to me, a miserable sinner. I am too weak to praise him. O I wish I could! O how wonderfully he appeared for me when I had lost all hope of Christ; he appeared for me in the eleventh hour. I wish that I could praise him." She talked for some time of the wonderful works of God. She wished a friend, who had visited her during her illness, and who felt interested in her never-dying soul, to be sent for. "Should I," she said, "feel too weak to inform him, tell him what the Lord has done for me. Yes, my Jesus has done all things well." Soon after her friend arrived, when she exclaimed, "O my Jesus has saved me in a dying hour. O how I long to die, to be with Christ for ever and ever."

She now seemed quite exhausted, and fell asleep; but in a short time awoke, and called her mother to her bed-side, and said, "I shall not be here long. What a thing it is to face death." "And can you?" inquired her mother. "Yes, I can; for I am going to a better world. O mother, we are going to part; but we shall soon meet again. Then we will praise him to a never-ending eternity." She frequently put her poor withered hand around her mother's neck, and declared how good the Lord was in appearing for her when she had no thought of him. "Yes, my dear child," her mother said, "that is when the dear Lord comes." Her weakness was great; and when not able to speak, she tried to raise her mother's hands, exclaiming, "Pray, pray!" and then fell back exhausted. O what a change when the dear Lord shone into her soul; she could then praise the Lord, and, fearing not to face death, long to depart, and be with Christ for ever in the realms of eternal bliss. The last words she uttered were, "Let me flee away; happy, happy, happy!" Her happy spirit then took its flight, at quarter to 4 o'clock, Saturday, March 3, 1855, aged 23 years. We can truly say for her to die is gain.

Trowbridge.

M. A. B.

Notwithstanding a universal destruction of the ungodly by a flood; the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, with fire and brimstone from heaven; the tenfold tremendous plagues of Egypt; the erection, prosperity, and overthrow of kingdoms and empires; the smaller or greater forms of society; the diversified states of savage barbarity and politeness, and of gross ignorance and high pretences to learning; the want of ceremonies, and an extensive and heavy load of them, mankind had gradually become worse and worse. While this increase of wickedness manifested that nothing less than the incarnation, righteousness, power, and grace of the Son of God, by the gospel, could avail for reforming the world, God, by permittings, prepared a noted opportunity, or reared up a scaffold, for displaying the triumphant freedom and power of his grace, and the fulfilment of his promises respecting the pardon, reformation, and salvation of men.—*John Brown.*

R E V I E W.

A Treatise on some Important Subjects, viz., On the Church of God, &c.
By C. H. Coles, late Pastor of the Baptist Church, Old Brentford.
Price 4d. London: James Paul, 1, Chapter House Court, St.
Paul's Church-yard, and Paternoster Row.

*The Spirit of God Grieved, and the Church of God Sleeping. A
Letter.* By C. H. Marston. Price 1½d. London: W. Yapp, 4,
Old Cavendish Street, Oxford Street; Houlston and Stoneman,
Paternoster Row.

(Concluded from page 165.)

If we look for stability in any man, it is in a minister of experimental truth. He comes forward as one taught of God, as one who has tasted, felt, and handled the word of life, as one set down and established by the Holy Ghost in the truth as it is in Jesus. He stands up before the church of God as eyes to the blind and feet to the lame, as a guide, an instructor, a counsellor, a friend. He is a steward of the mysteries of God, in whom it is required that he be found faithful; an ambassador of the King of kings, and as such, deeply interested in his Master's honor; a servant of Jesus Christ, whose highest privilege is personally to know his Lord's will and do it, and ministerially to make it known to others, for the obedience of faith. For one occupying such a post, instability is, to say the least, a grievous defect. If the officer waver, if the standard-bearer faint, what confusion it makes among the rank and file! To see a minister of truth, then, waver and show himself, like Reuben, "unstable as water," saps the very foundation of our confidence that he is taught of God, throws a discredit upon the whole of his ministry, and creates strong grounds for fear that what he advanced before his change he learnt merely in the letter, and not by the work and witness of the Holy Ghost in his soul.

But what makes the instability of a minister of such consequence is, that it affects others as well as himself. Many children of God, though right at heart, are exceedingly weak in judgment; and in their eyes a minister is almost a sacred being, who cannot err. If he be possessed of apparently great spirituality of mind—a thing, by the way, easily assumed, they are overawed by his eminent sanctity; and if he can talk and argue ably and fluently, they are overwhelmed by the waterfall of words, and though really not convinced, yet are silenced into acquiescence.

Some of these gracious characters might read Mr. Marston's pamphlet, and so far from seeing anything to object to in it, might, we believe, be really carried away by it. Its earnest and affectionate tone, its lamentations over the sleepy state of the church, mingled with confessions of his own shortcomings, and its ascription of all power and grace to the Holy Spirit, are, until one looks beneath the surface, very persuasive. The expressions, which to us, and to those who know the system of the Plymouth Brethren convey so much, discovering what is in the writer's heart and whither he is

fast tending, would most probably altogether escape their notice, and they would read it through and through without perceiving what, under a thin disguise, was in the author's mind, and what he was really aiming at. That he is deeply imbued with the views of the Brethren* we have not the slightest doubt; and he has probably been seduced into them as much from their attractive appearance as from natural instability.

We shall, therefore, perhaps be doing him a service as well as some of our readers if we briefly point out a few of their errors, for it is not our intention to enter very largely into the distinctive features of that deceptive form of godliness professed by the Plymouth Brethren. That it has something very specious about it cannot be denied. Did it not possess some strong resemblance to truth, did it not, in some points, approach with considerable closeness to the letter of the word, were there not in it some very striking traits, imitating the features of vital godliness, it would possess no attractiveness to that class of sincere, well-meaning persons who are religious without any clear or sound experience either of the depths of the fall, or of salvation alone by sovereign superabounding grace. Being ignorant alike of the deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of the human heart, and of the mighty work that is needed to deliver and bless the soul before it can realise its interest in the Redeemer's blood and righteousness, such are easily beguiled by anything, however flimsy or superficial, which advances towards them arrayed in a gospel dress; for it is most evident that anything in our day which comes forward under the name of religion must come with the open Bible in its hand, since truth has so far gained a footing in the professing church that error itself must wear its mask. The nearer, therefore, it approaches the truth without being the truth, the more it is like grace without being grace, the more deceptive it is. And this, we believe, is precisely the case with the system we are now considering. To those, indeed, who see nothing beyond the mere letter of the word, its shallow waters, like a land flood, may appear to reflect in their bosom the very beauties of heaven, when to a discerning eye they are at once seen to want the depth and power which belong to that river the streams whereof make glad the city of God. Whatever it may be in the eyes of its admirers and professors, it most certainly is not the religion of the tried and tempted, the distressed and exercised. It is not a religion learnt in the furnace and flood. It is not the religion of David, Heman, Asaph, Jeremiah, Jonah, Hezekiah, Habakkuk; no; nor the religion of Peter and Paul—of Peter sinking in the water, and caught by the Saviour's hand, of Peter sifted in Satan's sieve and so riddled to and fro therein that his faith would have utterly failed but for his Lord's intercessory prayer; of

* As an additional proof of this, we may mention that he has abandoned strict communion for open, and also quite adopted the Brethren's views about the ministry. Whether these views be scriptural or not, it does not look much like divine teaching to learn them all in a few weeks. The truth of God is usually not learnt so rapidly, nor, when experimentally known, unlearnt so easily.

Paul caught up into the third heaven, and thence cast down to the very gate of hell, buffeted by the messenger of Satan, and groaning under a daily rankling thorn. Nor is it the religion of Bunyan, Hart, or Huntington; nor of Berridge, Romaine, and Hawker; nor of any one writer or preacher blessed to the church of God.

This one circumstance is or should be decisive—that with all their writing, and they have for many years plied the pen most assiduously and unweariedly, the Brethren have never yet produced one author whose works have been a blessing to the church. They have written tracts and pamphlets by the score, entered deeply into type and figure, precept and prophecy, searched the letter of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation, and explained, with all the help of learning, education, and talent, the dispensations, past, present, and to come; and yet their writings have left no more trace on the heart and conscience of the churches of the saints than last autumn's leaves on the soil where they fell. There may be, we hope there are, amongst them some of God's living family, but not of God's tried and well-taught family. It is too light and superficial for them; too smooth and easy; too dealing with things outward and at a distance; too high above their heads, flitting and skimming like a bird, one while in the air of doctrine, and then hopping from spray to spray of promise, and utterly wanting in that depth, weight, and solidity, which commend themselves to living consciences. It is, in fact, a young lady's religion—a kind, amiable, soft, gentle, easy religion, just adapted to those tender-hearted, well-educated females of a naturally serious turn, who are fond of reading their Bibles and saying their prayers, and want to be religious, but know not how. It comes with such honeyed words about Jesus and his love; speaks so kindly and gently about faith and grace; and deals so tenderly and affectionately with them, that they are won over to a profession almost before they are aware. A Christian is soon made by their scheme. No agonizing throes of the new birth, no deep law work,* no heavy burden of sin or distressing guilt of conscience; no such narrow gap as Bunyan saw in vision,† well nigh tearing off the flesh to get through; no long season of doubt, fear, and bondage, find a place in their system. Bunyan put stepping stones in his Slough of Despond, though poor Christian either could not find them or stumbled over them; but they have built a suspension bridge over the Slough for their pilgrims, and land them within the strait gate at once without mud or mire, and if their advice be duly followed, will guarantee they shall have not a speck of either for the rest of the way. "All you have to do is to believe"

* They are bound by their very creed to cast aside a law work; for one of their strongest tenets is that the law was given to the Jews only, and that the Gentiles never came under it; and this in the very face of Paul's declaration, "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; *that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.*"

+ In "Grace Abounding."

is their language. This is their suspension bridge,* and if you can but get your feet upon it, you may look with pity as you cross the Slough on those who are struggling in the mud below; though we believe, were an exercised child of God to venture his weight upon it, it would so rock to and fro that he would tremble with alarm lest he and the bridge should both fall together.

To our mind one of the greatest mysteries in religion is the difference between the power of truth on the natural conscience, and the power of truth on the spiritual conscience; between the faith produced in the natural mind by the letter of the word, and the faith wrought in the heart by the Spirit of God through the spirit of the word. And yet in this lies all the difference between a professor and a possessor, between the damned and the saved. Here is the rock on which thousands split; here is the grand deceit of Satan as an angel of light—that a man may have all faith, and yet be nothing. Yes; have the strongest and most unwavering faith in his natural mind, generated there by the letter of the word, and yet live and die in his sins an unpardoned criminal, an un-sanctified rebel; may have the most implicit faith in Jesus Christ, and yet die out of Christ; may believe the promise, and have no interest in the promise; obey the precept, and yet be damned for disobedience. This is the grand key of the cabinet; and he who holds not this key in his hand, be he preacher or writer that attempts to describe the work of the Spirit, will but fumble, for without it he cannot unlock one secret drawer of the heart, or penetrate into any one innermost recess of nature or of grace. Tremendous mystery, yet not more tremendous than true, that between a spiritual and a natural faith lay all the difference between David and Saul, between John and Judas, and that on it hangs life or death, heaven or hell, unutterable bliss or eternal despair!

On this turning, this fundamental point, the difference between a dead and a living faith, the Brethren are unsound to the very core; for whilst in word they ascribe it to the gift of God, they make it in reality the work of man. The faith which they advocate is an implicit, unwavering credence at all times, and under all circumstances in the letter of the word. A Christian, according to them, is never to doubt. If he doubt, he sins; he lives below his privileges, he dishonors God, he grieves the blessed Spirit; in

* The following anecdote, for the truth of which we can vouch, will show whether we are wrong in calling their system a suspension bridge over the Slough.

A woman, whom we know well, was under very great distress of soul in her first convictions. Whilst in this state she was continually visited, we might rather say plagued, by the Brethren telling her to believe, all which only sank her more deeply into the Slough. After awhile the Lord graciously appeared, and gave her a remarkable deliverance. When they called again, she told them how the Lord had blessed her soul, and how she could and did now believe in the blessed Jesus. O, they answered, "Why did not you believe before?" By their bridge she would have escaped the Slough, but she would have missed the revelation.

Is it not grievous to see men of truth leaguering themselves with such rank Arminianism?

fact, he almost ceases to be a Christian at all. God, they hold, has said it; and therefore the saint believes it. Now this is not true spiritual faith, the faith of God's elect. A child of God believes the word of God, not because it is the word of God, for on that ground all might believe it on the mere external evidence which proves it such, but he believes it because it is made spirit and life to his soul. He believes a promise, not because God has spoken it in the word, but because God has spoken it through the word to his heart. Doubts, then, such as a Christian is exercised with, are not of the essence of faith, nay, are utterly contrary to it, yet stand to it in the same relationship as darkness to light. As light dispels darkness, so faith dispels doubt; but as when light ceases to shine, darkness comes on, so when faith sinks out of sight, unbelief and doubt spread themselves over the heart. As then faith only acts as drawn into exercise by the blessed Spirit, when his divine operations are suspended, and in this he displays his sovereignty, doubt begins to work; and thus unbelief waits on faith almost as the shadow waits on the sun. But in their system doubts and fears can have no place, because their faith, not depending upon the special operations of the blessed Spirit, always stands on the same ground, and at the same level.

I need never doubt that two and two make four, or that every point of the circumference of a circle is at the same distance from the centre. An undoubting faith in God's word as God's word, as a habit of the soul, which it can exercise without a special influence, is much of the same character with my faith in the truth of the multiplication table or in the properties of a circle.

Men, according to their view, when converted, are called upon to believe that the Scriptures are the word of God, that Jesus is the Son of God, and that his blood cleanseth from all sin. By believing all this, they become believers in Christ; and being thus made believers, they have ever after a right to avail themselves of the privileges of the dispensation of grace, among which is the approach to God at all times, and under all circumstances, as a son, a full, constant, unwavering assurance of his Fatherly love and mercy; an absolute freedom from all bondage, doubt, and fear; and a complete victory over sin, death, hell, and the devil.

These are indeed the choicest blessings of the gospel, the richest fruits of the blessed Spirit; but they are not to be taken down, and handed about to every body, like wine and fruit after dinner,—to all the young ladies and gentlemen who read their Bibles, and call themselves believers; to all the mere letter students of prophecy, and the whole motley group of intruders into sacred things, ignorant alike of God and of themselves, whom such a system is sure to enrol under its banners.

In all this scheme, which to them seems so scriptural, there is not a word of manifestation and revelation; that faith to be spiritual and saving, must be generated and maintained in the soul by the power of God; that it is not an habitual grace always in exercise, but is drawn out into operation only at times and seasons,

and those generally of distress and trouble; and that the blessings of the gospel, which they hand about so freely for every body's acceptance, are kept in the Lord's gracious hands as heavenly cordials, and given only as strong drink to those who are ready to perish, and as wine to those that be of heavy heart. Of course they hold in word that faith is the gift of God, and the work of the Holy Spirit; but the vagueness of their language shows the vagueness of their faith; and there is too much reason to fear that they, or at least many of them, believe it is so not from any vital experience of what faith really is, but because it is declared to be so in the Epistle to the Ephesians.

The main deceitfulness of their system lies in this, that they use the words of Scripture to overthrow the spirit of the Scripture, and employ the language of experience, which they must do if they avail themselves of scriptural terms, the language of revelation being necessarily experimental, to establish what is really contrary to experience. Thus, whilst they speak much about the blessed Spirit, there is all the while a secret, implied condition that His operations are connected with our availing ourselves of his promised help and influence. The surface of the stream being free grace flows onward and heavenward, gleaming and glittering in the sun; but beneath this there is an under current of free will, a backwater, which runs in the opposite direction; and it is the existence of these two distinct currents which makes their writings so confusing to those unhappy navigators who embark upon them. When we first read them, they appear so sound and scriptural, and speak so much about Jesus and the work of the Spirit, that we are almost beguiled to approve of them; and yet there is something in our inmost heart which rejects them, as contrary to what we have tasted, felt, and handled of the precious things of God. Take, for instance, the following extract from Mr. Marston's book:

"Now the point to which I wish to come, and to which I wish to lead my friend, and, if it might be, the Lord's dear people, is this:—The Father and the Son having continued and completed a great work of salvation, the Holy Ghost is promised in virtue thereof, to do a certain work in me—a work which he is able and willing to perform. Have I ever received the Spirit of Adoption? then the moment I am unable to cry Abba, Father, I am deficient in a part of the Spirit's work; the moment my peace in Jesus ceases to be realized—the instant I find that I have not access into the holiest of all, I cease to occupy that position which it is the work of the Spirit to place me in. This says there is something wrong; and if I am right in my idea, it becomes me to stay at once and inquire, What is it? The cause is either in myself or in the Holy Ghost. Not in him; for his work is to remove all my darkness and fears; then it is in me, and proves that I have grieved the Spirit."

Many a gracious character, we believe, might read this extract, and hardly be able to know, at first, what to make of it. He cannot deny there is some truth in it; and yet its effect is to confuse his mind, and bring bondage into his soul. Now, we will give such a one a little piece of advice. Read this extract again, till your mind is more and more confused, and your spirit more and more hardened and bewildered. Next, take down Hart's Hymns, and read one of them; and then compare your feelings, after reading it,

with what you felt after reading the extract. "Well," say you, "what a difference! What sweetness and blessedness in the hymn; how it softened my heart, and I could go with it every word. But the extract—I don't know what to make of it; I can't receive it, and I hardly like wholly to reject it." The best way to deal with writing of this kind is to do what the wine merchant does in buying wine. He has a standard of taste, for he knows well what good wine is; and so he first tastes this, and then tastes that, and, comparing each sample with what he knows to be the right taste, he rejects the bad, and chooses the good. Whether we have the right taste or not, we will not assert; but we can say, after tasting Marston's sample and Hart's, we know which is the wine of the kingdom, and we can add, without doubt or fear, "No man having drunk old wine, straightway desireth new, for he saith the old is better."

In reading, however, Mr. Marston's book, we must bear in mind that he has not abandoned experimental ground, but is, as he thinks, seeking somehow to enlarge it by grafting into it the system of the Brethren. Thus his experience leans one way and his judgment another. This wavering in his own mind between what he has felt in his conscience and what he has lately embraced in his judgment, is painfully evident in our next extract, in which, amidst what really seems sound and experimental, a discerning eye can see a strong taint of their system:

"It is by this Spirit we are quickened from our death in trespasses and sins; we are convinced that we are by nature children of wrath, even as others; we feel and know our sins, and look with dismay at a God of judgment. He who shows us what our disease is, and how deep our malady, leads us to Jesus; he points to his glorious person, shows us the mighty Holy One—the very One whose wrath we have incurred—taking hold upon the seed of Abraham. He will show us ('he shows us') the spotless beauty of his character, how perfectly free from sin, how holy, harmless, and undefiled, and then shows that Lamb without blemish and without spot sacrificed and presented for us. This is the claim of faith. Suffering without the camp I see the victim slain for my sin—the fire of the altar consumes the burnt offering, and as it sends up its curling smoke a precious fragrance is accepted in the highest heavens, and in the sweet savor of that offering the whole church is accepted."

This extract shows us exactly Mr. Marston's present views and position. There is an attempt in it to mingle two things, which can no more unite than oil and water,—experience and claim. He speaks experimentally and well about being quickened, and made to know and feel our sins, and being led by the Spirit to Jesus, though with a certain vagueness of his work in making Christ known to the soul. But when he begins to speak about the "claim of faith," he leaves the work of the Spirit altogether, and wanders about on Plymouth ground without seeming to know his own meaning. It seems to us that he knows in soul experience just as far in the above extract as the words "leads us to Jesus," but not having experimentally advanced any further in the things of God, he makes *that* the ground of laying claim to the whole work of Christ and the whole work of the Spirit, and thus, without seeming to know it, gets upon the ground of the letter, if not on that of

presumption. He does not seem waiting to be led on by the blessed Spirit into the experimental enjoyment of the blessings, but, adopting the system of the Brethren, at once to lay claim to the whole work of the Spirit, on the simple ground that he is a believer. Now, in doing this he virtually abandons experience altogether, and ventures beyond the spot where he has been set down, to walk in the light of a letter faith, and, what is worse, is trying to encourage others to do the same. His wisdom and mercy would have been, if his mind were undergoing a change, to remain perfectly quiet until the point was settled in his conscience one way or the other, and not hastily rush into print to disturb the faith of others. Nor should he have intruded his new views in pulpits where he had stood as an experimental minister, but should have withdrawn from the ministry whilst his mind was in this wavering state. To pull down what he has built up, and to build up what he has pulled down, makes a man a transgressor, and opens a door for Satan to harass and disturb the minds of those who are not settled and grounded in the truth.

“The claim of faith” is the language not of experience but of presumption. When the Holy Spirit reveals Christ to the soul, we do not claim him, but receive him. If I am sick, and a medicine is given me, which heals me, I do not claim that medicine, but receive it. If I am starving, and a charitable person give me food, I do not claim it, but eat it, and bless the giver. If I am dying of thirst in an Arabian desert, and a passer-by, out of pure compassion, give me a cup of water from his own store, I do not seize the cup as my right, but drink it thankfully as a precious gift to save me from death. Gift excludes claim. What I claim, I claim by right; what I receive, I receive of grace. A presumptuous faith claims; a living faith receives. In the last sentence there may be pretty writing, but not a grain of experience or of living faith. The faith which saves the soul is something more personal than such a vague generality as seeing the curling smoke of the burnt offering accepted in the highest heavens.

Mr. Marston appears to us, either from converse with the Plymouth Brethren, or from reading their books, to have partially, if not wholly, adopted their creed, and learnt their language, without any experience of what it is, or seeing what it really leads to. Thus it is in his mouth as it is in theirs, a kind of religious jargon, which he has learnt as it were by rote, without really knowing what it means, or what consequences it involves. Take the following specimen, at the opening of his little pamphlet :

“The great promise the Lord gave to his disciples before he left them was the “Spirit,” whom the Father would send in his name. The descent of that Spirit was heaven’s witness to the glorification of Jesus above; and his presence is peculiarly the characteristic of the present dispensation. While we by no means deny that the Old Testament saints were in some sense the subjects of his influences, we must conclude that one of the greatest privileges accruing to the church as the result of Christ’s ascension, is the bestowal of this gift, in a sense in which he was never possessed before. Hence Jesus says, “It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not

come unto you; but if I go away, I will send him unto you." (John xvi. 7.) Such being the case, it is of importance to us carefully to inquire what is the work of this blessed One, and how far we, as the children of God, realize his work in and among us."

All this seems to sound very well; but when we come to examine it, how vague it is; how floating in a haze of words without anything experimentally felt or known. "His presence is peculiarly the characteristic of the present dispensation." "We by no means deny that the Old Testament saints were in some sense the subjects of his influences." This is just as men write who write from theory, without a gracious experience of what they are writing about. They mystify themselves and others about privileges and dispensations, without seeing that the same Blessed Spirit who is needful now was needful then; and that as unbelief, doubt, sin, and despair worked in the hearts of the children of God then, as they work in the hearts of the children of God now, they could only be removed and overcome by the same means. It is almost, according to their view, as if a man who broke his leg 3,000 years ago, did not want the leg mending and setting as a man does who breaks his leg now; or as if a thirsty man in the desert could then take a drink of sand, but now wants a drink of water. It is, in fact, denying either the fall or the recovery, the malady or the remedy; for if sin can be only pardoned and subdued in one way, to exclude the Old Testament believers from the presence and influences of the Holy Spirit, is either to shut them out of heaven, or set up two kinds of religion, one natural, and the other spiritual—a natural religion for Abraham, Moses, and David; (for they could have had no other, unless they possessed the presence and influences of the Holy Spirit;) and a spiritual religion for John, Peter, and Paul.

It thus makes the God of the Old Testament different from the God of the New, and represents the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as accepting natural men without spiritual faith, hope, or love; and the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ accepting only spiritual men and a spiritual work. If the Old Testament believers were not the subjects of the Spirit's influences as believers are now, we may as well at once declare the Old Testament a non-inspired book, for it was in that case written by non-inspired men; and so far from looking to find our own experience in the Psalms, we must read them merely as Hebrew poems written by a natural man, who knew nothing of God's presence, though he cried, "Cast me not away from thy presence;" nor of the Holy Spirit, though he said, "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me."

It is not the dispensation that makes the believer, but the presence and power of faith, which faith is of the Spirit's operation. If we deny this, and make men mere creatures of a dispensation, we deny spiritual faith to Abraham when he offered up Isaac, and spiritual faith to David when he encountered Goliath, and either cut off at a stroke all the Old Testament saints as unregenerate, or else admit unregenerate men, which they certainly were if they possessed not

the blessed Spirit, into the courts of heaven. Young men of impressive minds and quick apprehensions little think what errors they may imbibe and what consequences their theoretical views lead to. The Old Testament saints, it is true, had not the same clear views of "the sufferings of Christ and of the glory that should follow," though "the Spirit of Christ which was in them" (and if "in them," they had both his presence and influences,) testified of both to them beforehand; but they had the same faith, hope, and love, and these as fruits of the Spirit, as believers now; and as they were chosen in the same decree of election by God the Father, so were they redeemed by the same precious blood of God the Son, and were sanctified by the same presence, grace, power, and influences of God the Holy Ghost. To deny this is to cut the body of Christ asunder; and, under the idea of investing New Testament believers with higher and peculiar privileges, to degrade the Old Testament saints, of whom the world was not worthy, into natural, unregenerate, and therefore ungodly men.

As our Review is already so unduly lengthened, we shall not here touch upon Mr. Coles's pamphlet, though all we have said about the views of the Brethren applies as much to him as to Mr. Marston, so far as he has embraced them; but as it dwells chiefly on one point, what he calls "the liberty of the ministry in the Church," we have some thoughts of examining the subject, it being one of some importance, (God willing,) in our next number, in a separate paper, without inflicting on our readers a further continuation of the Review.

Let any one who owns the Scripture to be the word of God, to contain an infallible revelation of things proposed to be believed, and who has any conscience exercised towards God for the receiving and submitting unto what he declares and reveals, take a view of these testimonies, and consider whether they do not sufficiently propose this object of our faith. Shall a few poor trifling sophisms, whose terms are scarcely understood by the most that are amongst us who make use of them, accordingly as they have found them framed by others, be thought meet to be set up in opposition to these multiplied testimonies of the Holy Ghost, and to cast the truth confirmed by them down from its credit and reputation in the consciences of men? For my part, I do not see in anything, but that the testimonies given to the Godhead of Christ, the eternal Son of God, are every way as clear and unquestionable as those are which testify to the being of God, or that there is any God at all. Were men acquainted with the Scriptures as they ought to be, and as the most, considering the means and advantages they have had, might have been; did they ponder and believe on what they read, or had any tenderness in their consciences as to that reverence, obedience, and subjection of soul which God requires to his word; it were utterly impossible that their faith in this matter should ever in the least be shaken by a few lewd sophisms or loud clamors of men destitute of the truth and of the spirit of it.—*Owen.*

P O E T R Y.

"THOU ART MINE."

Hark! hark! the soft whisper, the sweet, solemn voice!
 'Tis the word of Jehovah that bids thee rejoice.

How blest the assurance, the promise divine,
 "Fear not, thou worm Jacob; behold, thou art mine!

"Eternity saw thee enshrined in my love,
 And the favor I bore thee no time can remove;
 Thy sins shall not frustrate my gracious design;
 Fear not, thou worm Jacob; behold, thou art mine!

"Though fiery the trials that wait for thee here,
 Yet bright through them all thou at last shall appear;
 And when dark the storm gathers, this word shall be thine,
 In all thy afflictions, fear not; thou art mine.

"When thy foes shall beset thee, and dangers assail,
 Although they distress thee, they shall not prevail;
 His claim to thy person shall Satan resign;
 As a brand pluck'd from burning, behold, thou art mine!

"When faint thy heart beats, and slow draws thy breath,
 And thy soul is engaged in its struggle with death;
 When thy friends gather round thee to catch the last sign;
 In death's gloomy valley, fear not, thou art mine!

"When the grave closes o'er thee, in darkness and gloom,
 And all that thou claimest on earth is the tomb,
 Though thy dust should be scatter'd on mountain or main,
 Yet still thou art mine! and I'll raise thee again.

"When the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall arise,
 And fruition of glory shall beam on thy eyes,
 The song of salvation, the chorus divine,
 Shall burst from thy lips, and proclaim, 'Thou art mine!'"

London, 1854.

E. J.

Mr. Editor,—Many times in reading the piece by Nathaniel, on the "Mystery of Godliness," the following lines, by an old saint, pressed on my mind; and if you think them worthy of a place in the "Standard," I place them at your disposal. "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

A CONSTANT READER.

Before this lower world was made,
 Foundation for my rest was laid
 By the Eternal Three;
 In counsels of electing love,
 The union oneness there I prove,
 Securing bliss to me.

Foundation work I do adore,
 And long to know it more and more,
 And all its glory see;
 On this foundation would I rest,
 On which this soul of mine is blest
 To all eternity.

THE
GOSPEL STANDARD.

MATT. v. 6; 2 TIM. I. 9; ROM. XI. 7; ACTS VIII. 37, 38; MATT. XXVIII. 19.

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VOL. XXI.

THE UNIVERSAL INVITATION OF THE GOSPEL.

BY RUSK.

“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.”—ISAIAH LV. 1.

THE prophet Isaiah is called by some the evangelical prophet; and indeed he was led by the Holy Spirit to treat wonderfully about the Lord Jesus Christ and his finished work, from the manger to the cross; so that one would have thought those things took place in his days. In the 53rd chapter, he briefly traces the life of the Saviour, and in the 54th encourages all sensible sinners to rejoice in the complete work of the Son of God. Hence he says, “Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud,” &c. But what is all this rejoicing about? Why, Christ has finished the whole work; and he did it for the barren, the desolate, for those that are ashamed, confounded, forsaken, and grieved in spirit, and that feel God’s wrath; afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted;” and as he did the whole work for such characters as these, he says, “Fear not, for thou shalt not be ashamed; neither be thou confounded, for thou shalt not be put to shame;” and here is the whole cause; “for thy Maker is thy husband; the Lord of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called.” What a wonderful thing this is: “Thy Maker is thy husband;” and all this to the poor rejected and despised outcast Gentiles. Surely here is a foundation for real happiness, an everlasting union between the God of heaven and earth and all sensible, lost, and perishing sinners. By the Lord’s help, I shall show,

I. What we are to understand by this *thirst*:

II. Take notice of these *waters*, and show the difference between a *coming* sinner, and one that is already *come*:

III. What it is to *have no money*:

IV. How it can be that such *are to buy*:

V. Take notice of the *provision* such are to have.

We shall go through every particular as the Lord shall assist; and O that the Holy Spirit may guide me in writing, feeling, as I do, my utter inability, and my reader in reading, without which it will be all in vain, and make it a blessing to our souls.

1. Then what are we to understand by this *thirst*? "Ho, every one that thirsteth."

What causes this thirst in all God's elect, and what do they thirst for? 1. When God is pleased in a sovereign way, he puts his Spirit in every chosen vessel, and the effect of this is, life and light; not light in the head and a name to live. No; but he quickens a man to see and feel three things. He sees his own heart and the state of all this world; he sees the spirituality of God's holy righteous law, and his own condemned state; and he sees that Christ Jesus is the only Saviour to all that believe; but that he, with all the rest of mankind, is shut up in unbelief; and as he sees all this, as he goes on, he is more and more parched with thirst. He is conscious that he is destitute of all righteousness, because he feels himself quite opposite to God's law, which commands love to God; and as for his neighbour, he finds what Paul says is true, that we are "hateful and hating one another," "and lovers of our own selves." But the Holy Spirit testifies to such a soul that Christ is the end of this law for righteousness; and this makes such a one long for a *manifestation of the Saviour*. Hence you read, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."

2. Again, such a soul thirsts after *holiness*. He wants to get rid of this vile nature, this abominable heart that is continually casting up mire and dirt. I remember years ago looking at a book about one Mrs. Rogers, an Arminian book; and O how I longed to be like her and like them; but O, I appeared a very devil, not outwardly, but in my feelings. Now, what such a soul thirsts after is the water of life, the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, to wash away this enmity, and produce love; to wash away this unbelief, and produce faith; hardness of heart, and give meekness; pride, and give humility; to cleanse him from all his filthiness, idols, and uncleanness; to create a clean heart, and to renew a right spirit within him. He therefore says with David, "O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!" It is not only his desire to be saved from the damning power of sin, but from its reigning power, and from the very in-being of it. He therefore thirsts to hear the pure gospel, and generally runs about a good deal after every "Lo here," or "Lo there," hoping to find a right preacher every time, but is continually disappointed. Hence you read, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord; and they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east. They shall run to and fro, and seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it." (Amos viii. 11, 12.) To this agrees the prophet Isaiah: "When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them." The gospel is good news to such. It is just what they need; and no laborer, hard at work on a hot summer's day, can be more parched with thirst literally than such

are spiritually ; and therefore God has promised to "pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground."

Now, both this righteousness, and this living water to wash and cleanse, come by the gospel. Hence Paul says, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith ;" "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word ;" and "This is the word, which by the gospel is preached unto you," says Peter. Therefore to such a fainting, thirsty soul, "how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them that publish salvation—that publish peace—that publish good tidings of good—that say unto Zion, thy God reigneth." But this is not all. They thirst for the atonement of Christ, for they well know that, if they die in their sins, where Christ is they can never come. O how earnest are they at times with the Lord for a manifestation of this to their consciences. This comes also by the gospel ; and therefore you read that forgiveness of sins was to be preached amongst all nations in Christ's name : "He that drinketh my blood hath everlasting life ;" but it is the poor and needy, the guilty, a sinner lost and perishing in himself, that, like the publican, crieth out, "God be merciful to me a sinner," that shall know what this pardon is.

3. They thirst for *the living and true God* : "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God ; My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God ; when shall I come and appear before God ?" (Ps. xlii. 2.) By reading the Psalm, you will find what the psalmist wanted to satisfy this thirst. He thirsted for the health of his countenance, earnestly wishing, longing, and desiring the Lord to visit his soul, to bring it health and cure, and reveal to him the abundance of peace and truth, which are the blessed effects of this visitation, and allay this thirst. He thirsted after the lovingkindness of the Lord, for it is this that delivers the soul from bondage and slavish fear. "Perfect love casteth out fear ;" and when the Lord appears kind to us, and admits us to make free with him in humble confidence, really this is a heaven upon earth ; and at such times we can see his kindness in providence, supplying our need, and his kindness in grace, in the displays which we feel of his love to our souls. These are the things that David thirsted after. Again. He thirsted for a heart to praise God. Hence he says to his soul, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me ? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him." Thus you see what David's thirst was. It was for the living God, as a pardoning God ; for the living God as a loving, kind God, to visit his soul, and that every faculty of it might be upon the stretch to praise his holy name. As he says in the 103rd Psalm, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name." This thirst is at times in all believers ; nor can they be satisfied till the Lord visits them ; and while this influence lasts, they feel their thirst quenched.

4. But again, David tells us a little more about this thirst : "My

soul thirsteth for thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is." (Ps. lxxiii. 1.) No one thing parches and burns up, dries and withers, like heat or fire. Now there are many fires that God's children get into. There is the fire of inbred lusts of all sorts. (James i. 12-15.) The tongue also that no man can tame is called a fire. Both of these David found, and therefore, in that dreadful fall, he had the first, and as respects the second, he prays God to "set a watch upon his mouth, and to keep the door of his lips." Persecution, also, is another parching fire. Hence David says, "If the Lord had not been on our side, then they had swallowed us up." (Ps. cxxxix. 1-3.) Jeremiah calls God's word a fire; and so the Lord's family find it, when the word comes with cutting reproof and rebuke, as it did with David after his fall, when Nathan, the prophet, came to him saying, "Thou art the man." Satan's fiery darts and blasphemous suggestions are called fire; and a dreadful fire they are. David was no stranger to these, I believe.

Now let these fires parch and dry up a soul, and let such a one go to hear a letter preacher, he will find him a well without water, and a cloud without rain; so that he may truly call it a dry and thirsty land where no water is. In this Psalm the psalmist tells us what of God he thirsts for: "To see thy power and glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary." This power is displayed in quenching these fires, and in raising the soul up in heart and affection to the Lord; so that the soul forgets all his troubles, and he sees the King in his beauty. The King is held in the galleries, and the whole soul glorifies God. This is pouring water on the thirsty and floods upon the dry ground; so that the parched ground becomes a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water. In the habitation of dragons (or our corrupt heart) where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes.

Reader, if you have spiritual life, you will find a thirst in your soul for the living God. No forms or modes of worship will satisfy this life. Christ crucified, preached to you by a minister of the Spirit and the word brought home by the power of the Holy Ghost, this only will satisfy your thirst. Moreover, the moral law is a fire, which is to try every chosen vessel of mercy. Some have it very keen at first, and some have it after they have been a good while, perhaps for years, seeking the Lord; and others are greatly exercised with it all their days; but all shall feel this fire more or less. As it is written, "The Lord came from Sinai and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from Mount Paran and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them." Observe how it is worded: "A fiery law for them." Now, under this teaching a man is scorched, burnt, and dried up. It burns up all his fleshly righteousness, all his false conceptions of God, all his dead works and everything that he formerly gloried in. Hence it is called "the rod of his wrath;" for it is only in the law that God is wrath. "The law worketh wrath." David sorely felt it, and describes it thus, "When thou with rebukes correctest man for his iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like the moth."

A sense of God's anger against us for sin is felt : " I am consumed by the blow of thine hand." Now, all this and much more is intended to dry us up, and it is so well managed of the Lord as to create a thirst in the soul for the cool and refreshing waters. " As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country." This good news is the glad tidings of the everlasting gospel, and Christ Jesus is the whole of it, as the angel told the shepherds : " Fear not, for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people ; for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." This is the best news that ever reached the heart of a poor soul that is parched, dried up, scorched, and burnt with these fires ; because these cooling, refreshing waters all flow from the Lord Jesus Christ ; for if he had never assumed our nature and conquered every foe, magnified the holy law, wrought out and brought in an everlasting righteousness, satisfied divine justice, &c., no living water ever could have come to us.

Having therefore shown the cause of this thirst—namely, life and light communicated to the soul by the Holy Ghost, and of the dreadful discoveries such a soul has of his own heart, which makes him thirst for holiness, or a conformity to the image of God, that he thirsts to hear the gospel and thirsts for the living and true God ; and also of the various fires such a soul gets into, which parch, dry, and burn up what can well be spared, cannot you clearly see what sort of a thirst this is, and how it differs from the thirst of this world or a carnal professor ? Can any man in his senses suppose that these living waters are promised to people that thirst for money, pleasure, honour, this world, a good name, gifts, abilities, and various other things ? Must there not be a suitability in the thing that a man thirsts for ? If a man literally is thirsty, gall is not suitable to him. If he is hungry, grass is not fit for him ; and just so spiritually. If a man is dead to God, he thirsts for this world ; but if alive to God, he thirsts after him. No one blessing of a spiritual nature is suitable to a man dead to God, any more than food is to a dead corpse. Sensible sinners are invited ; poor, needy, destitute, lost, guilty, perishing, condemned, polluted wretches, that feel their true state under the quickening operation of the Holy Ghost—such characters are heartily welcome.

II. I come now to treat of these *waters*, and show the *difference* between a coming sinner and one that has already come : " Come ye to the waters."

Now, what I understand by these waters is God in Three Persons. This is the fountain head, from which we receive every drop of this living water. 1. God the Father goes by the name of water : " My people have committed two evils ; they have forsaken me the fountain of living water," &c. 2. God the Holy Ghost : " He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass ; as showers that water the earth." 3. " In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried with a loud voice, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." (John vii. 39.) Thus the Three Divine

Persons are called by the name of water, and, as the prophet Isaiah says, are the "wells of salvation."

But there are many things which a thirsty soul needs which go by the name of water, and which he is to get by coming to the waters which I have mentioned, even the fountain Head; for they are to be got nowhere else. 1. He needs *cleansing*: "From all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you;" "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean." Of his mercy he saves us, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. And O how does a poor needy soul thirst for this cleansing, who feels the power that sin has over him and the vanity of all his best vows and resolutions; who feels himself held fast down by his beloved lusts, which stick as close to him as his skin; Satan all the day long telling him he is an Antinomian, that sin reigns, and that he leads him captive at his will. Ah! None know but those who are thus entangled what hard and sore conflicts God's family have; for they cannot believe but that sin has full dominion over them. It is one thing to talk about sin, and another thing to feel it. As fast as one corruption is subdued, another starts up, more formidable than ever; but there is no relief to be had except by coming to these waters; and remember, it is not once coming and getting cleansed, and then sitting down, saying, "I am cleansed," and so feeling no more trouble about sin. O no. If you ever expect to get such a cleansing as this in this world, you are greatly deceived; for you will be plagued this way till death; so that you will constantly need to come again and again, all your life, to the fountain for this clean water.

2. *Life* is another water that we are to have in an abundant manner by coming to these waters, even to the fountain head; and this we greatly need: "And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." And do you know that none feel their need of this water of life but the man that has life? Say you, "that is a contradiction." Be that as it may, it is a grand truth; for, as I told you, life and light go first. If a man is spiritually dead, he cares nothing about this living water; so that the invitation is not to the dead, but to the living; and they do not come to these waters to receive life at first; but God gives them life, and then bids them come to these living waters. Now this is real truth; and, therefore, there is a preparatory work done in us by the Holy Spirit. To talk of a sinner dead in trespasses and sins coming to these waters, is talking nonsense. And what is it that those want who come? I answer, they want the atonement of Christ brought into their conscience, to remove the guilt and burden of sin; for they've no rest in their souls; as David says, "There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger, nor rest in my bones because of my sins." The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin; and that is what every sensible sinner thirsts after, nor can he rest without it. This you may see in the publican. He dared not so much as lift his eyes to heaven, but smote on his breast, saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner;" and God heard the groanings of his soul;

for he went down to his house justified, which is justification unto life. Thus he obtained this living water. And this is a wonderful thing, that a sinner, all over sin from head to foot, original and actual sins, mounted up to heaven, "more in number than the hairs of his head," should be wholly acquitted by faith in Christ Jesus, and be as if he had never sinned in thought, word, or deed; fully delivered from all his sins, past, present, and to come: "He that drinketh my blood hath everlasting life," and God says he will "abundantly pardon." As Christ in the days of his flesh said, "I come that my sheep might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

3. Again, *righteousness* is obtained by coming to these waters: "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled;" not with their own righteousness, but with the righteousness of the Son of God, which he wrought out for all the elect, and for none else; and by a living faith in this perfect, spotless righteousness, a man is justified freely from all things from which he never could be by the law of Moses. This is the one and only way. This is the righteousness which delivereth from death in all its branches, and it is called water: "Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies *pour down* righteousness."

4. *Peace* is obtained by coming to these waters. This peace every natural man is a stranger to, for destruction and misery are in all their ways, and the way of peace they know not. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." Peace is the effect and the fruit of Christ's death: "He made peace by the blood of his cross," and he ever lives to maintain it, and has promised to extend peace to us like a river, and righteousness like the waves of the sea. Wherever pardon and righteousness are, there is peace in that heart: "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee; go in peace;" and "the work of righteousness is peace."

5. The *love of God* goes by the name of water. Hence Paul tells us that it is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us. This love was the self-moving cause, neither can we trace any further back than this: "God so loved the world, that he gave his Son," &c.; so that the death of Christ, the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost, every unconditional promise, with all the blessings of the new covenant, all flow to us from God's everlasting, unmerited love, through Jesus Christ, the mediator and channel of all conveyance, by the blessed Spirit of all grace and truth, who reveals and makes it all known, experimentally, to our souls.

But you will say, "Is not strictly attending the ordinances of God's house coming to the waters?" Why, it is right to attend to what God has commanded;—but you and I well know that these things of themselves are of no use; for Christ is the fulness of all the means we can use; and if he do not fill them, we must return with our pitchers empty. Therefore,

6. Lastly, *The Gospel*, in the life and power of it, that takes in all that I have mentioned, as regeneration, life, the atonement and righteousness of Christ, peace with God, conscience, and the saints,

and the everlasting love of God ; *this gospel* is called water : " Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak ; and hear, O earth, the word of my mouth. My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass." From which we may notice the *degrees* mentioned about this water. There are *drops* of this rain ; there is the *dew* ; and there are *showers* ; and yet it is all *water*, and comes from this fountain, even God in Three Persons, as I first showed. But he gives it in a sovereign way, as it pleaseth him.

(To be continued in our next.)

LETTERS BY THE LATE STEPHEN OFFER.

LETTER IV.

Dear Sister in the bonds of the everlasting gospel of the eternal covenant of peace,—Our adorable Jesus has undertaken to fulfil all covenant engagements, and glory be to his holy name that he has finished the work that was given him to do ; for if one jot or tittle of the holy law had been left unfulfilled by him, you, and I, and all the church of God must have been condemned for ever. But he, the Lord Jesus, has done all things well. Thousands enjoy the blessings of the temporal covenant that God made with the earth, when he set the bow in the cloud to be a witness that whilst the earth remained there should be seed-time and harvest. But "the church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven," had grace given them in Christ before the world began. O wonderful, unconditional election of love, that those who are saved from hell have done nothing of themselves to merit heaven, nor are they any better in themselves than those who sink down into eternal ruin.

Dear sister, what rich, free, and sovereign grace the Lord has made known unto you in quickening your soul when dead in trespasses and in sins in your youth, whilst so many are left to fulfil the "lusts of their flesh, the lust of their eyes, and the pride of life." The power of the Holy Spirit has been made known to you in convincing you of sin, and not only of outward sin, or else you would only have been a self-righteous, proud, boasting Pharisee ; but he has written the law in its purity in your heart, by which you feel yourself a law-condemned sinner. So the law is made a schoolmaster, to bring you unto Jesus the great Law-fulfiller. By the complaints that you make in your letters about your sins, I know that you do not mean outward, practical sins, but the inbeing of sin in the chambers of imagery in your heart ; and if you should live a little longer in this wilderness, you will see greater abominations yet, for all Israel must know the plague of their own hearts. But sin shall not have the dominion over you, for you are not under the law, but under grace ; and we must know our own weakness, that we are "not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but that our sufficiency is of the Lord," that he may have all the glory of our salvation and every deliverance of quickening grace that he works in our poor

souls, from the first to the last. Salvation is all of rich and sovereign grace.

I understand by your last letter that you have some impressions on your mind to change your situation in life from a single to a marriage state. If the young man with whom you are connected be a profane person, or one that believes in a conditional salvation, I should, as one that wishes well to your soul, persuade you, if possible, to break off the connection, knowing that there could be no real soul-union between you. But if the Lord the Spirit has taught you both to see eye to eye in the doctrine of unconditional election before time, and the particular redemption of the church by the precious blood of the Lamb of God in time, and that all the chosen and redeemed shall be made to feel their need of the precious blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus in the day of the Lord's power, and if you can see alike in experience and practice, and can both leave father and mother and be no longer twain, but be united as one, I have no Scripture authority to gainsay it, but hope that it is appointed of the Lord; and if it should be that you may be helpmates together in faith, and prayer, and love, if you marry to one of the Lord's dear children, you have not sinned; but such shall have trouble in the flesh. But the time is short. "They that marry will soon be as though they were not married, for the end of all things is at hand."

My wife and Susannah join me in giving their kind love to you, wishing you every blessing, temporal and spiritual.

S: OFFER.

Let such a soul be wounded, let such a man's heart be broken; let such a man be made sick through the sting of guilt, and be made to wallow himself in ashes under the burden of his transgressions; and then, who but Christ? then, the physician; then, "Wash me, Lord; supply my wounds;" then, "Pour thy wine and oil into my sore." Then, Lord Jesus, cause me to hear the voice of joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Nothing now so welcome as healing; and so nothing, no man, so desirable now as Christ; his name to such is the best of names; his love to such is the best of love; himself, being now, not only in himself, but also to such a soul, the chiefest of ten thousands.—*Bunyan.*

Let a wolf be taken while a cub from its mother's den, and fed and trained up with lambs, yet it is a wolf still; and in the after stages of life will show its original relationship to the wolf by its wolfish nature. Such are all the children of the bondwoman. Educate them, train them, bring them under the continual means of grace, catechise them, make them read the Scriptures, hear sermons, cram them with all the trammels of religion until that they are full in the mouth in creeds and prayer-books; yet without a change of heart, without a new nature, there will be no removal from the old stock. The Ishmaels can never become Isaacs, no more than the Isaacs can become Ishmaelites. As is the root, so are the branches.—*Hawker.*

I WAS BROUGHT LOW, AND HE HELPED ME.

My very dear Friend and Brother,—It has been much in my mind of late to write you; and on Saturday last, upon the mention of your name by my dear wife, my heart was influenced with such a feeling of love to you, that it seemed as though I must come down to you at once. But while thinking this over, about coming down to see you, these words arrested my mind, and brought a decision with them: "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not convenient." Well, I thought the Lord leading me, and helping me, I would write. But I find I cannot do this so readily as I appeared to do years back, as I am now exercised about my motives in these things; and when I am weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, I am proved to be so wanting in singleness of eye to the Lord, that I am afraid lest self-exaltation should be the spring of all my actions. I do, my dear friend, find sin to be "mixed with all I do;" and yet I feel a something within me that hates self, and all that springs from self, and would gladly "give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name." And I trust the sequel of this letter will show that no poor sinner under the heavens has greater reason to speak good of his name than I have. I do hope I can, to the honor and praise of his name, say, "I was brought low, and he helped me;" "This poor man cried unto the Lord, and the Lord heard him, and delivered him out of all his fears;" "O taste, and see that the Lord is good, there is no want to them that fear him; the young lions do lack and suffer hunger, but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." While you are reading this, you may be wondering what it all can mean, coming as it does from one who, as you know, was sunk so low that he lived in daily expectation lest the horrible pit into which he had been cast "would shut her mouth upon him." Yes, my brother, it has been my lot, for nearly five years past, to fear every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as though he were ready to destroy me. So soon as the measure of my iniquity was full, I feared that the command would be given, "Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?" But I do desire to thank the Lord that so it has not been, and at this moment I am blessed with a hope and sweet confidence in the Lord that it never will be so. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." And again: "I know the thoughts that I think concerning you; thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." "The needy shall not always be forgotten, neither shall the expectation of the poor perish for ever;" "Those that wait for me shall not be ashamed." I believe the psalmist had proved in his own soul these blessed declarations of God's holy word, and this led him to exhort others. He says, "Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord." And so, my dear friend, I would say to every sin-distressed, devil-hunted soul,

“Wait on him alway; be constant though weak;
The Lord whom thou seekest will not tarry long;
And to him the weakest is dear as the strong.”

I feel something like this, “Come all ye that fear the Lord, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul.” But how to speak of it, or set it forth as I would, I know not; yet this I feel,

“Had I ten thousand tongues,
They’d all be far too few.
To give my Jesus all the praise
And glory to him due.”

He has, indeed, in my case, “made the lame man to leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing;” and he who thought a little time ago his character to be pointed out in that of the wicked who should be silent in darkness, is now favored to sing on the heights of Zion, and to shout the high praise of God from the top of the mountain—the mountains of God’s everlasting love to poor perishing sinners, who deserve nothing at his hands, and have been led to look for nothing else but everlasting destruction. But blessed be his glorious name, though he “turneth man to destruction” in his own apprehension, yet, in the set time, he is pleased to say, “Return, ye children of men;” and at his commanding voice “the ransomed of the Lord do return, and come to Zion with songs;” and, at the end of their race, they shall obtain such “joy and gladness, that sorrow and sighing shall flee away.” Yes, “there shall be no night there;” but “the Lord shall be their everlasting light, and their God their glory.” One dear saint, with a sweet view of this before him, says,

“O glorious hour! O bless’d abode!
I shall be near and like my God.”

Do we not love this nearness now? Is not the language of our souls, more or less, “Draw me, and we will run after thee?” There is such inexpressible beauty and excellency in the Person of Immanuel, that if he is pleased to reveal a little of his blessed self to the soul, “the virgins do love him,” because “his mouth is most sweet.” He is never, if I may so speak, a silent visitor—a useless or troublesome one. He always speaks when he comes, and the salutation is this, “Peace, peace be unto you.” Who, then, can give trouble? “Where the word of a king is, there is power.” And I have found both “death and life” to be “in the power of the tongue” of this King. “I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal.” And “what the Lord doeth is done for ever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken away from it; and he doeth it that men may fear before him.”

I believe the first thought that entered my mind after I awoke on the Lord’s Day morning, about 5 o’clock, was the words, “Verily there is a reward for the righteous; verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth.” This reward was set before my mind in the Person of the Lord Jesus, saying unto Abraham, “Fear not, Abraham, I am thy shield and exceeding great reward;” a reward not of gold, but of grace; God’s “unspeakable gift.” And is it not

strange to say, that, although this be the greatest gift that a God can bestow, yet man is too rich in himself to receive or accept of it as God's will, and have it "without money and without price." No, he cannot, until that same God is pleased to make him poor enough to feel that were a good thought or desire needed from him to procure him the possession of it, he must absolutely perish for the want of that good thought or desire. Nay, further, that he not only can produce no good thing from himself, but is as helpless in preventing the risings and flowings of evil; having to learn, by bitter experience, the Lord's own testimony, that "out of the heart of man proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, blasphemies," and such like; and also that "every *imagination* of the thoughts of man's heart is only evil, and that continually." Many, my friend, will be ready to acquiesce in the letter of this; but, O to feel it for one's self "cuts deep," as Mr. Hart says, "beyond expression." I have of late seen the force, and felt the truth of a few lines of a hymn of that departed servant of the Lord, Gadsby. He says,

"God's children must not learn
As schoolboys learn their task;
Such knowledge is not proof
Against delusion's blast.
An empty knowledge bloats with air,
But dies when dreadful storms appear."

In that hymn he is led to speak of the way in which the Lord deals with his family, and I am a living witness of the truth of his assertion, "The rod and reproof give wisdom." Yes, the wisdom of knowing one's own folly and wickedness. The Lord leads his people about now for the very same purpose as he did of old, "to humble them, to prove them, and to show them what was in their hearts." Thus, I trust, my dear friend, I may say the Lord has in mercy condescended to deal with me, and not to give me up, as I really thought he would, to a reprobate mind, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

But I want, if I can, to come to the way in which the dear Lord was pleased to bring about this wonderful change in my poor soul; it is indeed so great and wonderful to me that I hardly know sometimes how to give it full credit as being a reality. If any one had asked me, for many years past, whether I was perfectly lost, in my own apprehension, for aught that I could do or say, I should have readily answered, "Yes;" but I now see that all my strength was not gone; there was something yet shut up and left, so shut up too that I could not see it. I had thought and felt thousands of times, from the distress and anguish of my soul, (through a continuation of such horrid blasphemous thoughts as I was almost the subject of,) that I must lie down and die; nay, that I could not and would not live in such a way; it would be better for me to put an end to my life, which I was tempted to do every time I took the razor in my hand. But, O! "Kept by the power of God!" and what less than the power of God can keep a soul in such a furnace as this? This is the furnace to set in a blaze a man's filthy rags, and strip him naked and bare, so that he is "cast out

into the open field to the loathing of his person," and there must wallow and perish in his blood, unless he who is the Life, the very Life, passes by him, and says unto him in his sins and his blood, "Live!" Then live he must and shall.

Now, as well as I am able, and it is brought to my remembrance, I will tell you how this was brought about; but I must confess I feel more liberty in speaking about the dear Lord than myself. However, about three weeks since, after leaving business, and passing through Bishopsgate Street, on my way home, it was brought to my mind, "Why, what an unthankful, ungrateful creature you are." "Yes," I was obliged to say, "I am; and what can I do; I would not be so if I could help it; but I cannot create gratitude." I thought I felt as I did because I belonged to that class denominated, in God's word, as "unthankful, and to every good work reprobate," and that there was no hope for me. After going on a few steps, the following words came into my mind: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him, might not perish, but have everlasting life." Well, that word, "*whosoever*," seemed to dwell upon my mind a little, and yielded a little encouragement; but then it came, "*whosoever believeth on him*." Ah, thought I, there it is—I can't believe. O if I could believe; but I cannot believe. Then my heart began to cry out as I walked along, "Lord help me to believe; O I would, but I cannot." Such a pleading, wrestling spirit that I had been so long a stranger to was given, that I did not know what to do, how to give up, without the blessing. When I had proceeded a little further, I remember I said, "Lord, would not thy mercy be magnified in the salvation of such a sinner as I am, as much as thy justice would be glorified in my destruction?" And now a little softness, a little giving way, a little melting of the stone, was felt, when the words of Mr. Hart came into my soul with some degree of sweetness:

"O what is honor, wealth, or mirth,
To this well-grounded peace?
How poor are all the goods of earth
To such a gift as this!"

Ah, I thought, "*well-grounded peace, well-grounded peace*;" the words kept sounding in my soul, love began to kindle, and my feelings were expressed in a line or two of Watts:

"Command my soul away
From all created good."

And so I desired, for just then I had to call at a shop where my dear wife and I had appointed to meet; and sorry I was it was so, as I should perhaps lose the feelings that were so highly prized because so long denied me. However, I find I cannot go through it step by step, how I was taken on until I got into that "river the streams whereof make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved. God will help her, and that right early." If I should be favored to see you again, and the dear Lord is pleased

to bless us together with the lifting up the light of his countenance, and also to bring to my remembrance the way in which he was pleased to bring me out of a strait into a broad place, I shall, I trust, rejoice to have my mouth opened to show forth his praise. You know it is written, "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise." I shall, I believe, be glad to hear from you as soon as convenient, and also to learn the state of your dear wife's soul. Tell her I feel, as Mr. Hart says,

"The vilest may have it, it always comes free;
The worthless my crave it, 'twas given to me.

"Sick sinner, expect no balm but Christ's blood;
Thine own works reject, the bad and the good;
None ever miscarry that on him rely,
Though filthy as Mary, Manasseh, or I."

And I would say to her, as I trust it was often whispered into my soul during my long night of trial, although I could not discern the voice of the Lord in it then, but do so now,

"Still wait, for he shall all explain,
Nor shalt thou seek his face in vain."

And now, my dear brother, I wish you the sweet and blessed realisation of all that a covenant God can bestow, and that the dear Lord will be pleased still to hold up your goings in his paths, for all his paths are mercy and truth to such as keep his covenant, and that remember his commandments to do them. I am satisfied that you wish to be more than a hearer of the word; you have been made, as James says, through grace to look by the Spirit into the perfect law of liberty, and wish to continue therein, which favor may the Lord grant you, is the desire and prayer of

Yours in the truth and love of the gospel,

London, Oct. 2, 1854.

R. K.

I know there are some flaming Arminians, who tell us that, "a man may persevere until he comes to die, and yet perish in almost the very article of death;" and they illustrate this wretched, God-dishonouring, and soul-shocking doctrine, by the simile of a ship's foundering in the harbor's mouth. It is very true that some wooden vessels have so perished. But it is no less true, that all God's chosen vessels are infallibly safe from so perishing. For, through his goodness, every one of them is insured by him whom the winds and seas, both literal and metaphorical, obey. And their insurance runs thus: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee." "The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads." So far are they from foundering within sight of land.—*Toplady*.

The heat of Nebuchadnezzar's fire was, in the issue, a means of increasing the faith of the three worthies. In this point of view, the very lions Daniel might at first fear, would, in a little time, preach to him the special love and care of Jehovah.—*Timothy Priestley*.

A LETTER FROM THE LATE J. KEYT.

My dear Friend,—Inclosed you will receive the epistles requested, agreeable to stipulation. Be pleased to accept my sincere thanks for your kind and spiritual letter. I have read it over and over again with attention, and, by divine teaching, not only understand the import of its contents, but have also, in my measure, learned by experience the whole subject-matter of it, both in the heights and the depths.

I have, my beloved friend, tasted, yea, drunk deeply, both of the wormwood and the gall, the milk and the honey—the wine of astonishment and the wine of the kingdom. I have found days of prosperity and days of adversity, both spiritual and temporal, during my long pilgrimage of near threescore years and ten, and to the present period find, to my grief, that the days of darkness are many; nevertheless, the dimness is not such as was in my vexation heretofore, when sitting and walking in the dark valley of the shadow of death; for, through the tender mercy of the Most High, the Day-spring from on high hath visited me, and “unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness.” (Ps. cxii. 4.)

The principal difference between me and my friend appears in my being so dull and stupid a scholar, though my most blessed and gracious Teacher hath in very faithfulness instructed me with many strokes of his chastening rod. Yet such has been the perversity of my stubborn will, such the wanderings of my wayward heart, so bent to backslide, that nothing short of stroke upon stroke has been sufficient to keep me in my proper place to this day. I have felt that “correction is grievous to him that forsaketh the way,” and have learned that the rod and reproof, attended with humbling grace, give wisdom.

Under the tuition of the Almighty, I have been instructed and brought to conclude that sanctified afflictions and tribulations are real covenant blessings; and when attended with contrition and godly sorrow, my soul is even as a weaned child; so that I would now choose rather to sit down under such soul-humblng sensations at the Lord's feet than to possess the riches of many wicked, or to be wrapped up in the delusive web of those who have a name to live and are dead. In Rev. iii. 19, I find the love of God and his chastening rod are inseparably united; all, therefore, who are strangers to the experience of the latter are equally strangers to the comforts of the former—bastards, and not sons; and consequently will be excluded from that heavenly inheritance which is laid up for those who are children, and who must pass through fire and water ere they are brought into the wealthy place of everlasting rest.

It appears that you were almost excited to laughter while reading my poor scrap. It is true I fetched a compass in order to insure the return of the papers you requested to see; but believe me when I say that I felt nothing of a light and trifling spirit while writing to you. This being the case, I found no reproof from your kind

caution, but was rather pleased and gratified by that godly jealousy you were exercised with, both over yourself and towards me.

The fleshly joys of a stony-ground hearer or of the stony heart will never find anything to feed upon in the contents of the enclosed epistles. The joy that springs from the manifestations of God's everlasting and pardoning love, flowing in the rich channel of the adorable Redeemer's precious blood, is always attended with soul-humbling effects; and the nearer the Almighty condescends to approach a recipient of his sovereign grace, the deeper that soul sinks in self-abasement and self-loathing: witness, Abraham, when pleading for Sodom; Moses at the burning bush; Joshua before the captain of the Lord's host; Gideon when laying his sacrifice upon the rock; Manoah on a like occasion; Job, when the Lord pleaded with him; and Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, with others recorded in the book of truth; and as it was from the beginning, so it is found to this day, and you know it is even so. I am inclined to designate the "wayfaring man who is now on a visit at your house" as an inhabitant, and not a visitor. The new man is a dweller with you, although the Canaanite is still in the land. It is, I conceive, the visitations of the Almighty and most Holy Spirit that enlarge and preserve your soul in its present lively frame. It is only when the heavenly and sacred Spirit blows upon his own plantations, and while the King sitteth at his table, that the spices flow out, and the spikenard sendeth forth its fragrant smell. When there is a suspension of these blessed influences, you may call yourself an "automaton figure," in the opposite and worst sense of the word; yet, even when these sad changes take place, (as they too often do with me,) there is hope in Israel, and a ground for strong consolation; for "I," saith the Lord Jesus Christ, "will see you again, and your hearts shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." As to "temporal adversity," I believe we are equally matched; but all our changes and trials come by divine appointment, and shall eventually work together for our future and everlasting good. A vessel of mercy well ballasted with adversity and tribulation is much safer than one that with outspread sails is floating on the sea of prosperity. We may read the mercy of our God, and learn his holy purposes in thus appointing and mingling our lot, in Deut. viii. 2-5; and there are seasons when I can adopt the language of Judah's afflicted king with application to myself. (Isa. xxxviii. 16-19.)

I am, in gospel bonds, yours affectionately,

October 17, 1829.

J. KEYT.

Patient submission to God under desertion is sweet. What though I saw no reason why I cry and shout, and God answered not? His comforts and his answers are his own free graces. He may do with his own what he thinks good, and grace is no debt. "Hear, O Lord, for thy own sake." (Dan. ix. 19.) Infinite sovereignty may lay silence upon all hearts. "What shall I say? He hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done it." (Isa. xxxviii. 15.) It is an act of heaven; I bear it with silence.—*Rutherford.*

A WORD OF EXHORTATION FROM A MINISTER
TO HIS PEOPLE.

To my dear Friends meeting together at _____ Chapel for the worship of the only true and living God, as revealed in his word, and received into your hearts who love him as a just God and Saviour of sinners, having of his own will laid sin on Jesus Christ, who was willing to bear it in his own body on the tree, that God might be just and yet forgive the sins of them that believe in the name of Jesus.

I had many anxious thoughts and desires for you last night, as I lay on my bed, that the Lord may bless you with the rich anointing of the blessed Spirit of Truth; that your hearts may be knit together in love; that you may strive together to hold the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; that none may be desirous of vain glory; that your conversation may be to edification and profit—not vain, and about others' business; that the Lord may bless you with the light of his countenance, favor you with divine comfort, enable you to draw near to him at a throne of grace, reveal to you a knowledge of his will concerning you under all circumstances; that you may live in the world as those who are going through it to a better country; that you may bring your troubles to the Lord, who only can help your grievances; that your souls may find the Rock beneath you, and be able to find the race set before you, looking to Jesus Christ, who is the Author and Finisher of your faith; that the Lord may sanctify every dispensation of his providence to you; that you may be able to bear with each other's infirmities, nor expect to find in others that which is not in yourselves, knowing we are all compassed with infirmity; that the ways of the Lord and the order of his house may be found pleasant and not burdensome. These, and many other longing desires, my soul had for you in the nightwatches, and I felt it my duty and desire to write you.

But methinks you will be ready to say, "If all this be so, why leave us so much?" This is a matter which much exercises my mind; but I am not my own in this. If I were to think my own thoughts, I should think he would never send his word to any good purpose by me at all. My dear friends, I hope the Lord may bless the message of him who stands up in his name among you; that God's word by him may be as waters to the thirsty soul. I hope you may be able to come in secret to him who seeth in secret, and ask him to search you, being willing to suffer any cost that your souls may prosper. Do not encourage that which clogs your conscience with guilt; if you are tortured from day to day with besetting sins, go with the worst to him; he will find a way to hold you up, if not deliver you. I pray the merciful Lord that he will bless you, and that the day may be near when you may long for the courts of the Lord, that we may see each other's face with pleasure, and that love may flow from heart to heart.

O, my friends, it is poor work for us, when we come together, if God's mercies do not rejoice our hearts, or our many departures

from him make us groan, and say, "How long shall it be thus, and darkness attend my path?" God's cause and Christ's church will flourish best with a goodly portion of joy and grief. To rejoice, hoping in God's mercy, and grieve for our own wretched sinfulness—these two things make communion of saints. Pray for it.

Thus I have given you a little of the concern I have in my heart for you. I hope, though in a feeble way, it may not all fall to the ground.

Believe me, though unworthy,
Your affectionate Servant,

South Moreton, Jan. 10, 1855.

W. D.

TO LIVE IS CHRIST; TO DIE IS GAIN.

Dear Friend,—I had heard of the death of our friend B—— on Monday; but I did not hear whether he revived or not after we saw him. I hardly thought it likely he would. I had an impression, from what his wife said, that he would go that evening, and that he expected he should be with the Lord by the next. I should think it was some kind messenger sent from above to minister to him, as it appears he had an intimation that it was the Lord's intention to take him to be with himself. "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them." They know no more infirmities of body or mind, but are completely clean, whole, perfect, and free from all they groaned under while in a body of sin and death. We cannot tell what it is wholly here, but hope to come to a full knowledge of it when we depart. What an infinite mercy to know the only true God in our hearts; to tremble at the glory of his Majesty; to fall down before him; to sit condemned; but to find him full of mercy and compassion in Jesus Christ, and by faith to be able to believe, and lay hold by hope, that God is reconciled towards us, though our state be bad by nature; to hang the whole weight of our sin-ruined souls on Jesus Christ, in whom alone all salvation is, and find we have peace through him: this is life eternal. There is no coming to and walking in this new and living way without having a burden. No unregenerate person knows that Christ is the one thing needful to our soul. Our needs will be infinite, for this mercy is infinite; so that I find to have Christ the first and the last, makes me feel the depth of my state, and the wonders of his mercy. I find, without faith, I cannot walk the narrow road. O, my friend, how much we need faith; no getting on without it; no standing still to see the salvation of God, unless the good Lord, who enables us to believe and hope in his mercy, careth for us, and waiteth to be gracious.

Our departed friend will never groan to the Lord for another token for good; for he is now in full possession of it. May it be a voice to the remaining, "Be ye also ready." We must not think we shall have no opposition, for I believe there will be times when we shall feel beaten by it. Still we must look for it, for we must

know Jesus Christ, whom the Father sent into the world, is the One Thing needful, and all the salvation of them that believe. I say all their salvation; were it not so, or I unable to believe it so, I should, with my present feelings, be as far from the kingdom of heaven as when I was profane; for, though I believe I have the fear of the Lord in my heart, it makes no part of my righteousness before God, but causes me to feel my weakness more, and more of Christ, the only One Thing needful. I hope and pray he may be with us as a Saviour, and enable us to come to him; and, as he has seen fit to gather one from us, that he may mercifully plant, and cause to grow a rising seed to call him blessed.

I believe our friend will be missed, as he stood in a position of usefulness, being the only male resident in the place. I hope the Lord will appear for us, as the case is open to his all-seeing eye. I hope it may be especially laid on the minds of the church to seek him for direction.

A LETTER BY THE LATE WILLIAM ABBOTT.

Dear Friend,—As I know you are glad to hear of the goodness of the Lord to his poor tried servant, and as you were not at our chapel on Sunday, where you would have discerned it, I feel myself disposed, before the dew is dried up, or my soul robbed of its peace, to send you a line. Last week for the most part was a very trying time with me; indeed, I was left under the strugglings of a corrupt heart, the hidings of the Lord's face, a heavier burden in temporal matters than usual, the devil very busy in buffeting and accusing me, unbelief like a mountain, and myself very poorly and weak in body; all these things threw a dark veil of gloominess and dejection over my mind, accompanied by many doubts and fears. This state of mind continued until Sunday; upon rising in the morning my heart sank at the work of the day. I said, "What shall I do? O unbelief, begone, begone! I must not listen to thy suggestions. O for a change for the better! O that the Lord would burst the bands and rend the bars, relieve me of my load, and convince me he is with me in the work, that he will help me, stand by me, and strengthen me by his Spirit, lest I be put to shame and confusion!" I felt undetermined what words to speak from, until about half an hour before the time this passage (Job vii. 17, 18) came to mind: "What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him? and that thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment?" I know not that I was ever favored with more enlargement of heart or freedom of speech, and I believe some present felt the power of it. Poor old S—'s face shone like the sun, and poor C— came to me, but could hardly speak, his heart was so broken under a sense of the goodness of God; poor K— found matters revived, and his soul refreshed. My heart melted even like wax before the fire. While they were singing the last hymn, I gave vent to my feelings

in weeping tears of love and joy, finding the Lord had taken away all my trouble. I left all my burdens with him. The hymn was sweet. It begins thus,

“To thee, my God, I make my plaint.”

It appears to me a very beautiful hymn. Do read it. I have enjoyed sweet peace since. I have been looking and watching ; a cloud appeared as large as a man's hand ; you know what followed ; a sound of abundance of rain. We are told by James, the prophet prayed again, and the Lord sent rain, and the earth brought forth her increase. We know the Lord will work in his own time and way. I was wishing my wife at home, that she might bear a part of the burden, but now I am not in haste. “No chastening for the present is joyous, but grievous ; nevertheless, afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them who are exercised thereby.” One more landmark is set up. One more high heap, one more stone erected in the highway. This will enable me under future trials to sing,

“His love in times past forbids me to think
He'll leave me at last in trouble to sink ;
Each sweet Ebenezer I have in review
Confirms his good pleasure to bring me safe through.”

I hope you will be enabled to cast all your burdens and cares upon him, because he careth for us. It is a comfort to me there are a few who are concerned each for the other's welfare, who know what it is to wrestle in private. This I call real fellowship ; the unity of the Spirit, and that charity which is the bond of all perfectness. The Lord grant it may increase more amongst us. Such souls weep with those who weep, and rejoice with those who are glad. Thus, like the wheels and cherubim in Ezekiel's vision, we move in concert ; when one is cast down, the other is dejected ; when one is elevated from the earth, the other is lifted up ; for it is said “the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels,” but one spirit in them all. We are not strangers to the path the apostle went. “As unknown, yet well known ; as dying, and behold we live ; as chastened, yet not killed ; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing ; as poor, yet making many rich ; as having nothing, yet possessing all things.”

Yours affectionately in the Lord,

WILLIAM ABBOTT.

Mayfield, August 9, 1825.

When God sent me out I was friendless and defenceless ; poor to an extreme, and illiterate to the last degree ; without a Bible or book of any kind in all the world ; and I labored hard for bread, suffering hunger, cold, and nakedness. I was sent into dark corners of the earth, where there was no light nor truth ; and was opposed both by professors at home, and the profane abroad. But L— bears a brighter aspect ; there is a house of prayer ready, and a candlestick, but it wants a light ; a golden bell, but it wants a clapper ; a body of people wanting an eye ; a cry for bread, but none to break it.—
Huntington.

R E V I E W.

Is it possible to Make the Best of Both Worlds? A Book for Young Men. By T. Binney. Eighth Edition. London: J. Nisbet and Co. 1854.

BOOKS of this kind rarely fall into our hands, and still less frequently afford a suitable subject for Review. When once the eyes have been divinely enlightened to see, and the heart opened to believe, the mysteries of sin and salvation, it is for the most part worse than waste of time to read works written by men ignorant alike of malady and remedy. And yet, though, as a general rule, this is most certainly true, an occasional glance at them may not be wholly without interest. To give a passing look at such books is something like walking down Regent Street. We have not the remotest intention or wish to enter in, or purchase anything out of the splendid shops that meet the eye; but a passing glance may show us, without our even wishing to see, what the fashionable world runs after and admires. So, from merely glancing at the pages of a work of this description, instruction may be gathered, though of a very different nature from that intended by the writer; and we may see in it, as in a plate glass shop-window, what is the fashionable religion as ticketed at the most attractive figure for the professors of the day. Separated as we are, by conscience and choice, from the general mass of Dissenters, never hearing their ministers, nor mingling with the people, we live in comparative ignorance of the actual state of things amongst them. We read, then, a book of this kind, written by one of their most popular preachers, not with any hope or expectation of getting soul-profit from it, but much as we should an account of what is doing in the Crimea.

Put forward, under a most attractive title, by a leading minister of the Independent denomination, it stands at the very head of the way, calling to those who are just entering upon a world of sin and sorrow, and telling them that, if they will be but ruled by its counsels, it will put them into a most certain path of present and future happiness. Such a title, it is true, no more attracts us than a ticketed article of mock jewellery in the window would draw us into a pawnbroker's shop; for the very label tied round the book's neck carries deception on the face of it; and if we buy it, it is only to break it up, put it into the melting-pot, and expose the counterfeit. Treated, then, in this way, the book thus puffed off may serve to show us what sort of an article, under the name of religion, finds a ready acceptance amongst that great army which writes "Dissent" upon its banners. And we must say, after reading it, that, bad as we previously thought the state of things amongst them was, this book has convinced us that the reality, if this be a fair sample of their principles and practice, is far worse than all our suspicions.

This, then, is our chief, indeed our only, motive for bringing a book of this kind before our readers—that they may see in it, as

in a glass, what sort of a religion the truth has saved them from—how false in its beginning, deceptive in its progress, and ruinous in its end; and abundant reason they will have to bless the God of all grace if they can find, wrought by a divine power in their hearts, a religion as different from the one set forth in this book as light excels darkness, life surpasses death, truth outshines error, and the work and witness of the Holy Ghost the lying flatteries of man.

The origin and object of the work may be soon told. It was originally a Lecture, the last of a series addressed to the members of "The London Young Men's Christian Association," which, not being published at the time, on account of the Author's illness, he subsequently expanded into a volume. Its object is to set forth religion in its most attractive form before young men in the commercial walks of life, and especially before that vast mass of youth which the great seething vat of the huge metropolis is daily and hourly drawing into its drudging mill of business, and there wearing out their body and soul by making them keep pace with the ever-whirling fly-wheel of Mammon's million-horse-power steam engine. Now, as these young men, urged on by the precept and example of their employers, and stimulated by their own interest and ambition to grasp this life as their all, might naturally fear, if they embraced the hopes of another world, they must renounce all prospects of profit and pleasure in this, the popular Mr. Binney comes forward to assure them that to think so is all a mistake, and that, by proper management, they may "make the best of both worlds," the present and the future; in other words, that they may, if they will but follow his counsel, contrive to enjoy all the riches, honors, profits, and pleasures, sinful and immoral ones excepted, that this world offers, and then, in green and honored old age, may gently glide out of them to drink of the pleasures which are at God's right hand for evermore.

Need we wonder that such a book has already reached eight editions, and is sold at every railway book stall? For, besides the attractiveness of such a subject, it is really, in point of style and expression, merely regarded as a work of art, most admirably written. Its language is a model of plain, forcible appeal, with no false, stilted, mock eloquence to mar its point, but full of that familiar illustration which so hits the level of the class of mind to which it is addressed, and yet redeemed from vulgarity by its pure, simple English, running along clear and sparkling like a mountain brook. In addition, then, to its captivating subject, it is doubtless this popular style which makes it at once so attractive and yet, in similar proportion, we cannot forbear using the word, so awfully deceptive. Do our readers recollect the memorable conversation of Mr. Worldly Wiseman with Christian, as drawn by the graphic hand of the immortal tinker? Well, the book before us is neither more nor less than a sermon from that text; and the Lecture might have been given with the most unbounded applause in the Exeter Hall of the town of Morality, with my Lord Fairspeech in

the chair, Mr. Byends, Mr. Moneylove, and Demas, afterwards smothered in the silver mine, on the platform, and Lady Feigning and her daughters, in their best white veils, among the audience, to the theological students at the academy of the Rev. Mr. Legality and the drapers' assistants in the large and flourishing establishment of Mr. Civility.

We can hardly give even a brief sketch of the subject without more copious extracts from the work than our limits admit; but its leading idea is this, that assuming happiness in this life to consist of certain elements; the religious man, in addition to the great prize at the end of the race, has, so to speak, the best chance of obtaining them all. These elements are health, cheerfulness, competence, reputation, culture of the intellect and affections, some source and spring of strength and consolation against inevitable troubles, and, to crown all, a green old age. These almost indispensable requisites of earthly happiness, he contends, are best secured by early piety, and the steady pursuit of a course of religion and virtue; as they are most certainly forfeited by such sinful indulgences and vicious, immoral pleasures as are opposed to it. With the old and middled-aged, who have hitherto neglected religion, and thus "spoiled and poisoned life," he considers himself to have nothing to do. These, he believes, have pretty well sealed their own doom already as regards this present life, and their case is almost desperate for making the best of this world, though not wholly hopeless to win for themselves a place in the next. Nor will he have *invalids*, either in body or mind, as these afford no sufficient stamina for him to work upon.* The consumptive, the dyspeptic, the bilious, the nervous, the desponding, the weak in head or heart, wind or limb, he will very considerably take into the hospital, but he will not admit them into the ranks of the army which, under him, is to march to the conquest of both worlds. The young, and the healthy young only, will he take as fit subjects for his experiment; them, and them only, will he make the confidants of his great secret—the means of ensuring present and future happiness.

But it is time to introduce our readers to a nearer acquaintance with the book. The following extract will give a fair idea of its lively, buoyant, familiar style :

* "I must have a young man with a fair average constitution, physical and mental, to begin with. The most of the race, you know, or of those, at least, who live to be men, come into the world in a good condition as to bodily soundness, and with a competent amount of original faculty. Let me have a young man, then, of good health and ordinary common sense; with some degree of educational culture, and some means of getting his living. I don't undertake to teach one to make the best of life who has already poisoned or wasted it. I cannot work with such stuff. The clay is marred, and no potter can make anything of it, but something according to its condition. I won't have, either, a man weak and imperfect in mind or body, an idiot or an invalid. I can prescribe something medicinally for them—something to cure or alleviate; but I can make none of them into the sort of men you want to see, and that I want to see you."

"Now, in looking at all this, we cannot but see, as a simple, plain matter of fact, that some people do actually make a good thing of the present world, and that some don't. With the first, life is bright, joyous, successful, happy. They contrive to work up its raw material into something noble, beautiful, and good. With the second it is otherwise: in their hands life becomes a bitterness and a burden; it puts on the appearance of a repulsive deformity; the whole thing is a miserable failure; they blunder on—get wrecked and lost—worry themselves, wear out their friends, and then 'wish they had never been born!' These things, too, are obvious and every-day matters of fact. There they are. There's no denying them. It is as plain as that there is a real visible world, that there are two ways of getting through it. The question before us, then, you will observe, is not whether it be possible to make the best of this life—or at least to make a tolerably or thoroughly good thing of it—for that is admitted and acknowledged as a preliminary fact—but whether it is possible to do this, and, at the same time, to secure the blessings and advantages of the next? Can we now act on any principle which, while it provides for the use and enjoyment of the one world, will provide for and secure the happiness of the other?"

After hinting at two or three supposed ways of making the *worst* of both worlds, or the *worst* of one and the *best* of the other, or the *best* of the one and the *worst* of the other, all the while quietly assuming that man is a free agent, and God a mere looker-on, holding the reins neither of providence nor grace, he thus states his own view:

"But the question with us is, whether there is not another supposition, another possibility; whether, in fact, it is absolutely necessary for either one world or the other to be sacrificed; or whether it may not be possible to make the best of both? Nay, I know not but that I should even be willing to put it thus: whether the life that now is might not be so taken hold of in its raw material, and worked up and woven in such a manner, as to become a resplendent thing, simply as a present temporary possession—the man feeling it a joy to have been born, though there should be no second birth for him into a higher state; whether, moreover, this might not be accomplished on such a principle that, supposing there should be a second state, the advantages and happiness of that state should be secured and prepared for too?"

"That is the question. I mean to give to it, on the whole, an affirmative reply. I believe, in fact, that the constitution of things is such—that man's nature is so wonderful, that the world and life are such beautiful and glorious things, and that the tendency of the laws under which we live is so thoroughly on our side, if we only place and keep ourselves in harmony with them, that even if there were no second world, it is worth a great deal to be born into this. If there were really no God over him, no heaven above or eternity in prospect, things are so constituted, that man may deem it a most fortunate accident that he lives at all. He may turn the materials of his little life-poem, if not always into a grand epic, mostly into something of interest and beauty; and it is worth his doing so, even if there should be no sequel to the piece. I believe, however, that there will be one; and I venture to think, that if set about rightly, both parts of the performance might be expressed in sustained and harmonious verse."

What a pretty piece of heathenism for a Christian minister to write! The fall as much ignored as if earth were a paradise, and man as innocent as Adam when he came from the hands of his Maker! As, sitting in his easy chair, in the calm seclusion of his study, surrounded with books and every comfort, the reverend divine penned these glowing sentences, did no pallid face of starving stitch woman rise up as a spectre before his eyes? Did no groan from the hospital, no wailing cry from court and alley, no sigh of

heart-broken maiden, no shriek of forlorn widow, or bereaved mother, pierce his ear? Why, the man speaks as if this world were a Jacquard loom, the events of life skeins of silk, each person his own designer of the pattern to be woven, and that it rested wholly with himself whether this world was to be unto him "a thing of beauty," and the next "a joy for ever," or whether the piece, whilst on the beam, was to be a smirch, and, when cut off, only fit to be torn to pieces in the willy.* Churchmen in easy circumstances, such as your rosy deans and portly archdeacons, are proverbially ignorant of the world and the rude storms of life; and any amount of ignorance may be reasonably expected from them, were it almost equal to that of the French Princess, who, when the people in Paris were dying of hunger, asked her governess why they did not buy buns; but in a dissenting minister, who rises for the most part from the ranks of the people, we do expect a greater knowledge of the stern realities of life, not to say the fallen condition of man. In fact, no one could have written such a false description of human life but a man profoundly ignorant of his state by nature as a sinner before God. Why, the author of "The Christian Year," Puseyite, and almost Papist as he is, has in two touching lines shown juster views of human life than this evangelical dissenting minister:

"Remember who thou art, and where,
A sinner in a world of care."

Was there a young man in that large audience at Exeter Hall whose experience did not give the lie to such a deceitful picture of this present evil world? Was there one jaded clerk, or fagged assistant, in whom the rough realities of life had not already demolished such a golden web as was presented to their acceptance? A year behind the counter, or at the desk, would have shown him what sort of "raw material" this life affords for happiness, and that it cannot "be taken hold of at will, and worked up and woven in such a manner as to become a resplendent thing." Many a wan and wearied apprentice, instead of deeming it "a most fortunate accident"—(are we then born into this world as lottery tickets fall from the wheel of fortune?)—"that he lives at all," is ready, from overwork and unceasing snubbing, to curse the hour of his birth, and that fatal morn when he left his happy country home to be browbeaten all day, and sleep under the counter, like a dog in his hole, all night; and the "life-poem" of many a youth has already been made a tragedy before the close of the first scene, by the harsh oppression of his employer, and the rough insults of fellow-shopmen, especially if failing health and timid disposition have offered impunity to injury. Were the secrets of large London establishments laid bare, it would be seen that such is the profligacy of principle, language, and life among the young men generally prevalent, that a truly godly youth would have to endure a most terrible ordeal

* The "willy," or, as it is often called, the "devil," is a machine used in the cotton and cloth manufacture, in which the raw cotton or wool is put, and there torn to pieces by a number of spikes revolving at a tremendous velocity, and then thrown out in a continuous shower of separated fibre.

were he even to attempt to act according to the dictates of a tender conscience. But this man writes just as if every employer were or might be a Boaz, every young man in his service a Timothy, and the precepts of the New Testament not only the rules of the house, but written in the heart of all the inmates from the principal to the porter.*

But having thus stated his argument, the Lecturer proceeds to enumerate and define the elements of earthly happiness that we have before mentioned, and labours hard to prove that religion puts a man in possession of them all.

This is his summing up :

“Putting all these things together, let us see what we have got. Bodily health, mental cheerfulness, competent income, advance in life, established reputation, the solace of the affections in wife and children, the culture of the understanding, imagination, taste, internal resources adequate to the occasions of inevitable evil,—all possessed and carried forward for years, and crowned at last with a green bright, happy old age! Why, if all this really can be found in any one man, such a fact would seem to prove that it is ‘possible’ to make something unquestionably good, happy, and desirable, out of the raw material of the present life. The world, on this hypothesis, might certainly become by no means an unendurable place. Whether there is to be another one or not, I can suppose a man to be so satisfied with passing through this after such a fashion, as to be deeply thankful for having been permitted to live, though he might not have the prospect of living again. Look at the man before us. He was nothing; he could deserve nothing; and yet he awoke up one morning, and found himself alive! with the earth beneath and the heavens above him; with life before him; and within him the powers and capabilities of making it into something great and beautiful. It has become this to him. So has he used the world, and so enjoyed it. He has made the best of it, not in the sense of doing what was possible to be done with an acknowledged evil, but of turning to their best uses valuable elementary capabilities. But what has been possible to him, may be possible to others. What one man does, another man may do. It might be well to do it. I wonder if it can be done on any one principle better than another! Supposing that there is a second world, I wonder if it could be done in consistency with your making the best of that too! Perhaps we shall see.”

Having thus laid down his theory, the veriest of dreams, and so contradicted at every turn, that its parent must be ignorance or deception, he next proceeds very logically to work it out. Into this we cannot follow him, except by giving one or two extracts to let him speak for himself. A few words will, perhaps, better prepare us for one of these.

Among the elements of earthly happiness the Lecturer, it will be remembered, has mentioned *competence*, poverty being, of course, in the eyes of a London minister, so dreadful an evil, and the wolf at the door a more dreadful animal than any beast of the forest. One would not, however, think that the best means of driving the wolf away would be religion; but the Lecturer assures us it is so, and that a course of decided piety will not only keep the wolf from

* We do not deny there are principals in London and elsewhere who desire to carry on business in the fear of God; and we do not say there are not gracious young men in their service or that of others, who strive to act as in their heart-searching eye; but we believe these cases are very rare exceptions to the general rule.

the door, but may put two carriage horses into the stable. In fact, the best way to become a warm city man, have a large banking account at Messrs. Bullion, Cash, and Co.'s, a score of ships in the London Docks, and a beautifully-furnished house at Clapham, is—what? To sell body and soul to the devil, and drive, drive, drive, master and man, as if heaven were in the Bank cellars, and hell in the Insolvent Court? O no; there is a much surer and better mode of getting rich than that old dreadful way, the very thought of which is enough to horrify all the ministers, elders, and deacons who have been pious from childhood. The best way of getting rich, in the present day, is to become religious; and by so doing you not only surround yourself with all the luxuries and comforts which riches procure here, but become rich also in faith, hope, and love; and when you die in green old age, with all your sons well provided for, and all your daughters happily married, you mount to an eternity of bliss, to enjoy the inexhaustible riches of heaven. Who would not be religious, with all these magnificent advantages, especially as any one may be so who likes, religion being that easy sort of thing which may be had for asking, or almost without asking, if a man has had but a pious mother. Young men, why do you hesitate? How can you prefer the theatre and the cigar cellar to an immediate entrance on a course of piety, which will make you rich and respectable here, and eternally happy hereafter?

The Lecturer, of course, does not lay out his scheme quite so nakedly as we have done for him; but though rather more nicely wrapped up, such is his real drift and meaning. Look, for instance, at the following extract:

"So in respect to competency and success in life. All the virtues inculcated by religion are favourable to a man's passing comfortably through the world, and even to its advancement in it, so far as that is regulated by ordinary laws, and looked for within reasonable limits. Sudden turns of fortune, singular talents, and remarkable opportunities, we put aside. At the same time, it should never be forgotten, that the most astonishing aptitude for business will seldom secure solid and permanent success without virtue; while virtue, associated with average power, will often make a steadily-advancing man. The habits of mind; speech; and behavior, which a sensible, religious man will naturally cultivate, are all favourable to his retaining employment, securing confidence, improving his circumstances, and getting on, at least not going back. Whatever he is, whether master or servant; and whatever he does, whether buying or selling, planning or accomplishing, working with the head or hand; he will be conscientious, truthful, upright, just. He ought to be active and energetic, for the law under which he lives is, 'Whosoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might.' Religious virtue is favorable to industry and economy, thriftiness and forethought. He that provides not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel. A religious man of business should be discreet, cautious, circumspect; he is not forbidden, indeed, to be bold and venturesome, within safe and reasonable limits; to add to the objects or branches of his merchandise; to extend or change his connections; to alter something in the form of his pursuits; to embark capital in a supposed profitable investment, or in other ways to attempt to increase his profits, 'and lay up' for the time to come; but he should never enter, and, acting consistently with his professed principles, he never will enter, into any hazardous or reckless speculation; he will have nothing to do with anything;

suspicious in its moral aspect; he will not suspend rise or ruin on a dubious possibility; he will not dare to risk his all in 'hasting to be rich.'

"So of the master. The young principal, venturing into business as a partner or alone, who has probity, honor, scrupulous integrity; who displays activity, tact, attention; who conscientiously limits his private expenses; and who, whatever he has to deny himself, struggles to maintain his commercial credit; who, as at once a religious and sensible man, has a quiet conscience, a pure heart, a true life, clean hands, and a clear head;—why, all these things have a natural tendency to help him on, not to mention God's blessing on earnest goodness and honest work. 'The hand of the diligent maketh rich.' But there is such a thing as a diligent, bad man making money, and, from God withholding his blessing, 'putting it into a bag with holes.' And there is such a thing as 'God giving a man power to get wealth; 'blessing his basket and his store:' advancing him in condition and honor, and thus, age after age, repeating the story, and realising again the experience of the young Hebrew exile, 'The Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man.'"

Is not the whole drift of the above extract to show, that there is a natural tendency in religion to advance a man in the world? Not a syllable is breathed about God's crossing all a man's plans in providence to wean his heart from the world, nor a word of warning against indulging that love of money, which the Scripture declares to be the root of all evil. The temptations of prosperity, the snares of business, the difficulty of preserving an honest conscience as trade is now carried on, the worldliness of spirit which success naturally engenders, the conformity to prevailing habits and fashions, which almost uniformly follows an advancement in wealth and station, and the declared impossibility of serving God and Mammon, are not even alluded to. The positive statements of the Bible are virtually set aside. It is no longer "the poor of this world" who are "rich in faith;" no longer easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven; it is no longer true that "they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many sinful and foolish lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition;" the rich man, clothed in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day, is now as likely to go to heaven as the beggar at his gate full of sores. The world is not what the world was in the days of old, and a man may now be a friend of the world and a friend of God—it being then a wicked, profane, and very naughty world, but now a good, respectable, and almost pious and religious world.

But after he has, much doubtless to his own satisfaction, thus achieved the conquest of two worlds, a thought strikes him, or a sudden qualm of conscience seizes him, whether the matter can be thus easily settled. He, therefore, summons up a champion on the opposite side, into whose mouth he may put some sufficiently-obvious objections to his views. One of his audience, "having the aspect of a grave, religious man," is represented as thus speaking:

"You seem to ignore, if I rightly comprehend you, the contempt with which Christians are to treat the world; how they are to be crucified to it, to despise it, to trample it under their feet; to remember that 'the fashion of it passeth away,' that life is short, that 'we brought nothing into the world and can

carry nothing out,' that 'having food and raiment, we ought therewith to be content,' sustained and satisfied with the hope and prospect of an inheritance in the skies. Besides this, you forget that self-denial is to distinguish Christians; that they are under the obligation of going against nature, killing and 'mortifying' the flesh, 'putting off the body of sin,' 'pulling out their eyes,' and so on; and also that religion often stands in the way of our worldly interests; that conscience will oblige a Christian man to do what others do not, and to forbear doing what others find profitable;—fidelity to God will sometimes involve the forfeiture of patronage or position, the loss of custom or income, with other secular evils; and, in extraordinary cases, may require submission to imprisonment or death. I don't see what Christians have to do with making the best of the world. 'He that is the friend of the world, is the enemy of God.' You would almost seem to intimate that we might live on very good terms with both! Is it really possible, then, after all, 'to serve God and Mammon?' We have high authority for disbelieving that. But I deny the statement that religious virtue is anything like uniformly successful in life. I demur to the fact. I have known many of the most 'excellent of the earth,' humble, pious, unimpeachable men, who never could get on. Everything failed with them. No business they might touch or attempt ever succeeded. As principals, their speculations always miscarried; even as servants, they never rose, or never high. No, no, Sir; the world is a valley of Achor, a place of tears and graves—especially to the righteous. 'Through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom.'"

Now just observe, having set up this man of straw, though he has labelled his neck with texts enough to hang himself a thousand times over, how coolly he knocks him down with his own club:

"Perhaps our friend will allow me to begin what I have to say in reply to his objections and in support of my own belief, by asking him a question or two. May I? 'I may.' Very well. Are you in business? 'I can hardly say that I am now. I have been, and I still attend a little to it; but it is much more like play than work.' You don't live at the shop, perhaps? 'O dear no; I haven't for years. I live a little way out of town, and come in about four or five days out of the six.' Do you drive into town? 'Very seldom. I mostly take the omnibus; it calls for me every morning, whether I come or not. Sometimes I have the horse out, with the britska, but not often. My wife and girls mostly use that. I don't care about it.' You have a wife and children, then? 'I am happy to say I have; and no man, I believe, was ever blessed with a better wife, or had more comfort and satisfaction in his children.' Are they all at home with you? 'No, not all of them. Some are married, and most satisfactorily. My eldest son is in the business; my second is at Cambridge. Two of my daughters are settled. One is the wife of a respectable solicitor, the other of a rising merchant in the city; and each has two or three lovely children.' You are, of course, a professor of religion; your words and manner showed that. You belong to some Christian church? 'I have been a communicant in the same church for forty years. I had pious parents, though I lost them early. My father I never saw, but my mother lived till I left school; her image is the most precious of my memories. I was preserved from the follies and vices of youth; religion, too, got to be a habit and a life. I became a communicant; and I have retained that connection ever since.' You are probably an office-bearer? 'I am.' An elder? 'Something like it.' I thought so. Thank you. That will do."

This picture of a London deacon is, no doubt, drawn from life, and is so far valuable as showing us what sort of Christians the officers of the general dissenting churches are. The photograph, however, thus hastily taken is, by a few touches, finished off into the following miniature likeness:

"Our friend, here, has not found the world a vale of tears, or anything like it, though he began life in a haze, or mist, from his original locality and from

early sorrow. The sun soon broke out upon him, and he has had a long bright day. He started well, and got on successfully. He never lost position or income on account of his religion. It was never difficult for him to keep a conscience, or follow his convictions. His known habits rather, perhaps, helped than hindered his advancement. He has had, it appears, a steady rise in life. He got into business; things succeeded; he realised property; the burden of work is now completely off his mind—the results of his industry secure in the funds. He lives in some suburban retreat, at Clapham or Highgate; keeps a gig—and something more; has a good house filled and furnished from cellar to roof; sons starting in business where he leaves off, or preparing for entering the liberal professions; his daughters, I dare say, have been well educated, and are, no doubt, both virtuous and accomplished, reading, probably, some of the continental languages in addition to their own. His mind is easy for the rest of his life. He can never more be painfully anxious about provision for the day that is passing over him, whatever he may have been; for national bankruptcy is not near, and without that he cannot be reduced to fear or want. No ordinary event of Providence can affect him. I really don't think his crucifixion to the world can ever have been very agonising; or that life has been to him nothing but a thing full of tears and trouble, from which he was constantly sighing to escape. He knows very well, and has often, I am sure, rejoiced in the thought, that the psalm he learnt when a boy,—the first he said to his mother,—is really neither more nor less than just the description of what one world has been to him, and what he hopes for the next:

‘ Goodness and mercy all my life
Have surely followed me;
And in the house of God at last,
My dwelling place shall be.’

I have no doubt it will. I have no doubt either, but that he has lived with a sincere regard to his ultimate entrance into the upper world, though he has by no means been indifferent to making a good thing of this; and he has succeeded too, both as to accumulation and enjoyment.”

In this rich deacon, this retired, wealthy merchant, with his good house filled and furnished from cellar to roof, with his eldest son in the business, and his second at Cambridge, with a mind easy for the rest of his life, only to be ruined by national bankruptcy, with no agonising crucifixion to the world, but sure at last of an eternal dwelling-place in the house of God—in this communicant in the same church for forty years, we see the exact materials of which the London general dissenting churches are made.

The open, we may say barefaced way in which the writer of this book pleads for the luxuries and enjoyments of life, as perfectly consistent with religion, is very striking:

“ I do steadily maintain, then, that what we drew out as a theory, and pursued as an argument, is sustained by facts—facts standing there, before our eyes, in the visible church of the living God. Religion does, as a general rule, produce those virtues and induce that conduct which, by way of natural consequence, work the stuff that life is made of into something happy and prosperous. The pious, excellent, philanthropic men, who are the strength and stay of our religious institutions, I have already told you, are men of this sort. They have, for the most part, sprung from the church itself. They were in it, and of it, as young men; but they have all along, also, had to live and work in the world—and many of them have done so with eminent success. They are living in the enjoyment of all that is comfortable—some in much that is elegant and splendid. And there's no harm in this—no inconsistency with Christian principle. ‘ To provide things honest, or becoming, ‘ in the sight of all men, ’ is just for a man so to live in society as not to excite remark either by one extreme or another. His house, appointments, habitual ex-

penses, are all to be such as are suitable to his property and rank, according to what is customary with his class, and furnished by the improvements of the particular age in which he lives. He is not to be ostentatious, and to draw observation by show and expense; but neither is he to be mean and sordid, or unnecessarily singular, especially to such an extent that none can visit him with satisfaction or sympathy. It is not required that men, in our age of the world, and in our condition of society, should confine their expenditure and conform their habits to what was customary at a previous period; and there is no reason on earth why Christian men, when opulent and prosperous, should be required to do this, or thought to be luxurious and worldly if they don't.

"Because once there were no carpets, nor curtains, nor rosewood chairs, nor beautiful engravings to be seen in the houses of certain classes, (or further back, indeed, of any) that is no reason why it should be thought wrong to have them now. If God 'gives a man power to get wealth' in this nineteenth century of ours, in which materials are cheapened, and, when beautifully wrought into various objects of use or ornament, come, in these forms, so within the reach of numbers as to be general and customary possessions—why, the man in question, however spiritual or devout he may be, need not be supposed to do wrong by availing himself of the advantages of the day he lives in. If he can keep a carriage, let him keep it, and let him call it a carriage, and not attempt to sophisticate his soul by describing it, with the Quaker, as only 'a leathern convenience.'"

To get money, and then surround yourself with all the luxuries that money can buy, according to this bright and shining light of the London dissenting world, are things perfectly consistent with the precepts of the gospel. How far it is following Christ's example, walking in his footsteps, or being conformed to his suffering image, he does not inform us; nor does he hint at any probability of failure through the deceitfulness of the heart, or at any danger of making a mistake, and taking the broad road instead of the narrow one. Religion is assumed by him to be an easy sort of thing to which a man may gradually habituate himself; that at the outset nothing more is required than a determination to be truly religious, and walk in a course of decided piety and virtue; that by degrees religion becomes a second nature, and thus it is every day more and more easy to resist temptation, until at length piety is so fully confirmed that it is more easy to be religious than otherwise. If this is not contrary to all the experience of all the saints of God, and a fatal deception, what can be? And yet here we have a leading minister of the evangelical dissenters holding this up as the religion which saves a soul from eternal ruin.

On casting our eye over what we have thus far written, two thoughts seem to strike our mind. 1. Whether we have altogether done wisely in drawing attention to so worthless a book. 2. Whether our remarks have not been almost in too light and sarcastic a vein. As regards the first objection, we have already explained our chief motive for noticing the book at all—that we may see in it, as in a mirror, what is the prevailing religion of the day, and how fearfully the mass of general Dissenters have degenerated from the principles and practice of their Puritan ancestors. Not that we are insensible to that tide of sin and vice which engulf so many thousands of our commercial youth; not that we ob-

ject to see young men earnestly and affectionately warned against vicious courses; not that we grudge them words of advice and friendly counsel. Nay; most gladly would we see some, aye, many of our commercial youth so divinely wrought upon as to flee from the wrath to come, and made partakers of vital godliness. But we cannot bear to see them deluded and deceived by a book like this, which breaks down all the barriers between the church and the world that God has set up, flatters the pride and ambition of greedy, covetous professors, countenances every indulgence and luxury with which rich leading men in churches surround themselves and their families, wholly misrepresents the nature of true religion, and thus obscures the very path of life into which it seeks to inveigle the young. Better have no religion than one so delusive as this—a religion without repentance or regeneration; without faith, hope, or love; without separation from the world; without persecution or the cross; without the fear of God or a tender conscience; for not one of these things is spoken of or insisted upon.

This, then, must plead our excuse, if our indignation at so deceptive, and yet really to any one possessed of spiritual discernment, so shallow a book, has stirred up our mind rather to whip it out of court than patiently listen to and refute its statements and reasonings.

But if any of our spiritual readers still think that we have borne hard upon the writer, let them carefully read the extracts we have given, and then, comparing them with the word of truth, and their own experience, let them reconsider their verdict, and the result, we venture to hope, will be—our acquittal.

The length of our Review this month, and a desire to give more thought and time to the subject than pressure of other matters just now allows us, must plead our apology for deferring to a future number our promised remarks on the "Liberty of the Ministry."

P O E T R Y.

ZION'S PRAYER AMIDST THE DIN OF WAR.

<p>Jesus, the only Way to God, Thy precious name is all our plea; We would approach through thy dear blood; Let dust and ashes plead with thee.</p> <p>Wilt thou this privilege bestow? Dear gracious Spirit, aid us here; A little band thy will would know, Lord, for our help do thou appear.</p> <p>What thou hast said shall come to pass; The distant rumor now we hear;— Of war, and clashing swords, alas! What bloodshed and destruction's there!</p> <p>O solemn tokens! Britain, fear! Lord, for our guilty land we plead; Hast thou not still thy favorites here? Let them for mercy intercede.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Bedworth, March 21st, 1855.</p>	<p>We mourn to see how sin abounds, We mourn to feel its power within; We mourn to hear how war still sounds. Appear, and pardon every sin.</p> <p>Each warlike spirit, Lord, subdue, And hush the nations into peace; O sanctify these scourges too, And seal each troubled soul's release.</p> <p>Or fight for us, if 'tis thy will; Thy fear forth with our armies send; While Zion prays on Zion's hill, And rebels to thy sceptre bend.</p> <p>'Tis thou, the victory, Lord, must give. Our God, we humbly look to thee; Forgive our crimes, our praise receive, And let us thy salvation see.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">G. T. C.</p>
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THE
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MATT. v. 6; 2 TIM. I. 9; ROM. XI. 7; ACTS VIII. 37, 38; MATT. XXVIII. 19.

THE UNIVERSAL INVITATION OF THE GOSPEL.

By Rusk.

(Continued from page 206.)

“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.”—ISAIAH lv. 1.

HAVING briefly showed the waters, let us take notice of the difference between a coming sinner and one that is already come: “Come ye to the waters.”

1. A coming sinner has a keen appetite, a thirst for all that God has promised; but a sinner that has come has been satisfied. Christ says, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink;” but you will agree with me, that when I have come to drink, my thirst is quenched. Now by this you may try yourself, and see whether you have as yet come to these waters, or whether you are only approaching; for, although you may have had some drops of rain, and likewise at times felt the heavenly dew, yet there is something wanting; and that is, *showers*. I can remember that I had many sweet lifts, both under the word and in private, with the saints, and in reading the Word and good books; but still I was a coming sinner, and therefore was not fully satisfied.

2. If you are a coming sinner, you will feel at times the weight and burden of your sin exceeding heavy, and you will be trying to extricate yourself by hard labour and toil to break off your sins by righteousness; but you will find no rest. Now, a sinner that has come has found rest,—rest from this legal, fruitless labor, rest from the weight and burden of his sin, and rest from an accusing, gnawing conscience. Thus, if you have come to these waters fully, you have been well satisfied, and have had rest.

3. If you are a coming sinner, you feel that you have no righteousness. Instead of love, which fulfils the law, you feel enmity and hatred; and, instead of feeling yourself satisfied with your performances, you really see and feel yourself ungodly, and opposed to every branch of righteousness. You will be, like Joshua the high priest, clothed with filthy garments. Satan, law, conscience, the world, and hypocrites will all accuse and condemn you. Yes, and you will keenly feel it; and the cause is, you have no righteousness. But a sinner that has come has on the spotless righteousness of

Christ. Hence the Church breaks out, "He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness." She was one then that had come to these waters.

If you are a coming sinner, you are in a perishing condition, you are starving, and have never, as yet, come to the feast which God has provided. You may have tasted that the Lord is good, gracious, and desired the sincere milk of the word; yes, and have had a little peace, and a little love, and a little confidence; but these in general are but short lived. But the sinner that has come is one that has fed to the full upon Christ. He has eaten the flesh and drunk the blood of the Son of Man. He has partaken with the prodigal of the fatted calf, or Christ crucified; and therefore knows and is at a point in the full assurance of faith, that Christ, his Passover, was sacrificed for him, and he keeps the feast, a feast of fat things, full of marrow and fatness. Now literally, you and I can make a distinction in things; as for instance, one parched with thirst, and one that has drunk his fill; one that is worn out with hard labour and toil, and one that has had a good night's rest; one that is naked, or merely covered with rags, and one that has good clothing; one that is in a starving condition, and one that has abundance; and as it is literally, so is it spiritually. A coming sinner is the one, and a sinner that has come the other. The full assurance of faith is the full assurance of satisfaction. You will find all that I am now treating of in Ezekiel's prophecy. Look into it a little, and may the Lord make these considerations a blessing to our souls. The prophet says, "He brought me again unto the door of the house." Now, by this house I understand Christ Jesus, God and man united. From this house issued these holy waters, which they never could have done had not the Son of God become incarnate. We find that the prophet came through the waters to his ankles; and this may represent a coming sinner, having turned his back on this world, and his face Zionward. After this he is brought through these waters to his knees. This shows the strength that at times is communicated to the coming sinner. After this the waters were to the loins; and by this we may understand a being well equipped with truth. Truth is to be our shield and buckler; truth is to make us free; and Paul says, "Having your loins girt about with truth." Now certainly truth in the mind of the coming sinner is a great blessing; but still he is to go on further; so at last we find that these holy waters became a river to swim in; and this is the limit beyond which we cannot go. When a man gets here, he has come to these living waters as far as he can; but until this takes place, he is only coming. If you have not come here, you will find something deficient. You cannot take all the promises to yourself, all the blessings of the new covenant; you cannot believe that you are in a pardoned and justified state. You cannot claim God as your Father, with the inward witness of the Spirit. You are not delivered from the fear of death, neither can you triumph in the finished work of Christ. Now, seeing these things are attainable, it teaches us to come to these waters, and not to attempt to rest

midway, but press towards the mark. I well remember a time when I could not take these covenant blessings to myself; and I have known a time that I have taken *everything* to myself, and it has been a river to swim in; for I never could take too much, nor go far enough. This is raising the poor man up out of the dust, and the beggar from the dunghill.

But take notice, although the difference is great between a coming sinner and one that has come to these waters, yet it is to be a path of tribulation; for although "wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace," yet we never shall be without changes. The day of prosperity and the day of adversity are set the one against the other. All the happiness, comfort, and delight, which we have in God's ways are at the expense of a daily cross, a path of tribulation, sore temptations, a corrupt nature working, and many dark and trying providences, with much opposition from men; I say we shall find these things as well as the other; and what is worse than all, God will hide his face; so that in one sense we shall always be coming sinners, for we shall be kept very needy, that we may continually keep coming to these holy waters.

But I proceed.

III. What is it to *have no money*? Now, when God takes us first in hand, this is far enough from our thoughts; for a legal, self-righteous spirit is naturally rooted in all men; and, therefore, when legal convictions get hold of men, what promises they will make that, if the Lord will raise them up, they will attend church or chapel, be sober, honest, liberal; in short, they will keep God's commandments. Now, God will sometimes raise them up from these convictions, and from a sick bed; but, alas! they soon forget and break through all their vows and promises. And indeed if they kept them it would be of no avail, for it "is without money and without price." We all know the use of money. Solomon says, "It answereth all things, and is a defence;" but this must be taken in a limited sense; for money cannot give health, nor save life. By money, we can get a good habitation, good food, good clothes, good friends, good physicians when ill, and servants to attend us. Money will procure all these things, and much more; but what are we spiritually to understand by money? Why, everything in us that naturally we glory in; such as human wisdom, human strength, and self-righteousness; light, knowledge, and understanding; gifts and abilities in reading, praying, and preaching; all dead works which are very highly esteemed amongst men; a clear knowledge of the gospel in the letter of it; and likewise real faith, hope, love, when given us, with every other grace of God's Spirit; for nothing of all this will purchase this living water. I know very well we think if we had real faith, hope, and love, as some have, then we might venture to come to these waters; but, alas! we are opposite to all this, and therefore feel full of unbelief, despondency, and enmity. Surely the invitation is not for such as we; and thus we would make a saviour of faith, hope, and love, laying them at the foundation; but this will not do. Our text says, "without money."

Grace is a free gift, and is not given to us in order to merit anything from God. It is not for us to say, I believe, I hope, I love, and therefore can come to these waters. O no! You and I must come naked, stripped of all, without money and without price; and this is no easy thing, neither at first nor afterwards; yet it appears to me that still there is a coming to these waters with money. It is one thing to me to come to these waters bringing any one thing in a way of merit, and another thing for me to come even with money, provided it be good money, the current coin of heaven; yet, as before advanced, it is not for me to suppose that even grace is meritorious, although good money, and money which will never be refused, as I shall afterwards show. God is pleased sometimes, under peculiar afflictions, trials, temptations, and cross providences, to favor us with this money; and truly it is valuable indeed under such sore conflicts; and we are so stripped and humbled in the dust that we are far enough (under such conflicts) from supposing in the least that this money is meritorious. O no! We well know that we are not our own, but bought with a price. Then, reader, cannot you see a difference between our having grace as an evidence that we are the object of God's choice, and going to him with a little of this grace in order to get more, and our supposing that we merit anything from God's hand by our having faith, hope, love? Certainly if these are my views, I bring a price in my hand, and am a fool for so doing; but if this money is used aright, it will take hold of God's promises, and plead and wrestle hard with him in times of great danger.

I will now, as the Lord shall assist, show you the good use that some have been helped to make in coming to these waters, with this current coin, and yet without a farthing of their own. We will begin with Jacob. When he heard that Esau was coming to meet him with 400 men, he went to the Lord with this good money: "The Lord which said unto me, Return unto thy country and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee, deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother Esau." God heard this prayer; and if you read on, you will see more of it, and the good which Jacob made of this money, and what it brought in when he wrestled with the angel. This text was made good to him in his experience: "To him that hath, (this money,) to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly." "As a prince thou hast power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." Again, we will take notice of David. "And David inquired of the Lord, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? Shall I overtake them? And he answered him, Pursue, for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all;" and so he did. (Read 1 Sam. xxx.) " whatsoever ye ask, (with this money, or believing,) you shall receive." Thus you see there is such a thing as coming to these waters without any of our own money; and there is such a thing as our having God's money, and going with it to these waters, and succeeding. But again, let us look at Jonah. He was in a sad plight. You may read the account of his voyage, of his having been cast over-

board, and of the fish swallowing him up; and then he uses this money. Read the whole account, and you will find that he prevailed with God; and it cannot be denied that, while we come on the one hand without money of our own, yet, on the other hand, there is such a thing as this, namely, living near to God, and going to him again and again with his own money. The church in the Song went this way, and urged her plea, until the answer came, "Turn away thine eyes from me, for thou hast overcome me." But I proceed to the prophet Micah, who was well acquainted with the path of tribulation, and being brought off from various trusts; and he at last says, "Therefore will I look unto the Lord." This looking was the Lord's own money. I do not know whether my reader understands me; but what I mean by the Lord's money is this: a persuasion wrought in the soul by the Holy Ghost above sense and reason, which holds God to his word where everything makes against it; and such money Abraham had also, as you read that Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. He believed that what God had promised he was able to perform.

I will now suppose my reader to be one that has had a rich experience of God's providence and grace. Well, the Lord, for wise ends and purposes, brings you into sore trials, and in one particular trial you shall now be, in which you shall try everything to escape, but to no purpose, for everything threatens your ruin and destruction. You now walk in darkness and have no light. Well, in this gloomy state the Lord shall lead your mind back to past deliverances, and you shall feel a little hope, and think, "Well, I'll go again, and plead God's own promises. I will take with me words, and turn to him, as he tells me. I will put him in remembrance." And when you go, you find comfort, and a full persuasion that he will appear; and thus against hope in nature you believe in hope through grace. Thus you take the Lord's money, and venture with it, and find that he highly approves of it. I know well what I am writing about; and my writing-books will testify the truth of these things, that I have had the thing in faith before I have had it in hand. Hence Paul says that "faith is the substance (or confidence) of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen."

I could mention many such things, and they are wonderful; but, by way of illustration, let us take notice of what the Scripture says about this money. Solomon tells us that "money is a defence." (Eccles. vii. 12.) Now, what are we, as sinners, exposed to? I answer, to sin, to Satan, to a broken law, and to the wrath of God. Then, suppose the Lord never gives us this money, which I have all along said is faith, do you suppose that you are secure against these things? No, you are not. But why? Because the Scriptures cannot be broken. But will this money, if we have it, defend us against these dangers? Yes. 1. *Sin*: "He shall save his people from their sins;" "He that believeth shall be saved." Thus faith is money, and "money is a defence."

2. *Satan*: "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb

and by the word of their testimony." But how is this done but by faith in the atoning blood of Christ? Hence such are said to "resist the devil," and he flees from them. "Whom resist, steadfast in the faith." Then God's money is a defence.

3. We are exposed to the *threatenings of a broken law*; but money is a defence. What! worldly property? O no; but a living faith. Now, "as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse;" and "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law, to do them;" and here we are all in danger; but the Lord Jesus comes forth, and he stands in our law-place, magnifies it and makes it honorable, endures the curse due to us, and sets us free. "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us;" and we are now brought by faith to receive God's blessing; for "as many as are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham; for the blessing of Abraham comes upon the Gentiles through faith." Thus money is a defence.

Lastly, every soul that is not in Christ Jesus, the true Ark, of which Noah's was a type, will for ever be exposed to *God's eternal wrath and hot displeasure*; but in Christ we are secure; for "he that believeth," says Christ, "in me, hath everlasting life, and shall never come into condemnation." Thus money is a defence; and so you will say, if you have been tried about these things as I have, when I have, ere now, lain in bed under many fears, cutting convictions, alarming texts of Scripture, and, according to my views, on the very brink of black despair. I say, for the Lord at such a time to raise the soul first to a gleam of hope, and then to faith, so as to remove these mountains, we really do at such time feel that this money is a defence. Temporal money, as I said before, may screen a man from a hungry belly and a naked back, and many inconveniences, but God's spiritual money only can do such great things as these. But again Solomon brings in another text, saying, "A feast is made for laughter, and wine maketh merry, but money answereth all things." What are we spiritually to understand when Solomon says, "A feast is made for laughter?" Those that know, as Solomon did, when he said, "All is vanity," know well that the laughter of fools is the crackling of thorns under a pot. It is soon over, and all empty and vain; but this feast is the Lord Jesus Christ, and this is made for laughter; and so I will prove. Solomon says in his Proverbs, "A contented mind is a continual feast;" and I believe that the mind is never so contented as when feasting upon Christ. (I am writing here about real believers.) So that we may say, and with truth too, that feasting upon Christ makes a contented mind. But is the Lord Jesus Christ called a feast? Yes, he really is. Hence Paul says, "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast;" and so a soul finds it when the gospel trumpet is blown, and he comes ready to perish, like the prodigal, with hunger. Yes, and this will make him laugh with joy. Sarah, when she got Isaac, the promised seed, a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, looking through him to the Messiah that was to

come, says, "God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me." (Gen. xxi. 6.) Say you, "This is common among women." True, it is; but, then, why should she say, "All that hear will laugh also?" for I do not think that Hagar would laugh; but every soul that has a circumcised ear to hear and know the joyful sound, and is brought to receive Christ by faith, in whose heart he is formed the hope of glory, such will laugh with Sarah.

But Solomon adds, "Money answereth all things." Money, if a man is deformed, will not set him right; if he is unhealthy, will not restore health. Some are sickly and afflicted all their days, and have plenty of money. Neither worldly money nor treasure does answer all things, but this spiritual money does; yes, it really does; and here a field is opened; but I must keep within bounds. I will mention a few things which I will trace up to One, and then, if you are a real believer, you will fully agree with me, and both of us with Solomon, that this current coin of heaven, called God's money, answereth all things.

What will answer for a foul, filthy sinner, like the publican, that dared not to lift his eyes to heaven? I say, *faith* in the *atonement* of Christ; for he that believeth shall receive the forgiveness of his sins. What will answer for one clothed, like Joshua the high priest, with filthy garments? Why, *faith* in the *righteousness* of Christ, for it is unto all and upon all that believe. What will silence conscience, law, and Satan? The *Spirit's witness*; and "he that believeth hath the witness in himself." What will answer for a hungry soul, quickened to feel his lost estate? Christ, the *bread of life*; and *faith* feeds on him. Hence you read that God took the yoke (of unbelief) from their jaws, and set meat before them. Now, eating is believing. "He that eateth me, even he shall live by me;" and this text explains it: "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." Mary said, "My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." There is full assurance of faith, and this was her food. We want joy and peace, to rejoice that our names are written in heaven, to rejoice that we have received the atonement, to rejoice that we are clothed with the robe of righteousness, that we have peace with God, with conscience, and with one another. Well, Paul says, "The Lord fill you with all *joy and peace* in believing." Rest is a thing which we need from the weight and burden of sin, from the bondage of the law and a legal working spirit. "We which believe do *enter into rest*." *Salvation*. And this is very copious, for we are surrounded with dangers and enemies, both within and without; but "he that believeth shall be saved," from sin, Satan, the world, the law, and everlasting destruction." Prayer is what God has appointed to bring every blessing he has promised in an everlasting covenant into the heart, as well as all temporal supplies. *Life*, which makes us differ from all nominal professors. The *love of God*; not natural affection, but God's love to us; and Paul tells us that this is the more excellent way, and never will fail; but money we need, to bring this sweetly into the soul. Hence John says, "We have *believed* the *love* which God hath

towards us." Whenever we go to hear God's word preached, unless God give us this money, we get nothing profitable for our souls. But why? I answer, the word preached will not profit unless mixed with *faith* in them that hear. We need this money to manifest to us with satisfaction our *adoption*, and to help us to call God our own covenant God and Father. Hence you read that "to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that *believe* in his name." This money we need in order to our highly prizing Christ, and that we may view him as the altogether lovely. Hence Peter says, "Unto you that *believe*, he is precious." All the *promises* to the churches in the Revelation are made to *overcomers*. Now, we need this money to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil. Hence John says, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our *faith*." We need this money in order to a reception of the Holy Ghost. Wonderful, indeed, that ever he should dwell in our hearts; and "we receive the promise of the Spirit through *faith*." This money brings Christ *into the heart*. Hence Paul says, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts *by faith*." We are told to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; but we need this money here also; and it answers: "Till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God to a perfect man." From which you may see the cause of so much discord. It is for want of more of this money; for this faith works by love, which is the bond of peace. Money we need in order to our establishment in the work of God done in our souls. What is the cause that we are so tottering, weak, and feeble? We stagger at the promise through unbelief. Lastly, we need this money in a *dying hour*; and it will answer well for us. Hence we are told by Paul of the whole cloud of witnesses, that they all *died in faith*. (Heb. xi. 13.) Then is it not a glorious truth that God's money "answereth all things?" Truly it is; and all these things are to be found in one thing; and what is that? In that good thing promised to the house of Israel, even the Lord Jesus Christ, called a holy thing, even the Son of God; for Christ is all and in all, and filleth all things, and is the Author and Finisher of all real and genuine faith.

But you will say, "Is this money called God's money?" Yes, it is, in the following words, "Thou oughtest to have put *my* money to the exchangers." (Matt. xxv. 27.) As though God should say, "You have taken that to yourself which did not belong to you. You should have declared that it belonged to the exchangers, or my people, that are ever exchanging with me, bringing all their cares, burdens, and trials to me, and exchanging them for deliverance. They need this money, but you do not; for you have no changes, and therefore, as you have presumptuously taken to yourself what you ought to have declared belonged to my people, you are a wicked servant, and have been doing Satan's work, as Balaam did, calling me his God, and the Jewish Scribes and Pharisees, who were of their father the devil, and did his works. You should have put my money to the exchangers; but, instead of that, you have hidden

it in the earth ; that is, you have had sinister motives in all you have done, condemning the just and justifying the wicked. Thus you have declared that hypocrites were saints, putting my money to them." Job's three friends told him that if iniquity was in his hands to put it far from him ; and what iniquity can be worse than this, namely, to wound saints and feed hypocrites ? This is putting God's money (ministerially, as the word of faith) to a bad use.

But again. That God is well pleased with his own money is very clear, for he reproves his own people upon this head. Our Lord said to his two disciples, going to Emmaus, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe ;" and to Peter, "Wherefore didst thou doubt ?" and to Thomas, "Be not faithless, but believing ;" for to be strong in faith gives glory unto God ; and all this agrees with what God says by the prophet Isaiah, and shows that when we are short of this money, backsliding is the cause : "Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices ; but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities." And what, then, when this spending money is suspended, are such to give up all for lost ? O no ; but to come again, *without* money, stripped of all ; and therefore he adds, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins ;" (Isa. xliii. 24 ;) which shows that it is all sovereign and free. O how dejected and bowed down do many of God's dear people go, because they cannot believe that grace is as free as it really is ! "If I had faith in exercise," say they, "with hope and love, and was more meek, more patient, more submissive to God's will, all would be well ; but, on the contrary, I feel unbelief strong, my hope low, and am very impatient indeed." Well, but none of these things are the foundation, but Christ alone, and he is the same, let your frames change never so often ; therefore you are told, as it is all free, "Return unto me, ye backsliding children, for I am married unto you." It appears to me that the Shulamite had got here, as you read in the Song, "Return, return, O Shulamite ; return, return, that we may look upon thee." She answers, "What will ye see in the Shulamite ?" They answer, "A company of two armies," flesh and spirit, which will ever be the case. Now, if God works in us to will and to do, this subdues the flesh greatly ; and if this goes on for any time, we are apt to forget ourselves, and prone to bear hard upon others, not saying, "By the grace of God, I am what I am ;" "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name be the praise." But there is a secret leaning upon the fruits of God's grace, and self will work. It is said that Hezekiah's heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord ; and I believe that Job was in this path, and really trusted in what God's grace had helped him to do ; for I cannot believe that what Job had performed, and what he boasted of, were dead works ; but still there is no merit in them ; for grace is a free gift, and proves me an object of God's love ; but Christ alone is the foundation. He has paid down all the money that was required, and to us it is all free. Now, faith is money.

Hence Peter says, "That the trial of your faith, which is much more precious than that of gold that perisheth;" and Christ calls it "gold tried in the fire;" but no grace is meritorious. God is a God of order, and grace is given to us as a mark and evidence that we are chosen of God, and not for us to improve, and by so improving gain everlasting life. O no!

To make things more clear, take it as follows. We will suppose a man to be regenerated, by which I understand living principles are implanted in his soul; well, the good Spirit is pleased to draw forth faith, hope, love, and fear. These graces shall discover themselves both to the recipient of them and others; but the man, like Job, knowing but very little of his own heart, builds himself upon the fruits of this grace, and so gets proud and lifted up, righteous in his own eyes; and yet the man has real grace; but furnace work is needed that a man may be well acquainted with the depth of man's fall and his apostate state, as Job afterwards was, when he said, "Behold, I am vile."

(To be continued.)

COUNSEL IN THE HEART OF A MAN IS LIKE DEEP WATER.

My dear Friend,—I feel quite sorry to have been so long without writing to you. When I see the date of your letter, it reminds me of my neglected duty; but many things in mind and body have proved a hindrance; so you must not think it was because yours was uninteresting to me, as you seemed to imagine it would be; indeed it is far otherwise; for to hear the faintest sigh after heart-acquaintance with Jesus, or the least breathing of a sinner's desire for divine power, is always deeply interesting. Sure it is such "smoking flax" he will not quench, and such "bruised reeds" he will not break, but bind up. He is a tender Shepherd; he knows the lambs cannot travel very fast or very far; he will at proper times gather them in his arms, and carry them in his bosom; while at other seasons he will suffer even these little ones to feel the roughness of the road and their own weakness, that they may be emptied of self-confidence, and walk humbly, confiding in the Lord alone. All divine leadings are in divine sovereignty, and we cannot work out any specific line either for ourselves or others; but this we know, all that are born of the Spirit shall be led and taught by the Spirit; and all such do feel sin hateful, and holiness desirable; they hunger and thirst after righteousness; Christ is their object, either of desire or enjoyment; and the manifested pardon and subduing of sin is the object both of desire and enjoyment. To enjoy or understand the holy Scriptures is another object they either have or desire; and spiritual worship and soul profit in ordinances they either enjoy or long after. Fellowship with God and communion with saints they either have or thirst for. As there must be life to enjoy, so there must also be life to desire; and sweet is that word of our precious Lord, "I have come that they might

have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Where there is life, there shall be growth, though, as before said, the way and manner are divine.

Some learn war in their youth, and have their enemies come out against them while yet they scarcely know under whose banner they are fighting, or to whom they belong. This was my own case; and though it then seemed very hard, I now bless God for it, fully proving that "it is good to bear the yoke in one's youth." Learn war we must, if of the living family; and those who sing and make merry in early days are often very restive when the trumpet calls them from the banquet to the battle, and when after the green pastures they have to follow their Lord "into a land not sown." All his ways are right, and in the end we shall each say, "He hath done all things well;" "he led them by a right way to a city of habitation." Literal Israel was a type of spiritual Israel. Every one of them he will lead forth by the right way, and bring them safely to the right end; so that they shall prove "the end of a thing is better than the beginning." Balaam might well say, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." But, alas! he had never been "led forth by the right way," "by the footsteps of the flock;" he did not "hunger and thirst after righteousness," "but he loved the wages of unrighteousness," and he got them in another wise than he sought for; "the wages of sin is death;" and by the sword of Israel was Balaam, the soothsayer, sent to his just reward.

Now, my dear friend, there may be nothing in all this that will either meet you or suit you. I am sure there will not, unless his hand is in it, whose power levelled the bow which was drawn at a venture, causing the arrow to enter between the points of the harness. He knows whether you need a wound or a balsam, and can prepare accordingly. Know you "he wounds to heal, and kills to make alive." I covet his working in your soul as shall seem best to his godly wisdom, to keep you from false peace, false refuges, and sparks of creature kindling, and give unto you the true light when you seem to sit in darkness and the shadow of death; and also to give you knowledge of salvation by the felt remission of your sins, and to guide your feet into the way of peace. These things are the work of God: "it is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing." But as he condescends to use instrumentality, and that often of the weakest sort, we are encouraged to write and speak to one another, not knowing at what time, or by what word, a blessing may be given or received. On this ground I would affectionately encourage you to seek more openness on this dearest of all subjects. You are diffident of speaking, and restrained in writing; yet I believe it is not your want of interest in them, but because you feel as if there were a stone on the well's mouth when you would express yourself on divine things. This may be partly from natural reserve, and partly from the work of the enemy, for well he knows how many blessings the Lord's people get when in simplicity "they speak often one to another" of their fears and

feelings, and of the things that belong to their everlasting peace. He knows how many of his snares have been broken, and his temptations avoided, when fellow-pilgrims have taken sweet counsel together, and each for the other presented his hard case before the Lord. Therefore, while he cares not how much lip talk there is between professors, he will try hard to hinder heart talk among real believers; and especially young Christians will he hold back with the fear of being forward, or speaking more than is felt, or professing to be what they are not. Thus he will strive to keep them from the helpful cautions, encouragements, and counsels of those who have trod the way before them.

Do not wonder if you are assailed by unbelieving or atheistical thoughts when reading the Scripture, for they are the weapons of Satan, and the iron of them hath entered into many a redeemed soul, making them cry out in great bitterness, "For if the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" But the devil knows he cannot destroy them, though he is permitted to envelope them in dark mists, as if there were no covenant God, no redeeming Saviour, no quickening Spirit, no divine authority in the Scriptures, and no divine reality in the religion of Jesus; but while he strives to prevent us from believing, he believes himself, and trembles. He hurls those fiery darts to get the Bible closed, the footstool neglected, and the soul to sit down in hopeless gloom, with the eye turned away from the only place of refuge. Though he thus distress, he shall not destroy; and soon again the heart shall say, "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy! When I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me." These painful things are more or less the lot of Zion's pilgrims; but yet we are more than conquerors "through him that loved us," who will bruise Satan under the feet of every one, weak or strong, who puts his trust in him, that is, upon Jesus, who will arise, and rebuke this cruel foe, saying, "Is not this a brand plucked out of the burning?"

Accept what I have said in affection, though it is very weak and imperfect. I am always happy to hear from you; but use perfect freedom in the matter. Now I commend you to him "who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." With best wishes,

Yours very sincerely,

A PILGRIM OF ZION.

Having drawn his people from all created bottoms to a total reliance on himself, God cannot but give them that they have trusted him for.—*Owen*.

God not only preserved for himself a church among the descendants of Seth, from whom Christ the Redeemer was to spring, but, in the remarkable holiness of Noah, amidst an exceedingly and universally corrupt and profligate generation, prefigured the perfect holiness of Christ in his generation, and manifested the power and usefulness of his saving grace in the world.—*John Brown*.

INQUIRIES.

Sir,—Is singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, a part of the worship of Almighty God? If so, is it right that eight or ten persons should be huddled together at a corner of the chapel and pitch scientific tunes, so that hardly any one can sing but themselves?

There are many of the Lord's poor, who, after a week of toil, would be glad to join in singing a gospel hymn in honor of their once suffering but now exalted Lord, but are hindered by theatrical singing.

A few words from you on this subject would very much oblige, Sir,
A FEW POOR BROKEN-DOWN SINNERS.

ANSWER.

When heart and voice can go together, there is no sweeter part of the public worship of God than the singing. "I will sing with the spirit," says the Apostle, "and I will sing with the understanding also." (1 Cor. xiv. 15.) It not only forms a most suitable commencement of the service, softening and opening the heart, and preparing it for drawing near to God; but after the attention has been strained in listening to the chapter read, and uniting in spirit with the prayer offered, it forms a sweet relief of mind, it being, so to speak, a relaxing of the stretched string, and a consequent enabling of it again to be tightened to attend to the sermon. It is also the only mode in which the congregation, consistently with solemnity and order, (for the Wesleyan interjections of "Amen," "Lord, hear," &c., are a thorough nuisance, and for the most part the mere expression of canting hypocrisy) can give vent to their feelings, and take an expressed part in the worship of God. Singing is as much a part of the public worship of God as prayer or preaching, and ought therefore not to be choral, but congregational. A certain knowledge of music, indeed, is needed to preserve our ears from being distressed by horrid discords, and this part of the service of God from being made a misery instead of a delight; and to a certain extent it is necessary for those who are gifted with musical ears and voices to sit together, that time and tune may be observed, and a body of harmonious voice have sufficient strength and unity of sound to lead and sustain the scattered voices of the congregation. As this accuracy of time and tune, and this full harmony of sound, can only be attained by practising together, what is called a choir is gradually formed; and by degrees the more scientific portion, often, alas! the least gracious, begin to hanker after, and perhaps introduce tunes, which, however beautiful in themselves, are out of place in the public worship of God, and actually destroy that part of divine service, from the inability of the people to follow them. This is an abuse of singing, which should be testified against, and, if possible, put down.

Our own view is this, that, as a general rule, the good old stock tunes are the best. They have stood the test of time, possess in themselves those only real sources of musical excellence and delight, melody and expression, are generally well known

to the congregation, are pitched in keys within the compass of ordinary voices, and therefore are capable of that full body of sound which constitutes the sweetness and force of congregational, as distinguished from choral singing. We do not want in our simple, humble chapels the graces of a concert-room, the science and harmony of an orchestra, or the loud swell of the organ of a cathedral. We want simplicity in the service of God. Simple and childlike should be the prayer; simple and plain the sermon; and simple, though not unmusical, the singing. As the best things get stale by repetition, the old tunes may be occasionally recruited by a new one, which will in due time fall into the ranks of the stock tunes, and thus gradually, and almost insensibly, the list will be increased in number and variety.

The most difficult, because the spiritual part of the question, we have not touched upon—that the most musical voices have too often not the most gracious hearts. But this point we cannot handle now. To do so would be foreign to our correspondent's question, and open a wide field, which we do not feel now called upon to tread.

Dear Sir,—There is a member of a gospel church who has for several years felt a great interest in attending the Sabbath school to instruct the young, and he has frequently been profited in the engagement, and, at different times, while reading the word of God, been led to ask the children a question or two on what they are reading. The minister says that he has no business to ask any question, but only to hear them read and repeat their lessons, and set them going. But I believe it to be according to the word of God, if the teacher's mind should be so led, to drop a word by the way, or to ask a Scripture question; yet for so doing the minister has had him separated from the church, after standing a member of the same for several years.

By giving your mind on the subject you will oblige,

Yours truly,

A CONSTANT READER.

ANSWER.

We are not fond of inserting one-sided statements, as, were we to hear the other side, we might form quite a different opinion of the whole matter. But, assuming that the above statement is perfectly correct, we certainly think that, so far from it being wrong to ask the children questions upon what they are reading, he is an inefficient teacher who does not do so. We all know the dulness and inattentiveness of most children, and that they feel reading to be a burden and a task; but when the teacher, in a simple, kind manner, explains the lesson, or asks questions upon it, their attention is at once riveted, their mind engaged, and what is said is frequently fixed indelibly in their memory. Children may be taught to read and repeat lessons mechanically, and thus become mere reading-machines, understanding and mentally feeding on what they read

about as much as a threshing-machine feeds on the wheat that it thrashes out. And so teachers may be, and indeed most frequently are, mere hearing-machines, listening mechanically to the lessons which fall into their ear, with about as much interest in them or in the children as the hopper of a mill feels in the wheat which falls into it. If, then, the teacher has incurred the displeasure of the minister by merely departing from the old jog-trot mechanical mode, we cannot but think the latter most decidedly wrong, and to have acted in a most arbitrary manner.

But the teacher may have preached to the children, disturbed the other classes, done the whole thing through pride or ostentation, or addressed the children in that free-will strain of exhortation which is so common in many Sunday schools. These circumstances would much alter the features of the case, and might call for checking or reproof, and, if persevered in, would require to be stopped altogether. But, in any case, the punishment inflicted is most severe, and we wonder that the church should sanction, or concur in a censure so disproportionate to the fault.

Even an earthly parent is particularly careful and tender of a dying child; and surely, when God's children are in that situation, he will, speaking after the manner of men, be doubly gracious to his helpless offspring, who are his by election, by adoption, by covenant, by redemption, by regeneration, and by a thousand other indissoluble ties.—*Toplady*.

How often is it the experience of God's people, that time spent in company is not so sweet and satisfactory as hours spent in retirement! All that are taught of God find this. He that loves us, loves our company. It is then we are most at liberty to converse with him. That which is an intolerable burden to a carnal man, is refreshment to a child of God. As the weary man longs for his rest, so many have, with the greatest eagerness, embraced opportunities of being where no eye but God's saw them. And how often has God given such reason to say, "Never less alone, than when alone." Many, like Jacob, will remember to their dying moments those sweet seasons. Men must at times leave wives and children, and wives must leave all and steal from the world. One individual would have spoiled Jacob in his wrestling.—*Timothy Priestley*.

It is not an easy thing to break love, or to take the affections off of that object on which they are so deeply set, in which they are so deeply rooted, as man's heart is in his sins. Alas! how many are there, that contemn all the allurements of heaven, and that trample upon all the threatenings of God, and that say, tush, at all the flames of hell, whenever they are propounded, as motives to work them off their sinful delights? so fixed are they, so mad are they, upon these beastly idols. Yea, he that shall take in hand, to stop their course in this their way, is as he that shall attempt to prevent the raging waves of the sea from their course, when driven by the mighty winds.—*Bunyan*.

OBITUARY.

JANE COLLINGE.

Died at Blackley, June 1st, 1855, in the 37th year of her age, Jane Collinge, a member of the church at Manchester; and truly "the memory of the just is blessed."

How pleasing to see a vessel of mercy, built by the eternal Spirit, ("ye are God's building,") rigged and manned, launched into the sea of time, bound for an eternal shore, the sails filled with the breezes of the Spirit, gliding and scudding along, singing when the way is smooth, and praying when dangers threaten, mourning when feeling forgotten, and fighting when "strengthened by the Spirit's might," but, like the magnet to the pole, standing with the face Zionward, until safely passed through every storm, every enemy; and when the poor diseased body receives the last stroke from the last enemy, to hear the language of the soul in the last struggle saying distinctly, "Into thy arms," "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly," "Take me, that I may enter into thy abode." To every spiritual beholder, these things are fraught with unutterable pleasure.

All these, and many more, we beheld in Jane Collinge. Her first post on the stage of time was in a family of steady, church-going people. She became the wife of James Collinge, in 1841; and while listening to the late memorable Mr. Gadsby, she would at times say to her husband, "There is something about his preaching more than at church." Years passed over, but Jane cared not for God or eternity, had no regard for the conversation of the godly, yet was always a good wife and a kind neighbor. A loving one often carried her on his heart to a throne of grace, often waiting for answers to prayer; (all real prayer looks for the answer.)

Jane is at length seen in trouble—trouble that could not be accounted for by an ordinary observer. She shuns inquiry, and retires from observation. She is now anxiously watched; the Bible is found marked in an unusual way; portions condemning the sinner are folded down. Her anxiety is observed increasing. Long, tedious months pass over; her fears become alarming, and cannot be concealed any longer. At length, and at midnight, the mystery is unfolded. Rising from a watered pillow, she exclaimed, "I am a lost sinner! a lost sinner!" Her husband, not knowing how matters might turn, inquired into the cause. "O!" she replied, "Is there in the Bible anything like this, 'All flesh is grass?' because it is so, whether it be there or not." The portion was found for her and read. Then she said, "Is there another that says, 'The voice said, Cry?'" That was also found and read. Here she again declared her lost state, and begged that her husband would pray for her. Here was a midnight scene in the mystery of divine teaching: "In a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon man, in slumberings upon the bed; then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction." Now the time of Jacob's trouble is manifest; her soul trembles before God, and cries for mercy. Guilt hunts at every corner; no rest could be found. Her distress was

so great that her husband was often afraid to leave her alone ; for he was not at all times satisfied it was the work of God. Her conversation was often on the justice of God, the awful state of the damned, a never-ending eternity, and the felt impossibility of her own salvation.

During these years, the pulpit of the late Mr. Gadsby was supplied by various ministers. She became acquainted with the doctrines of grace, owning them as the truths of God's word. And now a sense of her lost state, and a knowledge of election and reprobation, worked fearfully in her distressed soul. Having no evidence of her election, and being perfectly sure in her own soul and by the word of God that she was a hell-deserving sinner, her state was dismal. Now she is found searching the Scriptures, though all is yet against her ; listening to Christ preached, though feeling no sensible interest in the atonement ; but, while listening to the description of a sensible sinner's feelings, her soul often answered, "That is me !" But when the soul was set forth as drawing water with joy out of the wells of salvation, Jane trembled, and retired from the sight of those blessings she could not obtain ; yet again she longed for the Lord's day, that she might hear something more about sin-distressed souls. For about three months she listened to the ministers of the gospel, thinking them more than mortal, because they could so truly describe her state ; sometimes thinking it was possible God could save her, after all. On hearing a sermon in a private house from these words, "And if children, then heirs," the Lord gave her a good hope that she was a child. "O !" she cried, "I am a child ! Thanks to God, I am a child ! 'And if children, then heirs ;' and if what the minister says be true, I am a child. (O this 'if')—but how dare I think of such a thing ?—yet I cannot help it, for I am a child !" Here the sucking child laid hold of the breast, blessing and praising God for a good hope that she was an heir of glory.

At this time the "Gospel Standard" became her daily companion. With the Bible and "Standard" she was ever found ; at work, in bed, walking and sitting, they were together. Now she listened to the fellowship of the saints, and was much instructed, comforted, and delighted ; refused the company of the world, for which she suffered no small amount of contempt and ridicule, which she silently endured. She felt the Lord's people her only real friends, and said with one of old, "This people shall be my people, and their God my God." The Lord soon gave her precious faith in Jesus, and believing, she rejoiced in God her Father and Christ her Redeemer. The Holy Spirit led her to see her title to those eternal mansions of which the children of grace are heirs. This was in humility of soul ; and "while she rejoiced, she was ashamed." Now she is seen looking on at the ordinance of the Lord's supper, secretly adoring the Lord Jesus, with her heart full of love, and tears of joy running down her expressive countenance. She has often said in our hearing, "Those were some of my best seasons." While sitting looking at others at the Lord's table, she saw that baptism was the

door. She often said, "No other right way to the Lord's table but through baptism." Whilst in this place she felt the power of truth in these words, "If ye love me, keep my commandments;" "Planted in the likeness of his death," stayed upon her mind. She was led to view the Lord's sufferings for her. Here she longed to be buried with him by baptism into death, and walk in newness of life, in holy obedience to the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, by which she was made free from the law of sin and death.

On one occasion, seeing a dear old saint, a deacon, stand by the baptistery before a large congregation, the minister and two candidates at his side, the old man giving out the 427th hymn, her soul was kindled to a flame by these words,

"Jesus, and shall it ever be,
A mortal man ashamed of thee?"

and she felt the power of the Spirit present, that "he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved." Her heart was fixed here; the hearts of the brethren became knit to her; she essayed to join herself to them in church fellowship, was brought before the church, related much of the Lord's dealings with her, and was baptized. Thus this measure of her joy was full, revealing the answer of a good conscience. She was then admitted to church fellowship, and sat down at the Lord's table, casting in her lot among the despised Galileans.

We now hasten to the Lord's dealings with her in affliction and in death. How precious that truth, "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it." Jane was always weakly. Being of a consumptive habit, very little upset her. Often, under the hidings of her Redeemer's face, and the depravity of her heart combining with the frailties of human nature, she felt she must give up her religion. At one time she said so to a friend, who replied, "Well, Jane, to whom wilt thou go for the words of eternal life?" She burst into a flood of tears, and said, "None but Jesus!" During the last few years she became much weaker; her chest was much affected, and slowly but surely the disease crept on; till, fastening its fangs in the very vitals, it refused to let go its hold; no medicine could divert it from its settled purpose. In February last Jane was missing in the house of prayer; she was confined to her bed, and very ill. Now the conflict became strong and trying; a sinking body, sin in the soul, and at times feeling alone in the war. Her heart sank, and she wondered how matters would end. Her soul was raised from this first conflict on her sick-bed by these words, "It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good." Again she was made willing to suffer all the Lord's will. Many weeks passed over in much distress of body, with many castings down of mind; but she was not suffered to murmur. She often said, "His will be done." By-and-by, she was enabled to look at her affliction with no natural eye. Yet self-pity at times led her to look upon herself as a martyr to disease, till the Lord "stayed the rough wind" by these words,

"His way was much rougher and darker than mine;
Did Christ, my Lord, suffer, and shall I repine?"

This filled her soul with love to the Lord Jesus. Wondering with astonishment, she forgot all her own afflictions, and cried, "O the sufferings of my Lord! Mine are light, and but for a moment. Not worthy to be compared with the glory that is revealed in me even now." She was often stopped in the communications of her mind by weakness and cough; it was, indeed, distressing to look upon her. When low, and fighting with disease, a gospel friend called to see her. He said, "Jane, it is a solemn thing to call God, Father. Can you do so now?" Panting, and almost suffocated with phlegm, she answered firmly, "Yes, yes, I can! Bless his holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul!"

A fearful attack of the enemy was at hand. In a very few minutes she was left to tremble at the remembrance of what she had said, and for a time sank into inexpressible depths of darkness. "Where is now thy God?" she seemed to hear distinctly, even as by the natural ear. Brethren, there is a time when the powers of darkness come in like a flood. The ever-blessed Redeemer stood by her in this battle, and whispered into her sinking soul, "Fear not; I am with thee!" "O!" she exclaimed, "it's all right.

'Begone, unbelief, my Saviour is near.'

O that I may daily learn that without him I can do nothing!" On hearing the 17th chapter of John read, she stopped the reader at the 10th verse, and said, "Do you see *that*, 'I am glorified in them?' O!" she said, "I cannot speak, or I would tell you how it is that 'he is glorified in them.'" In a short time she said, "O what wonders! what wonders!" She continued till her voice was lost. On the return of a little strength, she said, "O the sufferings of the Lord Jesus for vile me, wretched me! I am all sin! There is nothing good about me, but what comes from Christ! If that could be taken away, I should be nothing but a mass of sin!" Here she attempted to comfort her husband, telling him there was nothing in the world worth living for, assuring him that one hour of sweet enjoyment of the Lord's presence on a sick-bed was worth more than many thousands of worlds and all their glories, that the Lord was her Redeemer, and that he had taken away the fear of death.

About this time she was enabled to resign her only darling child, a daughter, 11 years of age. Calling the child to her, she said, "I now give thee up, my child; the Lord protect thee! I leave thee with him; and if it be his holy will to give thee grace, well. I have done with thee for ever." Her husband asked her if she could die upon the same things she had lived upon? "Yes," she replied, "nothing else can support a soul in death but God; his works are realities, solemn realities. I can die with his presence. I feel his power, saying, I will never leave thee." Her husband read the 8th of Romans to her; and here she did glory with reverence in God's election, repeating with unutterable pleasure, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect; it is God that justifieth." She continued, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" She quoted John x. 28: "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall

never perish." The body was rapidly sinking, but the soul delighting in the eternity of God's love. A short time before she died a friend told her she was very weak. She said, "Yes; but I am like Paul, when I am weak then am I strong. Though I am weak, the dear Lord says to me, 'Let not your heart be troubled;' but I must not be without trouble, for he hides his face." So she found it. Darkness, doubts, fears, and distress came upon her. This was the most dreadful assault yet experienced, the darkest night she had groped in; the enemy seemed to have been let loose upon her to a dreadful length; her poor soul knew not where to turn. All the past was minutely examined. She cried out, "Lord help me; Lord help me!" Thus she continued some time. At length she broke silence in these words, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise;" which were followed with light and power upon these words, "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens."

Her nurse became alarmed, declaring something unusual was about to happen, as she had never witnessed the like before: "Drunken, but not with wine." Her husband was instantly at her side, and understanding well the mystery, said, "Well, Jane, what is it?" "O," she replied, "I have got all I want. I have proved the devil a liar once more. O bless the Lord, my soul!" After repeating the before-mentioned text, she said, "Eternal in the heavens!" A female friend visited her while upon this mount, and Jane so exalted the Lord Jesus, standing on his finished work, declaring his glory, that her dear aged sister almost forgot her earthly condition, and they adored together as if they both had been landed beyond sorrow. On Thursday she expressed her wishes in reference to her funeral, and said, if any hymn was to be sung, let it be

"My thoughts surmount these lower skies."

The second and third verses were her delight. On the same evening the sufferings and shed blood of Jesus were made such a blessing to her, that she all but forgot she was ill. Being asked if she had taken any supper, she replied, "Yes; my last on earth. I shall soon pass through the valley of the shadow. O that the happy hour was come to change this for heaven!" The last restless night passed, on Tuesday morning she suddenly broke out, and repeated those words so beautifully expressive, "Bless the Lord, O my soul!" But at length her strength failed, and she was thought to be dying. A little while elapsed, and she desired to know the hour, and expressed also a wish to see her child. The little one was presented, she took her hand, and said "God bless thee, Hannah," sank down, and continued to mutter, "Jesus, O Jesus!" About six in the evening she was evidently dying. Taking hold of her husband's hand, she said distinctly, "By the grace of God I am what I am!" She paused, struggled, and continued, "Not of works; not of works!" A cloud now enveloped her, but in a few minutes she said, "Lord Jesus, O Lord Jesus, help me! Do come and help me, O Lord Jesus!" This was a prayer not to be refused a redeemed soul;

it was a time of extraordinary favor for those present, each waiting to prove a prayer answered by Christ. She now lifted her dear dying head, and said, "He is come!" Something more was said, but could not be heard. Looking round, she said in an audible voice, "Lord Jesus, come quickly, and let me enter into thy abode!" and breathing her last, she fell asleep.

"No more to fight with fell disease,
Or struggle with the powers of sin;
No more shall men and devils tease,
The Lord of life hath shut her in."

Manchester.

A. B. T.

Satan got nothing by his winnowing Peter. Peter lost some of his chaff, which well might be spared, and the tempter lost many an after-advantage.—*Elisha Coles.*

Look back to "the rock from whence you were hewn, and to the hole of the pit from whence you were digged." Reflect seriously on the state wherein divine grace found you, under how much guilt, under how much pollution! In what danger, in what ruin! Think what was, and O think with yet deeper reflection what would have been the case! The eye of God, which penetrates into eternity, saw what your mind, amused with the trifles of the present time and sensual gratification, was utterly ignorant and regardless of; it saw you on the borders of eternity, and pitied you; saw that you would in a little time have been such a helpless, wretched creature as a sinner that is just now dead, and has, to his infinite surprise and everlasting terror, met his unexpected doom, and would like him stand thunder-struck in astonishment and despair. This God saw, and he pitied you; and being merciful to you, he provided, in the counsels of his eternal love and grace, a Redeemer for you, and purchased you to himself with the blood of his Son, a price, which if you will pause upon it, and think seriously what it was, must surely affect you to such a degree, as to make you fall down before God in wonder and shame, to think that it should ever have been given for you.—*Doddridge.*

I had a sad storm yesterday, and difficult work to manage the helm. Satan stirred my old man up at a most awful rate; and they were raging and cursing below deck till I trembled above. I could not find my log-book, and visitors crowded in upon me continually, till I grew wretched, and Satan advised me to let down the boat under colour, and so flee out of the ship, desert the service, and leave the crew without a pilot. O, what a creature is man! Of all the frightful conceptions that ever I have conceived of death, the king of terrors, and the worst imagination that ever I imagined of ghosts, devils, savages, bears, tigers, lions, and wolves—put them all together, and paint them in the most fearful, fruitful, or formidable light—all never terrified the doctor so much as a real sight and sense of William Huntington has done, when I have seen him in God's light. And I do believe that I can say with reverence, the Lord knows that I lie not in this confession.—*Huntington.*

THE LIBERTY OF THE MINISTRY.

WE intimated, in a late Number, our desire and intention to make a few remarks on a doctrine held by the Plymouth Brethren, for which we can hardly find a term except that dubious one which, taken from them, stands at the head of the present Article. The doctrine, so far as we can understand their meaning, is this, or something like this, that the ministry of the word is not to be limited to one individual, stately preaching to the church and congregation, but belongs of right to all the male members of the church* according to their several and separate gifts. In other words, that it is unscriptural, and a limiting of the Spirit in our assemblies, that one person, say the Pastor of the Church, should invariably stand up in the pulpit to preach to the congregation; and that it should be left to the Spirit to furnish at the time the different members with each his psalm, or his interpretation, or his word of exhortation, that the whole body may thus mutually be edified.

The following extract from Mr. Coles's pamphlet lays down this doctrine very plainly and strongly:

"It is God's command that all that have the gift to edify are to use that gift when the church is come together into one place for worship. 'Only let all things be done decently and in order; for God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.' To appoint one man to take the lead in the worship of God, and to impose silence on all the rest of the royal priesthood of believers, is to destroy their relation to the one great High Priest, to usurp the supreme authority of the Lord Jesus, and is a mere intervention of man's wilfulness in the solemn assembly, and is a practical denial of the presence and sovereignty of the Holy Ghost, who 'divides to every man severally as he will.' (1 Cor. xii.; Rom. xii. 4-8; Eph. iv. 11-13. Paul could say, 'that the things I wrote unto you are the commandments of the Lord.' (1 Cor. xiv. 37.) The means God has appointed for the instruction, edification, comfort, and growth in grace of the saints, are despised and set at nought by very many in the present day; consequently, the spirit is grieved. (1 Thess. v. 19, 20; Eph. iv. 29, 30.) 'Many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.' The saints are to exhort one another in the assembly (Heb. x. 24, 25) to minister one to another as good stewards (1 Pet. iv. 10, 11,) to comfort one another with the coming of the Lord, (1 Thess. iv. 18,) to warn the unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, (1 Thess. v. 14,) to teach and admonish one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, (Col. iii. 15, 16,) forbearing one another, (Col. iii. 13,) submitting one to another, (Eph. v. 21; 1 Cor. xvi. 15, 16,) praying and watching, (Eph. vi. 18; Luke xii. 37,) building up yourselves, (Jude 20,) pulling others out of the fire, (Jude 23,) edifying one another, (Rom. xiv. 19; 1 Cor. xiv. 3-5, 12, 31, 32, 37; Eph. iv. 12, 16, 29; 1 Thess. v. 11; Acts ix. 31,) striving for the faith of the gospel. (Phil. i. 27; Jude 3.) Here, then, I see liberty of ministry in the church assembly, and the care of order thrown upon believers met together in one place; and it is an unscriptural, priestly assumption of any man or minister of our day thus to attempt to exclude or silence them, when God hath said they may all speak to edification and exhortation and comfort. (1 Cor. xiv. 3, 31.)"

* We do not know whether, in practice, they limit this liberty to the members of the church, for we were once present at one of their meetings when a man got up and addressed the congregation who sat outside the circle where the members were sitting and afterwards did not partake of the Lord's Supper with them. The man, we may add, was such a stranger to the people and the place, that when, after service, we asked him when they met again in the evening, he did not know the time.

In the above extract there is a good deal of confusion, for many texts which are brought forward to show the mutual offices of the people of God to each other, as "forbearing one another," "submitting one to another," "praying and watching," &c., have no necessary connection with public worship at all, but are intended as rules for their general conduct. With this necessary deduction, the above extract may be taken as a fair exposition of the views of the Plymouth Brethren on this point.

It will be observed that these views they mainly support by 1 Cor. xiv., which they consider to set forth and embody the mind of the Spirit and the principles and practice of the apostolic churches.

We do not deny that the practice of the Corinthian Church affords some ground for their views; but that it thence follows that the practice of the Church at Corinth was that of *all* the New Testament Churches, we strenuously deny, still less that it affords a pattern for the churches of the saints in all ages.

In opposing, then, these views, we shall, with God's blessing, dwell chiefly on three points, and endeavour to show,

I. That the practice of the Corinthian Church was not the regular mode as instituted by Christ and his Apostles, but was merely transitory and exceptional.

II. That the end sought, viz., the edification of the Church, is best obtained by the more scriptural and safe mode prevalent in our churches.

III. That the practice of the Corinthian Church was at the very time, in the purest days of the Church, *fraught with evil*, and that in our day it would be not only utterly impracticable, but pregnant with mischief and confusion.

I. We have *first* to show that the case of the Corinthian Church was transient and exceptional. If so, no argument can be deduced from their practice binding on the churches now. A transient system necessarily excludes perpetuity; and an exceptional mode bars the practice from being quoted or adopted as a universally binding rule.

To prove our first point we adduce three leading arguments:

i. The *negative* proof; in other words, that there is little or no evidence that the practice of the Corinthian Church prevailed in any of the other apostolic churches. Now, were that practice the regular order prevailing in the other churches, we should almost certainly find some traces of it, or some allusion made to it. Silence on this point, if not decisive, furnishes an important negative proof that the practice of the Corinthian Church was a temporary provision, the Lord, as yet, not having given them a pastor, and not the regular constitution of all the New Testament Churches as instituted by the Apostles.

The passage from Romans xii. 6, 8, quoted by Mr. Coles, has no necessary reference to the assembling of the saints together for the worship of God, but lays down general rules for the exercise of their gifts and graces in their mutual intercourse at all times, whether

assembled together or not. An examination of the passage will show that the exhortations in it have a much wider bearing than the restricted sense which would limit them to public worship.

If, then, among them there was any one endued with "the gift of prophecy," or preaching, whenever he exercised that gift, whether in his family, in a private house, or before the assembled congregation, it was to be "according to the proportion (or analogy) of faith," *i. e.* in strict accordance with the truth of God's word and the faith of the saints; if any "ministered," *i. e.* visited, as a deacon, the sick and poor members, and ministered to their necessities, (which could not well be done when they met together for public worship, but almost necessarily required private visits at their own houses,) he was "to wait upon it," or attend to it diligently; if any had the gift of "teaching," he too was not to neglect that gift, but exercise it, which he might do in private, by conversation or reading the Scriptures in their houses, as well as in their public assemblies. He that had the grace and gift "to exhort" the children of God to adorn the doctrine in all things, was not to bury his talent in a napkin, but exercise it as occasion offered. So "he that giveth"—the richer member who assisted the poorer members with his purse or presents, (things certainly to be done in private, and not when they met together for worship,) was to do it "with simplicity," *i. e.* without pride or ostentation, which he could hardly avoid if he gave, as a regular practice, publicly. "He that ruleth," an officer of the church, or a ruling elder, (1 Tim. v. 17; Heb. xiii. 17,) was to do it "with diligence," that is, he was not to be sluggish and inattentive, tolerating disorder and loose walking from mere indolence of body or mind, but was to discharge his office diligently, which would be best done by watching over the flock at all seasons, and at home in their houses, and not merely exercising authority at their meetings. So "he that sheweth mercy" or compassion, one who forgave an erring brother, was to do so "with cheerfulness," forgiving not sullenly or moodily, as a mere duty, but with that openness of heart and face, which showed it was done readily, and not by constraint, but in a loving, gospel spirit.

Such general rules as these by no means prove that the Church at Rome in its assemblies carried on public worship in a manner similar to the Church at Corinth.

ii. But we have *positive* proof to show that the New Testament churches were, as regards the ministry of the word, circumstanced very differently from the Corinthian Church.

1. We have *general* declarations given, which shew clearly that the ministry of the word and the edification of the church were not left in the hands of the ordinary, what we may for distinction sake call the private members, but were entrusted to certain extraordinary individuals, raised up and qualified by God himself for that express purpose. How plain and positive, on this point, are the words of the apostle Paul: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and

teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." (Eph. iv. 11-13.)

It is most evident from these words that "the perfecting of the saints, the work of the ministry, and the edifying of the body of Christ," are not left to what may be called the incidental or ordinary gifts of the members of the Church, but are entrusted to certain individuals endowed with special gifts for that express purpose. The very circumstance that God expressly raises up distinct and qualified persons to feed and build up his church shows that the ordinary graces and gifts of the Spirit in private members are not sufficient for that purpose. In things divine, as in things human, the rule holds good, that bodies of men cannot rule or teach themselves, but need others duly qualified to do it for them. As in an army, soldiers require officers; as in a school, boys need teachers, so in a church, are needed men qualified to rule and teach. It is true that on a pinch sergeants and corporals might command the privates, and lead them into action; and the elder boys in a school might occasionally teach the younger; but these, like the practice in the Corinthian Church, are transient and exceptional cases. Some more permanent and distinct authority is needed for the army to conquer, the school to flourish. So private members of churches, or believers generally, may much edify and comfort one another; but as a general rule, the Lord has entrusted to others the gift and authority to feed, teach, and rule them. This was so much felt from the very first that, even in the Corinthian Church, in which no mention is made of "elders," we find "governments" spoken of as one of the gifts of the Spirit. "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." These "governments" were individuals divinely qualified by the blessed Spirit to rule and govern the rest.

But a slight examination of the passage already quoted, Eph. iv. 11-13, may serve to show us that it was to persons expressly raised up for the purpose that the teaching and government of the churches were committed. Some of these, then, were "*apostles*," an office now ceased; others "*prophets*," or preachers, the word meaning not only those who, like Agabus, (Acts xi. 28; xxi. 10,) were empowered to predict future events, but men able to speak for God (its literal signification) in the congregation, and as the term evidently means in I Cor. xiv. 22-24; some were "*evangelists*," *i. e.* what we should now perhaps call missionaries, or persons who preached the gospel, like Philip, (Acts viii. xxi. 8,) without authority to form churches or take the oversight of them; and some "*pastors*, and *teachers*," the one permanent, stated overseers and shepherds of a church, the other more like our "supplies," privileged to teach and edify the people of God, but not endued with the gifts necessary to guide, govern, and feed a church stately.

Now, who does not see that all these distinct offices and gifts could not exist in, or be confined to, a small body like a church, but that their very necessity and usefulness consisted in their having a wider field? Let us, to see this more clearly, assume that there exists at the present time a church signally favored and blest, and that the members are such as can "comfort themselves together, and edify one another." (1 Thess. v. 11.) Now, suppose that in the bosom of this favored church the Lord were to raise up several "pastors, evangelists, teachers," &c. Would the church require all these for its own edification? Certainly not. If in a village there are ten or twelve men calculated to be shepherds, must they all go by turns and take care of *one* flock? If there be in a large town a certain number of educated individuals qualified to be teachers of languages, arts, or sciences, or, to make the analogy still closer, suppose there were in a large school a number of advanced pupils able to instruct the other boys, would they all keep just where they were, teaching in that particular school, or would they go and form other schools? So, if the Lord raise up in the bosom of a church men endowed with pastoral gifts and graces, it is not that they should continue in the body of that church, but that they should become shepherds of distinct churches; and if he raise up other men qualified to teach, it is not that they should always continue teaching in the same church, but should exercise their gifts in teaching other churches and congregations. It was in this way that the gospel originally was spread, the kingdom of Christ advanced, and the glory of God promoted.

When the Plymouth Brethren speak against what they contemptuously call "the one man system," they seem to forget that the office of "pastor" is as much of the blessed Spirit's institution as a church itself, or the gifts and graces of the individual members; and that it was "the Holy Ghost" who made the elders "overseers" of the church at Ephesus. (Acts xx. 28.) Men will and do abuse the good gifts of God; but if some pastors act arbitrarily, are not some members unruly? If there be pride in the pulpit, is there never any pride in the pew? and may not the gifted member be as proud of his prayer or word of exhortation as the minister of his sermon, and display it as fulsomely?

ii. But we have *particular directions* given in the New Testament, which are completely opposed to the views against which we are contending. Thus Paul commissions Titus "to ordain elders in every city." (Titus i. 5.) Now, here authority is given him to appoint "elders," or "overseers,"* over the churches, clearly implying

* The office of "elder" and "overseer," as is plain from Acts xx. 17, 28, is one and the same. It is a pity that our translators, in 1 Tim. iii. 1, 2, Titus i. 7, did not use the word "overseer," as the Greek term literally means, and as they themselves have translated it, Acts xx. 28. Translating "*episcopos*" "bishop," has caused much confusion, and much favored priestly assumption, besides almost spoiling one beautiful passage, "For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls." 1 Peter ii. 25. How much more expressive it would have been to render the word "overseer," the meaning being that Christ oversees or watches over

that these were special persons set apart to instruct, and oversee, or govern the churches. Thus the members of the churches did not mutually instruct each other, but one or more were appointed to teach and guide the whole body.* We do not, indeed, understand from the charge given to Titus, that he had any despotic authority to select whom he liked, still less to ordain him with all the modern ceremonies, established or dissenting; but that, being gifted with spiritual discernment, he should see who of the members of churches were spiritually qualified to be teachers and rulers, and these, with the consent of the church, he should set apart for that office. He therefore gives him the qualifications of a "bishop" or "overseer," that guided by his own spiritual discernment, and aided by these apostolic directions, he might appoint those individuals only who were divinely qualified for the office. Were it God's plan and purpose for a church wholly to teach and guide itself, this office would be useless and superfluous. The minute directions given to Timothy, (1 Tim. iii: 1-7,) in which the qualifications of an "overseer" are pointed out, furnish similar ground of proof that the primitive Churches did not teach or rule themselves: Thus, amongst these qualifications, there are two specially mentioned: 1. "Apt to teach;" 2. "Ruling well his own house;" in other words, he must have the two distinct gifts of teaching and governing. But if he neither taught, nor took care of the church, (verse 5,) and they taught and ruled themselves, why need he possess these gifts?

iii. An examination of the constitution of *particular* churches leads to the same conclusion.

1. The Church at *Ephesus* most certainly had "elders" or "overseers," to whom was entrusted the feeding and guiding of the flock. This is evident beyond all contradiction from Acts xx. We read there that when Paul came to Miletus, the sea port of Ephesus which was an inland city, he sent for "*the elders*" of the Ephesian Church to meet him there. Now, why should he send for "the elders" unless on the same principle that the General of an army

the souls of his people. Calling the blessed Lord a Bishop confuses the mind, as connecting him, through the association of ideas, with an office which is but a perversion and a corruption, and had neither place nor name in the New Testament churches. The reason, we believe, was this; they had their cue from James I., who, though bred in the Scotch Presbyterian Kirk, had an almost idolatrous love for bishops. He, therefore, gave the translators a list of words which were to be translated by certain English terms. Among these words, if our memory serve, were "church" and "bishop," for which they were not allowed to substitute "congregation" and "overseer." But in Acts xx. 28 there was this difficulty, that if the word were translated "bishop," it would make the office of "elder" or "presbyter" the same as that of bishop; and as that would overthrow the very foundation of episcopal government, they were compelled to put "overseers."

* When we speak of the "overseers" in the primitive churches teaching and ruling, we do not mean thereby to imply that they taught the people as schoolmasters, or ruled the church as lords. On the contrary, they were listened to as teachers, not because they *would*, but because they *could* teach, speaking out of a gracious experience with unction and savor; and they were yielded to as guides and counsellors, not because they *would*, but because they *could* rule with meekness, wisdom, and love.

in a council of war sends for the officers? From this we gather, were there no other proof, that there were spiritual officers known by the name of "elders," who were appointed to feed and rule the Church at Ephesus. But we are not left to mere inference. Paul's language to them, when they met, at once so tender and so weighty, is quite decisive of the point: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Observe the words. "The Holy Ghost," not human authority, had "made them overseers (or bishops) over the flock, to feed the church of God." The word rendered "feed," means literally "to shepherd," or "perform the shepherd's office" to the flock, which includes guiding and ruling, as well as laying food before it. In their assemblies, then, at Ephesus the members of the church would not, as at Corinth, have each their "psalm," &c., but would listen to the instruction of their elders and overseers. These we now call by the name of "pastors," or "ministers," the change being not in the thing itself, or in the office, but in the name.

2. Nor was the Church at *Philippi* taught and ruled as the Church at Corinth. Paul writes his Epistle "to all the saints in Christ Jesus," *i. e.* the private members of the Church, but specially mentions "*the bishops and deacons.*" These were the only two ordinary officers of the primitive churches. "The bishops" are the same as "elders," the term "elder" signifying their age and experience, ("novices," that is, youths in years and experience, not being qualified for the office, 1 Tim. iii. 6,) and the term "bishop" or "overseer" signifying their office or authority. The "elders" "overseers," or "bishops," the three titles being strictly synonymous, or meaning the same thing ministered to them spiritually, preached the word, and by their "sound doctrine," (or teaching, as the word "doctrine" generally means in the New Testament,) both exhorted the living family and convinced the "gainsayers," or opposers of truth. Besides this, they guided and ruled the church, not indeed by arbitrary, despotic authority, as "lords over God's heritage," but by kind, wise, and affectionate counsel, warning the unruly, reproofing the inconsistent, and as the mouth of the church, and acting by its sanction and authority, they received, or in the last case, separated members. The deacons chiefly attended to the temporal affairs of the church, and were especially engaged in visiting the sick, relieving the poorer members, and discharging offices of kindness and love to all.

3. The Church at *Colossæ* was, as far as we can gather, under the same constitution as the rest, for express mention is made of two of its ministers, Epaphras or Epaphroditus, (Col. i. 7; Philipp. ii. 25.) and Archippus; (Col. iv. 17;) they being either co-pastors, or Archippus performing the office in the absence of Epaphroditus, who was then with Paul.

4. The Church of the *Hebrews* was evidently on the same principle: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves:

for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you." "Those that had the rule over them" were "the elders," who as "pastors" or "overseers" "guided" them (*margin*) and "watched for their souls as those who were to give an account," being "stewards of the mysteries of God." (1 Cor. iv. 1; Titus i. 7.) The Hebrew church, then, plainly was not self-governed or self-taught, nor was its edification entrusted to the gifts of the private members, but was fed and guided by those set in authority over them.

5. *The Churches to which James wrote*, formed chiefly of Hebrew converts, were under the same rule and government: "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord." (James v. 14.) Express mention is here made of "the elders of the church," they being in these churches, as in all the others, the appointed teachers and rulers.

6. *The Epistle of Peter*, called *general*, as addressed to the churches generally in Asia Minor, affords the same testimony: "The elders which are among you, I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." (1 Pet. v. 1-4.)

How evident from this that "*the elders*" in all these churches fed the flock, and took the oversight thereof, literally "performed the office of overseer" to it. But does not this exclude the Corinthian practice of the members overseeing and feeding themselves?

7. When we come a little lower down the stream of history, we find in *the seven Churches of Asia* authority still more limited. The earliest churches, like that of Corinth, before men were raised up qualified to teach and rule, edified themselves by the gifts of ordinary members. When God raised up men, and furnished them with graces and gifts for the purpose, "the elders" superseded, in great measure, this early mode. Small churches, in the warmth and fervor of their first love, full of zeal and earnestness, and favored with spiritual gifts, might easily and happily, as well as profitably, edify and rule each other. But when the church became much increased in point of numbers, when many young converts needed feeding, many troubled souls comforting, and not a few disorderly ones checking, these means were found insufficient. As in the world, so in the church, where all want to govern, none will obey, and where all want to teach, none will learn. In the Corinthian church, gifts were more valued than grace, knowledge than love; and the consequence was that the possessors of gifts undid by their pride and forwardness what they had done by their gift. Thus their gifts fell into discredit when it was found that their

possessors were more zealous to shine than to edify; and those who could not govern their own pride were considered not much qualified to rule the church of God. Men, therefore, were needed specially qualified to teach and instruct, men enabled to preach the gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and who therefore could speak with more authority and power than private members. So, as disorder arose in the bosom of the church, self-government was found insufficient. Private members would not submit to one another; there was amongst them, as with Christ's disciples, a contention who should be the greater, a striving for the mastery, in which, being equally strong, neither side would give way. Some ruling head or heads became a daily-growing want, some person or persons whose rule, being of divine authority, would be submitted to. The apostles were therefore divinely led to appoint the office of "elders," who should rule as well as feed the church. "And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed." "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine." That this was of very early institution in the church is plain from Acts xi. 30: "Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul."

But after a time divided authority gendered other evils. Parties arose in the church, as even under a different constitution at Corinth, and by degrees the main office of feeding and guiding became intrusted to one man, called in the Revelation "the angel" of the church. The office of deacon, that being chiefly confined to the church's temporal affairs, and causing little jealousy or strife, remained unaltered; and thus at the close of the New Testament Canon we are brought much to the same constitution of things as is prevalent in the churches now—the spiritual ministration of one individual, whom we call "pastor," or "minister,"—pastor to the church, minister to the congregation—and deacons to manage temporal affairs.

Thus far, if our readers have followed us, we have shown from the Scriptures the constitution of the primitive churches, as instituted by the apostles. The state of spiritual things at Corinth we view as merely transient, and so far exceptional, confined for the most part to that church, and even then fraught with the elements of disorder and confusion, but absolutely impracticable now; for worse than useless it would indeed be to revive the form unless we can revive the power, or set up the body unless we can re-animate it with its original life.

But as we shall have more to say on this point, and our limits warn us to close, we shall defer to a future number our further remarks on this interesting and important subject.

Those difficulties which are the most dreadful in their appearance are so overruled that they generally terminate in the most animated praises.—*Timothy Priestley.*

POETRY.

A C O N T E M P L A T I O N,

AN ODE SUGGESTED BY REV. VII. 9-17.

I saw, and lo! a countless throng
 Th' elect of ev'ry nation, name, and tongue,
 Assembled round the everlasting throne;
 With robes of righteousness endu'd;
 (The righteousness of God;)
 And each a palm sustained
 In his victorious hand;
 When thus the bright melodious choir began:
 "Salvation to thy name,
 Eternal God, and co-eternal Lamb,
 In pow'r, in glory, and in essence one!"

So sang the saints; th' angelic train
 Second the anthem with a loud Amen.
 (These in the outer circle stood,
 The saints were nearest God;)
 And prostrate fall, with glory overpow'r'd;
 And hide their faces with their wings,
 And thus address the King of kings:
 "All hail! by thy triumphant church ador'd!
 Blessings, and thanks, and honor too,
 Are thy supreme, thy everlasting due,
 Our triune Sovereign, our propitious Lord!"

While I beheld the amazing sight,
 A seraph pointed to the saints in white,
 And told me who they were, and whence they came:
 "These are they whose lot below
 Was persecution, pain, and woe;
 These are the chosen, purchas'd flock,
 Who ne'er their Lord forsook;
 Through his imputed merit, free from blame;
 Redeem'd from ev'ry sin;
 And, as thou seest whose garments were made clean,
 Washed in the blood of yon exalted Lamb.

Sav'd by his righteousness alone,
 Spotless they stand before the throne,
 And in the ethereal temple chant his praise;
 Himself among them deigns to dwell,
 And face to face his light reveal;
 Hunger and thirst, as heretofore,
 And pain and heat they know no more;
 Nor need, as once, the sun's prolific rays,
 Immanuel here, his people feeds,
 To streams of joy perennial leads,
 And wipes, for ever wipes, the tears from ev'ry face."

Happy the soul releas'd from fear,
 And safely landed there!
 Some of the shining number once I knew,
 And travell'd with them here;
 Nay, some (my elder brethren now)
 Set later out for heaven; my junior saints below;
 Long after me, they heard the call of grace,
 Which wak'd them unto righteousness.

How they have got beyond !
 Converted last, yet first with glory crown'd !
 Little, once, I thought that these
 Would first the summit gain,
 And leave me far behind slow journeying through the plain.

Lov'd while on earth, nor less below'd, though gone,
 Think not I envy you your crown ;
 No ; if I could, I would not call you down.
 Though slower is my pace,
 To you I'll follow on,
 Leaning on Jesus all the way,
 Who, now and then, lets fall a ray
 Of comfort from his throne.
 The shinings of his grace
 Soften my passage through the wilderness ;
 And vines nectareous spring where briars grew.

The sweet unveilings of his face
 Make me, at times, near half as blest as you.
 O might his beauty feast my ravish'd eyes,
 His gladd'ning presence ever stay,
 And cheer me all my journey through !
 But soon the clouds return ; my triumph dies,
 Damp vapours from the valley rise,
 And hide the hill of Zion from my view.
 Spirit of light, thrice holy Dove,
 Brighten my sense of interest in that love,
 Which knew no birth, and never shall expire !

Electing goodness, firm and free,
 My whole salvation hangs on thee,
 Eldest, fairest daughter of eternity.
 Redemption, grace, and glory too,
 Our bliss above, and hopes below,
 From her, their parent fountain, flow.
 Ah, tell me, Lord, that thou hast chosen me !
 Thou, who has kindled my intense desire,
 Fulfil the wish thy influence did inspire,
 And let me my election know !
 Then, when thy summons bids me come up higher,
 Well pleased I shall from life retire,
 And join the burning hosts, beheld at distance now.

TOPLADY.

[How sublime the thoughts, poetical the language, and sweet the whole spirit of the above Ode of Toplady.—Ed.]

Christ casts the metal in the fire, ere he form the vessel of mercy ;
 he must cast down the old work, ere he lay the new foundation.—
Rutherford.

This is then to be shut up under the law after the flesh, not for ever, but till Christ be revealed. Therefore when you are beaten down, tormented and afflicted by the law, then say, Lady law, thou art not alone, neither art thou all things ; but besides thee there are yet other things much greater and better than thou art, namely, grace, faith, and blessing. This grace, this faith, and this blessing do not accuse me, terrify me, condemn me ; but they comfort me, they bid me trust in the Lord, and promise unto me victory and salvation in Christ.—*Luther.*

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THE UNIVERSAL INVITATION OF THE GOSPEL.

By RUSK.

(Continued from page 240.)

“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.”—ISAIAH LV. 1.

THESE are six particular things that we must experience in order to come to these waters without money and without price.

1. We must be *insolvent*, or complete *bankrupts*; for if we can see and feel any one thing good in ourselves, or suppose that we ever shall, then we have money; but we are to come without: “A certain creditor had two debtors; the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty; and when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both.” This exactly agrees with our text: “Come without money and without price.” You and I little think, when God’s holy law is first applied to us, that it is to bring us in guilty. but we conclude that God intends us to keep it; whereas, this would like expecting grapes from thorns and figs from thistles. Therefore we try to alter ourselves, work hard, and mean well; and what is it we want to do? Why, to keep God’s holy law; but all this arises from our ignorance of what that law requires, and of our own utter inability to keep it. While we proceed thus, we are bringing money; and the way that the Lord takes to impoverish us and to bring us to bankruptcy, is by discovering to us, by the light of his Spirit, our own hearts, and the spirituality of his holy law. Moses will bring his bills in so fast as to terrify us, wear us out, bring us down, and impoverish us, till at last we shall see and feel that, unless an act of grace in a sovereign way take place, we must be damned for ever, for aught we can do. “By the law is the knowledge of sin;” “The law is spiritual, but we are carnal, sold under sin;” “The law was given that the offence might abound, that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.” Has this law been applied to my reader, and have you ever been thoroughly stripped, so as to have nothing to pay? If you have, the invitation is to you: “He that hath no money.”

2. We must come to these waters *ready to perish*. This is coming without money. O the sore conflicts that my soul has had with the powers of hell, who first tempt, then accuse. I have ere

now been driven by the devil again and again into one particular, besetting sin. O how this has distressed me. Satan makes it out to be little or nothing while he is tempting you; but when once you have slipped, then he will represent your case as very perilous, and that there is no mercy for you. I remember that, after secretly falling in this way a long time, though none knew anything of it but God and myself, I was one day greatly bowed down on account of my continual falling; for I could see no account of Bible saints who fell so often. They fell once, and were reclaimed. Peter did not keep on denying Christ; David did not continue to commit adultery. O this sank me greatly. I concluded that I certainly was an Antinomian, and that text appeared very awful to me, "Because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee." Now, by one master sin being suffered continually to overcome us, will God sometimes bring us into a perishing condition. It is like opening a door to discover all the rest. There is such a power in sin, and the love of it is so strong, that were instant damnation to follow, and you knew it, still you would commit it. Neither is it simply having light to know that it is wrong, that it is offensive to God, that will keep you. I have gone into things with open eyes, though I have known what I should suffer. Ah! very few know the power of sin, and their extreme weakness! Sometimes, not only at first, but afterwards as we go on, God will, to humble our pride, suffer such things to take place; and really I have concluded it to be all over with me, for many texts have appeared to cut me off. O these darling sins are like a second nature to us; and nothing but the almighty power of God can turn us to hate and forsake them. But let nothing of all this keep you back, poor sinner; for where else can you go but to these waters? And many promises are made for your encouragement. Hence God says, "Return, ye backsliding children, I am married unto you." Again. Where can you and I go but to the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness? And does not the Lord promise that from all our filthiness, idols, and uncleannesses he will save us? Asaph tells us his sore ran in the night, and ceased not. David's loins were filled with a loathsome disease. God permits these things to take place that we may highly prize Jesus Christ, who alone can destroy the works of the devil; and in this way we shall be brought into a perishing condition. They, then, are to come to the feast who are ready to perish. The prodigal was one: "I perish with hunger;" and you read how well he fared.

3. To have no money is to have *no strength*. Say you, "I have none, for without Christ I can do nothing?" Very sound speech; but many a hypocrite has it at his tongue's end. It is no easy thing to be altogether without strength. All the time you are clear of temptation, you may boast; but let storms and temptations arise, and lusts of all sorts be stirred up in your heart, snares, traps, and gins be set for you, and then you will try to avoid and break

the power of these things. Here is the money again; but we are to come without. Hence you read, "For the Lord will repent himself concerning his servants when he seeth that their power is all gone, and there is none shut up nor left." It is one thing for us to believe we have no power, because we read it in God's word and in sound authors, and another thing to prove it by trying our own strength, and being continually overcome by temptations of various sorts. I have long been fixed in it as a truth, that I have no power; and yet to this day I feel a legal working spirit, prompting me to try to repent, to try to be sorry, and to endeavour to avoid such things in future; and all this in my own strength. But, say you, "What is it to have no strength?" To this I answer, that to have no strength is to be sure I shall fall unless God hold me up; and if faith is not in exercise, and if you have no strength you will fully expect to fall. See David: "I shall one day fall by the hand of this Saul." Now, the same man had defied Goliath, because his faith was strong in the Lord. Human strength will engage without God, as you may see in Israel of old; but they always, at such times, fell before their enemies; and if we call on the Lord when there is any of this human strength remaining, it is in a heartless, lifeless way, complimenting him only with our lips; but not so when we are in extreme weakness, and our case is perilous. Then the Holy Spirit will help us to cry mightily to the Lord from a deep sense of our need. This is coming to those waters without money. I feel at this time very restless, and torn to pieces with Satan's temptations. I believe he is desperate with any one whose heart is seeking the welfare of God's family. O how weak do I feel now, even as if I should become a prey to his power. Now, God's strength is made perfect in our *weakness*, not in our *strength*; and, therefore, when we come in utter weakness, we come without money; but human power is money.

4. *Human wisdom* is money also; and we have a good deal of this about us. From this arise all our schemes, plans, and chalking out paths for God to lead us in; and we really think we shall succeed too in this way; but our wisdom lies in knowing experimentally that we are fools. Now, if you have any of this money about you, I will tell you how you will find it out. If you get into any trouble, either spiritual or temporal, you will directly, the first thing, lean to your own understanding; but if you have no money, you will consult the Lord directly the trouble comes upon you. Watch closely these things, and you will find that you often really have money when in your judgment you have none. The head is clear enough, but the heart quite different. It is the same in hearing the word. You go to hear, but you are not sensible how foolish you are, and therefore you try the preacher by your own supposed wisdom; and in this way very often justify the wicked, and condemn the just. Some of God's people get entangled in errors this very way; and, if they look back, they will find that the whole cause was their not consulting the Lord at first, who has promised to give wisdom liberally to them that stand in need of it; but if a

man lack not it, he has money, and consequently will not succeed at these waters. It is the same in reading. How often do you and I sit down to read as if wisdom was lodged in us; and in this way we read a leaf over and over again, and at last shut up the book quite angry; but what is the cause? I answer, it is because we have money. I have been sorely tried in providence again and again, and have wanted money when I have had too much. Say you. "That's a flat contradiction." Be that as it may, I well know it is the truth. I have consulted my own reason. I have looked to this and to that arm of flesh, not looking above all to the Lord, but have hewn out these broken cisterns that could hold no water; but when the burden has been intolerable, and every refuge has appeared to fail, then the good Spirit has emboldened me to cry to the Lord, and he has appeared for me again and again, and in a way too that I have not expected. These fleshly props, which agree with our wisdom, these are money; and a man may have abundance of this money, when he is without a single farthing literally. I know what I am writing about by experience.

5. If a man has no money, *he will not attempt to alter his case and state at all*, but his working arm will cease. He will be sure that unless sovereign mercy is displayed towards him, it will be all over. This you may see in what Elihu speaks to Job. He is showing Job the way in which God strips a sinner, and tells him what such a man, under God's mighty hand, expects, namely, to go to the pit of hell, and to perish by the sword of justice; all of which the man expects. His life abhors bread, and his soul dainty meat. His soul draws near to the grave, and his life to the destroyers. In this condition, the man has no money, and therefore expects to go to hell, to become a prey to devils, and for strict justice to cut him down; but these waters prevent it all; for God is gracious to him, and delivers him from going down to the pit, having found a ransom, which is the Lord Jesus Christ. You may see a description of this work in the 107th Psalm. It is all to strip and impoverish a sinner. That he wants to bring something to God, and have wherewith to glory, is clear enough; and this is our legal pride; but God will reduce us to beggary, that we may come empty of all to these living waters. In this psalm you may see the whole of God's work in his elect. It begins with a separation from this world, which is his first work with the sinner, and it ends with the loving-kindness of the Lord, which is a rich supply of these living waters; and you and I cannot get higher than this, live as long as we may. The whole psalm treats of emptying and filling: "Hungry and thirsty, their soul faints in them." This is having no money: "They fall down, and there is none to help." This is having no money. "They draw near to the gates of death." This is having no money. "They are at their wits' end." This is having no money. "They are brought low through oppression, affliction, and sorrow. Their hearts are brought down with labor." This is having no money. And in this way you find they come by prayer to these waters, and always succeed. As it is written: "Then they

cried unto the Lord, and he delivered them." David tells us, that "whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even he shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord." But which way can you and I be wise, and observe such things, but by being brought experimentally into them? All other observation is head work; and what will that avail you or me? We must come as they did, without money, to these waters.

6. This coming without money is by some confined to the first stripping of a sinner before his deliverance; but God's word shows that it is to be *all our journey through*; for we are continually getting into self, and this self is the wretched money we are always trying to scrape together. Self, I say. O this self! Even if you have had a large experience of God's grace, you may still try to take this with you to these waters. You will really think that after the experience you have had, certainly you can go on better than those who are first seeking after God; but you will be deceived here. This is not the way. You shall be constantly emptied from this self. You and I would like to cut a figure, and lord it over others. But no. As we received Christ Jesus the Lord, (and how was that? Why, without money,) so we are to walk in him, rooted and built up. "But," say you, "is it not right to come before the Lord, and plead those good works that he has wrought in us?" To this I answer, that I have such deep discoveries of my own heart and its abominations, that I see nothing good that I do, and am glad to come to these waters without money; and it rejoices my soul that there are such full and free invitations. Neither dare I come any other way; and I know that this is the way to gain ground.

Having, therefore, shown what it is to have no money, I come,

IV. To inquire, how it can be that such *are to buy*: "Come ye, buy and eat." Say you, "It does appear strange; for if we have no money, if that is all that is required in coming to these living waters, and if we receive all as a free gift, how or in what sense can we be said to buy?" "Come ye, buy and eat; yea, come buy wine and milk, without money and without price." In order to illustrate this, suppose you are in middling circumstances in life. You have clothes, money, friends, a house to live in tolerably well furnished, with many other conveniences of life; and a gentleman, one exceedingly rich indeed, makes you the offer, that if you will part with all you have, and come naked to him, he will freely give you a hundred times more than ever you had, and that he would secure it to you and yours. Well, after hearing this, you reflect, "Cannot my intending benefactor give it to me without imposing such conditions? I should like to keep the stock I have, and possess what he offers too." But no. This is not the way; for, if you keep what you have, the gentleman will give you nothing. Now, you must have a confidence in him, and in his promise, and let everything go in order to be enriched. Very well. And as it would be in such a case as this, so it is in God's dealings with us; and therefore everything pleasing to flesh and blood, he will call upon us to part with. Hence he says, "He that will not forsake all that he hath, cannot be my

disciple;" "He that loveth father, mother, houses, lands, wife, or children more than me is not worthy of me;" "He that will save his life shall lose it; and he that will lose his life for my sake and the gospel's shall find it." So that you see there must be a parting in heart with this world; and in this sense I understand the buying the wine and milk. However strong you may think yourself, and however valiant for truth, you will find it no easy thing to part with all for Christ, when the trial comes. I know it is easy to say anything when we are not tried. See the young man in the gospel, when he came to Christ with his good performances, or this money. Christ told him to sell all that he had, and give to the poor, and he should have treasure in heaven; but he went away sorrowing, being determined not to buy his treasure at so dear a rate as parting with all he had. Christ tells us that "the kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hid in a field, the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field." (Matt. xiii. 44.) By this treasure I understand the grace of God. As it is written: "A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good;" "We have this treasure in earthen vessels." The fear of the Lord is God's treasure, and this is hid in a field; that is, it is hid in the church of God; for God's church is called a field: "Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field." (Isa. xxxii. 16.) But the man finds the treasure of grace, and hideth it; that is, in his heart: "Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee;" and God says, "I will put my fear, or my treasure, in their hearts." This, in time, produces real joy: "Let every man prove his own work, and then he shall have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another." And after this he buys this field; that is, he chooses to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; and such a one will endure all things for the elect's sake.

It is in this way, and no other, that I understand our text, "Buy wine and milk." This world must be parted with, or we never can have the treasure of God's grace. But as I have treated about this in a little book called, "Buy the Truth," I shall leave it.

(To be concluded in our next.)

Whatspever the world most highly esteems and magnifies, that should be in our eyes most vile and abominable.—*Luther.*

Prayer being God's fire, every broken parcel of prayer is prayer, as every part of fire is fire. The forlorn son forgot the half of his prayers. He resolved to say, "Make me as one of thy hired servants;" (Luke xv. 19;) but (verse 21) he prayed no such thing; and yet, "his father fell on his neck, and kissed him." A plant is a tree in the potency, that is, it shows what a tree it may become; an infant, a man; seeds of saving grace are saving grace. Prayer is often in the bowels and womb of a sigh; though it come not out, yet God hears it as a prayer.—*Rutherford.*

THE MARRIAGE UNION.

My dearly-beloved R—,—What would I give if you could be here with me to spend the day? I have just breakfasted, before which I took a walk along the beach. O how lovely the morning! the sun shining so warm, although there has been rather a severe frost in the night, and the rolling waves making a continual roar. O how delightful! but how much more so if you could have shared with me the pleasure! How true it is, where union is complete, that the happiness or pleasure yielded by objects or circumstances is rendered imperfect by temporary separation; and, while feeling this, and thinking upon the solemn reality of that union which is of God, my mind is powerfully impressed with that glorious union of which man and wife are figures and types, the union of the two natures in the person of an adorable Redeemer—God and man in one Person, whereby the whole election of grace is taken into union with the divine nature, constituting one glorious mystic body. And as the Lord hath said, concerning man and wife, “They twain shall be one flesh,” so also concerning Christ and his church, “That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.”

Here we see the love of the Husband of the church. His wife must be with him, to behold and share in his glory; and however ignoble, degraded, and base by nature the saints are, by virtue of this union, they are raised to the dignified, exalted, and glorious position of their Husband. From worms of the earth, they are raised to thrones in glory; from degrading and ignominious slavery, to be kings and priests unto God; from beggars on the dunghill, to seats of judgment. Well may they sing with dear Kent,

“Hail, sacred union, firm and strong!
How great the grace! how sweet the song!
That worms of earth should ever be
One with incarnate Deity!”

or with the enraptured soul of the holy prophet: “Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it; shout, ye lower parts of the earth; break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein; for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.” O mystery of mysteries, inexpressibly great and glorious! O inconceivable love, incomprehensibly great and God like! I feel the force of Watts’s verse:

“Great God, how infinite art thou!
What worthless worms are we!
Let the whole race of creatures bow,
And pay their praise to thee!”

The poet utters the language of my heart, while I meditate upon the grace of the adorable Three-One God :

“ May I be found a living stone,
In Salem's streets above ;
And help to sing before the throne
Free grace and dying love.”

And with blessed Toplady :

“ O may my blood-wash'd soul be found
Among that favor'd band !
And I, with them, thy praise will sound
Throughout Inmanuel's land.”

And I would for thee, my dearly beloved, if the Lord vouchsafe it, not only to share in the benefit and pleasure of these things, which are temporal, but of the sweet streams which gladden my soul, of love and mercy, proceeding from the throne of God and the Lamb, issuing from the smitten Rock, the broken heart and wounds of Jesus. I felt sweetness and unction while looking at these precious words of grace and truth, which were spoken by the Lord, given in John xvii. ; but how lost to conceive the love ! What must the love of God the Father be, who gave them to Christ ? “ Thine they were, and thou gavest them me,” as they eternally were the Father's by election or choice, the objects of his love and pleasure, as it is written, “ And hast loved them, even as thou hast loved me,” and, rather than they should be lost, torn from his embrace, held by the power of Satan, to whom they had sold themselves, he gives his Son a sacrifice (O awful sacrifice too !) to purchase, to redeem, and lawfully to recover them, honorably to pay every debt incurred, and fully to acquit and justify them, and free them from every charge ; that neither law, justice, Satan, the world, truth, nor righteousness could accuse them, or bring a charge against them. Rather than that, he gives unto death his only Son ; rolls all the wrath they had incurred by sin upon his holy soul, makes their every foe his foe, and directs all their weapons against him ; their reproach falls upon him, to the breaking of his heart ; their afflictions are his : “ Is there any sorrow like unto my sorrow ?” His visage was more marred than any man's ; their sorrows fill his bitter cup, till his holy soul becomes exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, and the awful weight makes human nature reel. As Hart says,

“ Backwards and forwards thrice he ran,
As if he sought some help from man ;
Or wish'd, at least, they would condole
('Twas all they could) his tortured soul.
'Twas here the Lord of life appear'd,
And sigh'd, and groan'd, and pray'd, and fear'd ;
Bore all incarnate God could bear,
With strength enough, and none to spare.”

His love was such, that he spared not, and justice stayed not, till wrath was spent, and gave place to holy delight and pleasure, and awful holiness and justice could exclaim, “ I am well pleased for his righteousness' sake.” He hath magnified the law and made it honorable, having finished transgression and made an end of sin, taken away the sting of death ; having died to give life to them,

that death itself might be the entrance to deathless life and glorious immortality, and bursting the doors of the grave, he victoriously rose therefrom, opening the way through the grave, and demanding that this dust should be yielded. "O grave, where is thy victory?" "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction." Having taken the prey from the mighty, and delivered the lawful captive, having contended with the terrible one, and spoiled him of his prey, he returned the mighty Conqueror, the Lord of hosts, mighty in battle, and by divine authority and command enters glory, and takes, in behalf of his people, a place in the kingdom of heaven: "Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus." As he said to his disciples, "I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am, there ye may be also." And the Father with delight sees the objects of his love, in the person of his dear Son, brought home to glory, with, "Behold, here am I, and the children whom thou hast given me." And Jesus, loving his own, watching over them with tender care, guarding them from every harm, says, "None shall hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain," intercedes, pleads, and advocates for those who come to him by the Spirit, hears their groans, answers their prayers, delivers them in their distresses, saves them from the dangers that attend them in the world, makes a way for their escape in temptation, strengthens them under trials, keeps them alive in famine, suffers them not to be clogged with the cares of this life, prevents them with the blessings of his goodness, gives them faith to overcome the world and all that is in it and of it, and will not suffer them to be their own destroyers, saves them from self-will and self-love, cures them of self-seeking, slays their lusts, subdues their passions that they may not reign, takes from them what may be hurtful, and gives them what is needful and profitable, restores, reclaims, comforts, revives, disposes, and leads them, and teaches them in the way he will have them to go, guides them with his eye, and will not suffer the loss of one of the least, not one shall be left behind, ("I have lost none," says he, "of all thou hast given me,") and will perfect all that concerns them, to their final and eternal glorification, when the topstone shall be added to the spiritual building, when heaven's resounding echo will be "Grace, grace to it!"

"O glorious hour! O blest abode!

May I be near and like my God!"

I must say, adieu. God bless thee, and the dear children, and his dear people. With best love to thyself and children,

Thy affectionate husband,

Worthing, March 4, 1855.

CHARLES.

When Christ comes to call you away by death, he comes to set you at liberty from your present sorrows,—to deliver you from your struggles with corruption,—and to receive you to dwell with himself in complete holiness and joy. You shall "be absent from the body and be present with the Lord."—*Dodbridge.*

FROM ME IS THY FRUIT FOUND.

My dear Friend,—I trust I can say that we have been favored with a little reviving in our bondage—aided with a little help in our souls, the effect of which is to make Jesus precious in his complete fulness and all-sufficiency, both as to the completeness of his salvation *for*, and as the spring and fountain *from* which the blessed and precious fruits of his salvation do and must flow into the soul of a poor, needy, helpless sinner. “From me,” says He, “is thy fruit found.” It is God the eternal Spirit’s work to testify of Jesus to the soul, to empty of self-dependence, hope, or expectation, and lead to Him; as David says, “I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.” When Moses and Elias were taken away, the disciples saw Jesus only; but O, what pulling down and stripping work mostly precedes this, and death and despair in self. But these are among the “all things” that make Jesus needed, wanted, longed for, and, when revealed to faith and realised, they make Him precious and all in all, mercy sweet, salvation great, and God’s judgments right. This alone, I find, produces gospel obedience. The soul thus blessed serves in newness of spirit, inwardly and outwardly, and not in the oldness of the letter; sees and feels sin in all he does, yet begs of the Lord to work in him the good pleasure of his will, and, above all, the work of faith with power. Yes, it is the work of faith that is pleasing to the Lord; “for without faith,” it is written, “it is impossible to please him.” Unbelief is the root and bottom of all sin; so I find it. It is at work all day long, more or less, in thought, word, and deed. O for grace to believe what we do believe, or, with the disciples, to say, “Lord, increase my faith.” When favored with a measure of faith in the word that leads to Jesus, and God in him, in the power of the Holy Ghost, how everything that was cross and crooked is made straight, easy, and pleasant, yea, joyful! His ways are, indeed, then found to be “ways of pleasantness, and all his paths paths of peace.” Yea, we read of some having “taken joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing *in themselves* ;” (this is it, in themselves, by the testimony of the Holy Ghost in themselves, not from the testimony of the word only, but in themselves,) “they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance.” This is what I want, at times, to live in the enjoyment of—a life of faith in the Son of God; then, I am persuaded, I shall not go wrong, for Jesus says “I am the way, the truth, and the life. He that abideth in me shall not walk in darkness, but he shall have the light of life.” Abiding in the Vine is the way of fruitfulness, and not our fruit getting us into and keeping us in the Vine.

Dear friend, I am taught and have to learn these things in the fire and through much inward tribulation, through deadness, hardness, carnality, and much unbelief, all of which is my sin and sinfulness; and often do I strive and struggle to get out of these states by carnal efforts, resolutions, amendments, &c.; but, like Job, get plunged again in the ditch, till my own clothes abhor me; and

the publican's cry is often extorted, when not in an insensible state, as I sometimes am, "God be merciful to me a sinner," "Lord, save, or I perish." Thus, when I am brought to fall down, and there is none to help, then I am constrained to cry unto the Lord in my trouble; and, blessed be his name, in his own wise and best time he delivers me out of my trouble, by working faith in my heart in him, his grace, his love, his power, his complete salvation. He dries our tears, relieves our fears, and bids us trust in him, to work in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure, saying, "Look unto me and be ye saved; for I am God, and beside me there is no Saviour." "From me (not from yourself) is thy fruit found;" and this fruit is unto holiness, and the "end everlasting life."

My dear friend, I did not think of writing a word of this when I began; but what I have written I have written; and if according to his will, may he own it to you and yours.

Yours in the truth of the gospel,

London, December 1, 1854.

J. S.

ONE OF THE FEEBLE FOLK.

Dear Brother B—,—How long a time has passed, and I have not received a word from you, not even to say how you are getting on. I do not know how you manage, but I seem to progress like a snail—very slowly. I am as one of the "creeping things," and I can only surmount the difficulties impeding my way as the Lord is pleased to help me. I am one of the feeble folk, weak and lame, hopping and limping along, first up, and then down. I have no faith that is worth a straw, except that which the Lord gives; no hope but what he creates; no love that is fervent, heavenly, and divine, but what the Lord kindles. I know nothing of the religion of some people, which enables them, at pleasure, to satisfy themselves as to the goodness of their state. I hope the Lord gives you a lively sense of his goodness. It is a mercy to be employed in the Lord's service, however humble the way may be. Go on, my brother, and the Lord keep you from being weary in well-doing, and grant that many signs and wonders may be done in the name of the holy Child Jesus. When a poor sinner is rescued from the regions of darkness and woe, is not that a wonder? You doubtless meet with opposition from the devil in some form or other, especially if you should rob him of some of his subjects. May the Lord enable you to make a great stir amongst those who sit in darkness, and grant that the clear light of the gospel may shine in unto them. If the devil let you alone, I shall be afraid that you leave him to his operations unmolested. I can assure you that, poor and obscure thing as I am, he does not let me alone. No. I find that he stirs up the enemies of truth and righteousness to invent and disseminate all manner of rancorous lies. You know I was going to attempt great things: to cut off the high priest's servant's ear; to bring fire from heaven; to confound all my foes; to

shame the devil ; to kill him ; and then to cut off his head. But I find this is too mighty a work for me. The Lord only can do all this. The devil says, " Paul I know ; Jesus I know ; but who art thou ? " So I have to endure reverses ; but sometimes I think I bear them not as a good soldier of Jesus Christ should. Ah ! strange is the path through which I pursue my onward course ! Sometimes I am lifted up, and anon cast down ; sometimes rejoicing, often mourning ; walking to-day in the light, to-morrow lost amidst profound darkness ; sometimes pouring forth songs of praise of the Most High, next minute I hang my harp upon the willows ; confidence in my interest in covenant mercy is succeeded by a haze through which I can see no sign, and fear, after all, that I have mistaken the way ; sometimes I fear no evil, laugh at all my foes, see all things work together for my good ; but soon a change comes over these bright visions, and I wish I was anybody but myself, while, at other times, I would not exchange myself or my position for any in this world ; sometimes in the valley my spiritual eyesight becomes so imperfect, that I fear I shall never penetrate the mists and fogs that surround me, to behold the glories yet to be revealed ; at another moment, I can climb the lofty mountains, reach Pisgah's top, and behold the promised land, view its landscape, read my name in life's fair book set down, scan my title-deed to mansions in the sky, and call eternal joys my own. But, notwithstanding these adverse winds of Satan, I am still sensibly on the Rock ; though enemies slander, and speak all manner of things falsely, my record is on high ; and though these storms of sorrow rage, yet I have withstood them, and shall live at last. Like Peter, I cling to the truth. Let the devil sneer, enemies pelt their lies, sin rage, the world despise, I lay me down at the feet of Truth ; and if I perish, I will perish there ! But such a thing was never heard of in all the regions of Achaia. The Lord bless and be with you.

Yours in the truth,

JABEZ.

MARKS OF SONSHIP.

My dear Friend,—The word of truth tells us, " Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might." A thought arose within my heart that I would drop friend L—a line. He may be glad to receive it. The Lord has, in tender mercy, brought me safely through this year (1853) which is hastening to its close. How can I raise such a hard and stony heart high enough to praise and thank the three-one God for all his past mercies and favors which have been manifold and great towards one so unworthy. What troubles he has brought me through ; what temptations he has kept me under ; what deliverances he has wrought ; what sins he has subdued ; what grief he has assuaged ; what prison doors he has opened ; what burdens he has taken off ; what chains he has broken ; what devils he has rebuked ; what mouths he has stopped ; what battles he has fought ; and what victory he has

given over my enemies—at home and abroad—within and without ! Here I am, a poor sinner, hanging upon free mercy, hoping in his full salvation, believing in his pardoning blood and justifying righteousness, trusting in his eternal faithfulness, and cleaving to him as my all and in all. If this give way, I must fall ; if Jesus is not Almighty God, I cannot stand ; if his blood is not Almighty, then my soul is not, nor even can be cleansed from all guilt and filth ; if his righteousness is not Almighty, then my soul cannot enter heaven ; and if his holiness is not the beauty of perfection, my soul cannot see God. But, bless his precious name, he is the wonderful Counsellor and the mighty God, the everlasting Father, and the Prince of peace ; bless his dear, precious name, he has the whole government upon his own shoulders, and the whole management of our soul's affairs in his own hands ; he has the whole disposal alike of our soul's prosperity and of our soul's adversity. His own glory and our soul's good lie near his heart. He has stood by me, strengthened me under all my weaknesses, and brought my soul through all the trying scenes of troubles, sorrows, sinkings, fears, cares, woes, and works up to the present moment, and not one good thing have I lacked. I have had food and raiment, a tent to dwell in, a bed to lie on, and the cheering warmth of a comfortable fire ; besides, I trust, a heart to feel for those who have an insufficiency of these things among the Lord's dear people ; but this is not always the case, I regret to say. No ; for there is an old covetous heart within me, which wants to get all and keep all, and often when the heart's liberal feelings are uppermost, the stingy feelings try to keep the hand back. Is this giving freely ? Is this not giving grudgingly ? Then what power is there, my friend, to enable a poor vile sinner, this sinful, stubborn, covetous, proud, selfish wretch, but the power of the Holy Ghost ? That alone can subdue it, and mortify the deeds of such a vile body. This my soul has proved for many years ; but still nothing but that same Almighty power can ever do it, and must continue to do it, till time is lost in eternity. I cannot help hoping that the Lord will bring me safely through the remainder of the road, because his lovingkindness is so great, his arm so strong and long, his heart so large, his bowels so tender, his eye so pitiful, his word so true, his promise so sure, and his grace so free ; and the three-one God hath bound himself to his promises by an eternal oath. So that heaven is sure to all the seed. But, my friend might say, "I have nothing but sorrows, afflictions, crosses, burdens, mortifications, disappointments, and self pity, with Satan and unbelief telling my poor soul there must be something wrong, or the Lord would never give me so many stripes and strokes as he does. I am almost ready to break my heart, to think that my back should call for so much flogging." Stop, stop, my friend, hearken to what the Lord has declared upon the subject ; "consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your mind. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin ; and ye have forgotten the

exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children: My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and strengtheneth every son whom he receiveth."

Now, my friend, you would not like to be a cast-away at last, and not be received by Jesus Christ at his second coming, when he shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe. I am sure you would not like the bastard's portion, to miss the rod, escape chastisement, and pass through without scourging. "No," says my friend, "let me have the children's portion here below, and then I hope to have their inheritance above, and to be among the number of those who shall come out of great tribulation, and be willingly and heartily received into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to crown him Lord of all, and to be a manifested vessel of glory filled with the fulness of God; and be a fellow-sufferer with Jesus, that we may be glorified together." Then, my friend, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the fulness of grace, which shall be revealed at the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The Lord grant you patience to endure hardness as a follower of the Lamb, and give you courage to bear up against the wind and waves, storms and tempests. Every fresh pain, trouble, sorrow, and affliction leaves the number less. You must remember you have a skilful Pilot at the helm, who never can fall off to sleep in a storm, or who will let the vessel be swallowed up in the quicksand, or be wrecked upon a rock, or capsized in a gale, because it is his glory and honor to bring her through all her trials and troubles. Neither will he suffer the fire to burn her up, nor the furnace to consume her soul; for the afflicted people he will save, but will bring down high looks. I have thought much about you since I last saw you and your dear afflicted wife. I can feel for you. May the Lord bless her soul and shine upon her path, and bring to her soul's remembrance the past helps, comforts, lifts, and encouragements the Lord has given her in the way, and reveal unto her soul a full satisfaction of her soul's interest in the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving her a firm standing upon the Rock of eternal ages, is the desire of your unworthy friend in tribulation. My love to her and to all the friends by name.

Yours affectionately,

Woburn, December 31, 1853.

T. G.

Many a child of God has found Christ in the desert, when missing him at his house-prayer. And many on beds of sickness have found the power of the Lord present to heal their souls, when languor and disease have fastened their bodies to the bed of suffering.—*Hawker.*

I WAS BROUGHT LOW, AND HE HELPED ME.

My very dear Friends,—I have many times wished I could write to you, but have been in such a wretched condition I could not accomplish my object. I have been left in so much death and barrenness, yea, and worse than that. You know what I mean. Indeed I greatly feared, at times, I should never again experience that which I thought I had known in times past. It is a mercy, however, “the Lord’s ways are not our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts.” I hardly know how to describe to you what I felt a week ago. I went to bed early yesterday, but was in such pain as I cannot describe; I had something soothing, but the pain still continued. It struck me there was such a thing as the prayer of faith. Well, thought I, what do I know of the prayer of faith? Mine is the prayer of unbelief; but, however, it worked in my mind the prayer of faith. Then my mind recurred to this passage: “Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee; and thou shalt glorify me.” I was truly enabled to plead with the Lord in such a way I never could before. It seemed to me if the Lord did not answer me, he was not according to his word; not, however, presumptuously. O no! I believe I was blessed with a measure of that faith which good old Jacob experienced when he said, “I will not let thee go except thou bless me.” What language and what feelings for sinners to use and to possess! After a brief period, I became more tranquil, and I believe I shall never forget the feelings, both of body and mind, I then had. Never before did things flow into my mind in such a blessed way. This state continued about two hours. I felt like David, “My cup runneth over.” During the whole time, passage after passage, promise after promise, flowed into my mind in such a blessed way. I never can describe how I entered into many of David’s expressions, such as calling on everything that had breath to praise the Lord. How I did wish I could see some of the Lord’s people! How I would tell them what he had done for my soul, and would tell them to wait upon him, and call upon him, for he would never suffer them to pray in vain. No; I could have said, “Pour out your heart before him, ye people, God is a refuge for us; he will never suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able.” O what confidence I felt. I could not go to sleep, nor indeed did I want to do so. I had enough to do to bless and praise the Lord, for his free, underserved mercy to one who felt what Watts said:

“Why was I made to hear his voice,
And enter while there’s room;
While thousands make a wretched choice,
And rather starve than come?”

and also,

“’Twas the same love that spread the feast,
That sweetly forced me in;
Else I had still refused to taste,
And perished in my sin.’

But this was to be tried. Satan, that subtle enemy, had been lying in wait, and watching for an opportunity to come out of his den, to

spoil my peace, which he was in a measure permitted to do, in consequence of a return of the pain. O how I sank in my feelings, and began to search and examine; but, alas! he was too mighty for me. I tried to pray the pain away, as I thought I had before, but could not. Well, thought I, it was by means before, and the Lord blessed them. I desired my wife to procure me some medicine, which seemed to increase rather than allay the pain. Now was the time for the enemy to taunt; but the Lord again heard my poor petition, and relieved me of my pain, both of body and mind, and soon after I fell asleep and enjoyed a calm repose. When I awoke, I felt so happy and comfortable; and, though I have lost that feeling of blessedness and overflowing of blessing and praising the Lord, I have not lost the persuasion that my name is written in the Lamb's book of life. I was led that night to view the Lord Jesus coming down into this lower world, becoming a Babe, taking upon him our nature, that he might be born so as to be able to die; and I saw what it was all for, the redemption of them that were under the law. How gloriously he fulfilled its every requirement! How perfect, spotless, and all-sufficient his work appeared! There was nothing could possibly be added to it. No; the poor sinner, for whom it was wrought out, when God the Holy Ghost is pleased to reveal it to him is as much a participator in the redemption as if it had been undertaken for him alone. He is led, with Toplady, to say, and not presumptuously,

“The terrors of law and of God,
With me can have nothing to do;
My Saviour's obedience and blood
Hide all my transgressions from view.”

I must conclude, hoping the Lord may visit and bless you with his love-tokens time after time, while you remain in this wilderness. My wife joins me in love to you both.

In the strongest of all ties,

J. H.

Cricklade, Jan. 14th, 1855.

To speak of myself, there are many hours in the which I chide and contend with God, and impatiently resist him. The wrath and judgment of God displease me; and again, my impatience, my murmuring, and such like sins, do displease him. And this is the time of the law, under the which a Christian man lives as touching the flesh.—*Owen*.

A broken heart is the handy work of God; a heart of his own preparing, for his own service; it is a sacrifice of his own providing, of his providing for himself. As Abraham said in another case, “God will provide himself a lamb.” (Gen. xxii. 8.) Hence, it is said, “the preparations of the heart in man, &c., is from the Lord.” And again, “God maketh my heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me.” (Job xxiii. 16.) The heart, as it is by nature hard, stupid, and impenetrable; so it remains, and so will remain, until God, as was said, bruises with his hammer, and melts it with his fire.—*Bunyan*.

AN ORIGINAL LETTER BY THE LATE DANIEL HERBERT.

My dear but unknown Friends,—I fear you will think me unkind, unfeeling, and ungracious, in suffering your kind and affectionate epistle to lie so long unanswered. But my having been a long tour into Lincolnshire amongst a few of the outcasts occasioned a long delay.

And what can I say to my dear friends, but that grace, mercy, and peace may be abundantly multiplied to each of your precious souls through the knowledge of personal interest in the great atonement of the Son of God, as your Surety and mine? That my poor little unadorned books should fall into your hands, and prove congenial to your experience, gratifies my soul, being fully persuaded they never can be approved of by any but such as know the plague of the human heart. My design in writing them was only for the self-ruined and self-emptied, who know and feel themselves completely lost and eternally undone, without an interest in the unmerited, unsought-for, unconditional love of the eternal Jehovah, made known through Calvary's bloody tree, where the eternal seal was affixed to the eternal bond, in which our names stood registered before the birth of day.

My dear friends, I trust you have no objection to acknowledge with me the freeness of that grace that has reached our hearts. Free it is as the rain from the clouds, and as uncontrollable as the winds, whose gentle whisper at times is heard amidst the rustling leaves, while at another its irresistible power is felt and shown by the up-rooted tree; for while a sweet soft breeze opens the heart of Lydia, a rough blast tears the poor Philippian jailor up root and branch; yet both were by the same Spirit and led to the same end.

O my friends, while thousands and thousands are boasting of free-will, may we be led to boast of free-grace, believing that our God is justly merciful in calling us, and mercifully just in saving us.

“O to grace, how great a debtor,”

is often your song as well as mine. I am not surprised to hear the account you give of the religion of your place; so it appears go where you will; yet God has his few, and, blessed be his name, we are amongst them; and though the Lord will, ere long, roar out of Zion, and the heavens and the earth shall tremble, yet he will then be the hope and strength of his people.

My dear friends, could I see you, I could tell you what wonders God has wrought for my soul, and the various vicissitudes he has led me through, from a state of independence to almost beggary—from a state of prosperity to adversity; but having obtained help of God, I continue to this day, with a warm desire to tell others what God has done for my soul. I have a few poor, troubled, tried outcasts, that I speak to on a Sabbath evening; but as we are almost choked up with what is called gospel in Sudbury, I am much opposed, being called by many, but proved so by none, Antinomian.

Pray for me, my dear friends ; and, though it is not at all likely we shall ever see each other in this wilderness, methinks, when I arrive at the golden gates of the city above, I shall inquire for my Liverpool friends, that we may unite our songs together to him who has loved us, does love us, and will love us ; who has redeemed us by his blood—paid the full price of our redemption, our names being eternally in the Lamb's book of life. I write this scrap in a very great hurry, which you will perceive.

Overlook its inaccuracies, take the will for the deed, rank me one amongst you, and never forget me when it is well with you. For I am truly and affectionately your brother in the blood-bought family ordained to eternal life.

Sudbury, Nov. 1819.

DANIEL HERBERT.

CHRIST THE TREASURE HOUSE.

Dear Friend,—This is the end of our conversation, “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.” The Father of all mercies has declared him his beloved Son, and has commanded us to hear him. Our Lord says, “Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son ; ask what ye will, and I will do it.” And he has promised to send the Holy Spirit to help our infirmities, that we might pray according to the will of God in Jesus Christ. In this way poor sensible sinners find mercy and grace to help them in need ; and, though we know not how to order our speech by reason of darkness, yet the same God who teaches thus, can furnish us with every good word needful for us to use in and for every good work ; for it is the will of the Father of mercies that the Holy Spirit should fill the hungry soul with good things ; and what things are so “good” as grace from the fulness that is in Christ, all-sufficient grace, so suitable to our great need ? Our wants are many, and cannot be numbered. Jesus Christ is the treasure house of all spiritual and temporal blessings for his poor afflicted members, his brethren, sisters, mother, and friends ; for he declares that those who do the will of his heavenly Father are his sister, brother, and mother ; and it is the will of God that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. Blessed are they which do his commandments. We are commanded to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and love one another. Good old John, who had been in the habit of lying in his blessed Master's bosom, said, “Little children, sin not ;” yet he knew sin would work in them against grace. John directed little children to their Propitiation and Advocate ; he pointed out Christ Jesus as their God and Saviour, and said, “Little children, let no man deceive you,” neither turn you aside from Christ, nor from the profession and confession of him, for if we deny him, he also will deny us. Now, “my little children abide in him, that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming.” To abide in him, is to love him, and we can truly say, “Whom have I in heaven but thee ; and there is none on earth I desire to the

exclusion of thee." Good Lord, remember all my kind friends, and have mercy on them in that day, for in how many things they and you have ministered unto me thou knowest well. The good Lord bless you all according to your need and to his own praise. Amen.
W. M.

ENCOURAGING WORDS.

Dear Friend,—Your letter I received safely. If the Lord will, I am to supply at Eden Street during June; but I do not expect to supply anywhere near you before. With respect to my intended visit to D—, I hope that I may not journey so far, if the presence of the Lord be not with me. I hope you will be encouraged in getting supplies by the Lord blessing his word through them. It is a great mercy to be blest with a spiritual appetite. The Lord will renew and revive his work when it is once begun, so that your deadness and coldness do not prove that you are dead in sin, if it cause you to groan, mourn, and sigh. At times you are full of fears whether you shall get safely to glory after all. Grace must be tried, and the Lord tries his work in different ways, so that we cannot understand what the Lord intends; but when we are brought out of a trial, then we can see how the Lord has wisely ordered all things. This world is a wilderness, with various allurements and enticements, and it is a great mercy to be kept by the Lord in his fear; for if left to ourselves, how soon we should find how vain is all help and strength, except that which comes from above. Our life is short when compared with eternity; but yet even a dying man will attach great importance to that which is not worth a thought. Our proneness to err, with our many sins in word, thought, and deed, shows us what fallen creatures we are, and how we need frowns as well as smiles to keep us from doing those things so displeasing to God. Grace must save all that go to heaven. Mercy shall be built up for ever, and God shall have all the praise. The Lord at times blesses my soul. About two months ago, I had a sweet blessing, which caused my tears to flow, so that I could "weep to the praise of the mercy I had found;" but I know what darkness, deadness, and unbelief are. But the Lord knows how to lead and teach his people to profit. Some things are to humble us, and some things are to encourage us. John Bunyan says, "A good man is not long without trouble;" so if you pray to be a good man with divine faith, you may expect a cross. It seems strange that those who feel themselves the vilest sinners should be good men. It is all of grace.

Give my love to all inquiring friends.

Yours in the truth,

Abingdon, March 1st, 1848.

W. T.

There are no marks of shipwrecks, no remnants of lost vessels, floating upon the sea which flows between God's Jerusalem below and the Jerusalem which is above.—*Toplady*.

INQUIRY.

Dear Sir,—Is it right for members to sit down to the Lord's table, having so much against each other, that they cannot speak or be spoken to? How does it accord with these scriptures: "How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity;" "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another;" "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another?" Can such members be said to profit under the preached word?

By giving your reply in the "Standard" you will oblige,

Yours truly,

A CONSTANT READER.

ANSWER.

Divisions in churches and private contentions among the members are sad fruits of the fall, and are certainly much opposed to the precepts and spirit of the gospel; and, unhappily, there are few churches in which they are not more or less found. But the question is, how far they should hinder the members from sitting down together to the Lord's Supper. If we were to lay down a general rule of this kind, that wherever there are divisions or disputes the disagreeing parties should not sit down together, we should soon come to this, that the Lord's Supper might be deserted by many of the members. On the other hand, it seems very sad and unbecoming for members to sit down together as brethren to the Lord's table, mutually partaking of the emblems of his flesh and blood, and all the time at such a state of variance as not even afterwards to speak to one another. This should not be; and it would be far better if an aggrieved member were patiently to suffer wrong, than show his resentment at such a time and in such a way. In these points, however, much must be left to the conscience of individuals and the influence of the blessed Spirit on their hearts. Where there is not an open breach and a decided quarrel, the church cannot well interfere. A sore, which rubbing will increase, left to itself, will frequently heal; and so unkind feelings, which public notice would probably chafe, will often gradually subside, if not give place to better. Much wisdom and forbearance are needed in all these matters: and we must bear in mind that we are still in the body, poor fallen sinners, saved only by sovereign grace. If we are to wait till every unkind feeling towards a brother is removed, we may never sit down to the table at all; nay, the very uncomfortable feeling produced may lead to confession, and the very sitting down together may be blessed to produce the love which will remove it.

The hot furnace is the workshop of Christ. In that fire he takes away the scum, the dross, the refuse of the true metal, that faith may be found unto praise, and honor, and glory, at the appearance of Jesus Christ.—*Rutherford.*

WHO IS A GOD LIKE UNTO OUR GOD?

Dear Friend,—I was glad to hear from you and learn something of your estate; to hear that the good hand of the Lord was upon you as well as upon many others of the chosen race, the instructed, corrected, and quickened family of the Almighty. I am tolerably well, better than I deserve to be. I am a great debtor to the great Creditor, and have no hope to stand before him with acceptance only in and through the great Surety and his great and all-sufficient satisfaction, and receive a forgiveness of all my debts out of the love and mercy of the Creditor and Surety, revealed, brought home and applied unto my poor ill and hell-deserving soul with a divine power. O that I were not so tongue-tied, so spirit-bound, so winter-cold, so trembling in fear, so stone-like hard, but that I could praise his name, and extol him on high for evermore! I am not only out of hell, but I am fed, clothed, relieved from sickness by medicine, supplied with money, protected, preserved, upheld, maintained, defended, guided, directed, and have my way cast up unto and through Christ for this everlasting salvation so full, so free, or it would never suit the condition that I see and feel myself to be in. What pains and care he has taken with me; what expense has been incurred to rear me, and bring me thus far on my way unto him. How has he humbled, meekened, softened, swaddled, and dandled me, in order that I should know him as my covenant God, and Father, and that I might be free, although he is so high, so great, and so glorious and take all my delight and pleasure in himself and the things, the only things that please him. How he has crucified my old man, quickened my soul, weaned me from the world, and is weaning me from the church, from my family, and the dear creatures for whom I have labored that Christ might be formed in their hearts, and dwell there the hope of glory. Moses said, the prophet said, you have said, and I say, "Who is a God like unto our God?" We challenge them all to show us a God as our Immanuel; he is with us in our nature, will be with us in his good Spirit, and will never leave us as the omnipresent God.

What wooing, winning, cheering, comforting, and captivating ways has Jehovah! How has he conquered, wooed, and won us for his bride, brought us up as his children, trained us for his servants, drilled us for his soldiers, elevated us as his courtiers, and commissioned us as his ambassadors. How has he given us authority with his seals, ornamented us with his robe, chain, and girdle. How has he banqueted, feasted, and quenched our souls. How has he endeared himself, and set our affections upon his blessed self, and made us jealous if we think that others have more of his visits and presence than we. How wisely has he planned all things; how divinely are all things ordered; how justly are all things dealt out unto us; how feelingly we know that he is merciful in all the past and present wants. How at times he enables us to believe that all will be right in the unknown future. Dear F., I commend you unto him for all that faithfulness that has never failed. You know him, but I have

had almost double the time that you have had for the attainment of that pure and divine knowledge. I think if life be spared, and health and strength admit, I will endeavor to see you before another summer has passed away. Our union remains the same. We pray the Lord to bless you and yours and to give you souls for your hire, and seals to your ministry, that shall be the crown of your rejoicing in that day.

W. C.

AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT.

Dear Mr. Editor,—Will you allow me, through you, to acknowledge, with deep sorrow, my unfeigned regret for the many errors contained in my recently-published tract, "The Spirit of God Grieved, and the Church of God Sleeping," and to beg that the statements of that pamphlet may no longer be considered as the expression of my thoughts and feelings. Notice to this effect has been given to the publisher; and no more copies will be sold with my sanction. It is painful to feel that any step of mine should have been the means of countenancing a system so full of error, and so delusive to the soul, as that of the Plymouth Brethren; bitterly have I been made to prove its emptiness and vanity, in the day of fire, which tries the work of man.

For myself, I am continually compelled to confess my sin to God, and to lay my guilty soul, all defiled, ignorant, and helpless, at the feet of Jesus, until he shall be pleased, of his blessed will, once more to speak a word of love and forgiveness to my wounded heart. Surely "there is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof is the ways of death." May the Lord himself, who alone keepeth the feet of his saints, keep back his servants from presumptuous sins.

I am, dear Mr. Editor,
Yours very unworthily,

Bideford, Aug. 13, 1855.

C. H. MARSTON.

[We should be very unworthy of the post we occupy as the Editor of the "Gospel Standard," very ignorant of our own heart, and very harsh and unfeeling towards an erring and repenting brother, were we to refuse insertion to the above letter. At the same time, Mr. Marston must not feel surprised if the Church of God require a little time to be fully satisfied he is wholly purified of Plymouth leaven, as it is a system of which the taint is usually burnt out only by hot and long furnaces.—Ed.]

Herod, Pilate, and the Jews, all conspire the death of Christ, and each party on a several account; not thinking in the least to fulfil the determinate counsel of God; yet that was what Providence intended, as is plain by Acts ii. 23. As also the soldiers, in parting his garments, and piercing his side; it was their barbarous rudeness which put them upon it; but Providence designed to make good a prophecy: "these things therefore the soldiers did." (John xix. 24.) All that God does in the world, is the transcript or impression of his ancient decrees.—*Coles.*

OBITUARY.

MRS. WITHERS.

Dear Friend,—“The memory of the just is blessed.” You are not unacquainted with the name of Mr. George Payton, late minister of the gospel, at Edenbridge, Kent. The account he published of the dealings of God with his soul is as sweet and simple as any description I ever read. I long enjoyed his friendship, and profited much by his ministry. I was in his company just after he had recovered from an alarming illness. Speaking of the happy state of his mind, he remarked, “I had no desire to live or to die; but I considered day better than night, heaven than earth. The first discourse I preached after my illness was from the text, ‘Hope thou in God.’ I fed on that text the whole of the succeeding week.” He might be truly said to be waiting on and for his Lord, in which condition he was called away, as may be seen in a letter in “Zion’s Casket” for 1838. I have since visited his last resting-place, and wandered beside the graves of many of his spiritual children, who repose near him. Many trod the path of death before, while others lingered but yet a little time after him. Among them was my departed, and much-lamented friend, Mrs. Withers, the following memoir of whom was sent me by one still living, a relation of Mr. Chandler, who was Mr. Payton’s successor, at Edenbridge. While in the neighbourhood of this hallowed spot, I met an old friend of Mr. Payton, who, in alluding to Mrs. Withers, remarked, “Mr. Payton believed that the death-bed of Mrs. W. was the happiest he had ever witnessed.” This declaration induced me to send you a copy, that you might insert it in a future number of the “Gospel Standard,” if you deemed it worthy of such distinction. I thought of Watts’s words:

“Why should the wonders God has wrought
Be lost in silence and forgot?”

Bromley, Kent, July 22nd, 1855.

L. Z.

MEMOIR OF MRS. WITHERS.

Having lost my dear mother and five sisters by the same insidious disease, consumption, I felt a deep sympathy for her in her affliction. I will endeavour to give you a connected narrative of the events which occurred during the three months immediately preceding her much-lamented death. Added to the ravages on her poor body by the progress of her disease, her mind was sorely troubled by the embarrassments of her family. Such comfort as I could afford her amidst this ocean of tribulation, I gave her. One evening, however, the lowering clouds by which she was surrounded were suddenly dispelled, and she seemed to awaken to new and to more hopeful feelings. “Mrs. C—,” she said, “I have been thinking to-day, that, if the Lord be pleased ever to shine into my soul, I shall be like your father, and sing as he did,

‘Then will I tell to sinners round,
What a dear Saviour I have found.’”

The dear Saviour was pleased soon to manifest himself. O how we ought to rejoice to be favoured with these sweet testimonies. She read and sang some hymns, which were now her principal support. I then left her very comfortable, which afforded me much gratification. On another occasion, during the absence of her husband, who had retired to take rest, I read to her an account of Mrs. Hall, with which she was greatly affected, so much so that I was obliged to give her some refreshment to sustain her. In the evening she was quite composed.

During the last three weeks it was truly gratifying to behold her, as she seemed all love and praise, for her end was not permitted to distress her, which she often declared was a great mercy. I went to see her on the Sunday morning before Christmas, and inquired how she did. "Ah!" she said, "I have had a comfortable night, and I have had some sweet words brought to me." The words were,

"O glorious hour! O blest abode!" &c.

I said, "When you are in possession of that bliss all will be well." "Yes," she replied, "but I did not think last Sunday that I should be here to day; but the Lord has lengthened my time;" adding, "'the vision is for an appointed time; and though it tarry, wait for it;' but it will not be long, 'and at eventide it will be light.'" Truly it was so, for "all was mercy, all was mild." She directed what she wished to be done after she had departed. On Christmas Day she said, "I wish you would find that hymn, the words of which were brought so forcibly to my recollection, and which continue on my mind." I found the hymn mentioned, and remarked that it was the one my mother sang the morning before she died. "Well," she said, let us sing it too." So we did. The love I felt to her is beyond description, and she felt equally towards me. She often entreated the Lord on my behalf, and if he grant her wishes, it will be more to me than gold and silver. She now became worse; but as her bodily strength failed, her faith increased, and she seemed firmly fixed on the Rock Christ her Saviour, and the things of time and sense became of very little concern. She said it was all in the Lord's hands to do what seemeth to him good. O what a mercy to be enabled to surrender all into his hands, for he maketh the burden light. I have often thought what a support it must be in so trying an hour, which makes the quivering lips to sing for joy in the midst of agonizing bodily pain. What a proof that the Lord never leaves nor forsakes his people, but loves them to the end.

I stayed much with her in the daytime, as I saw her end was fast approaching. I would not have been away from the closing scene on any account, as I received great comfort from it. On Saturday morning she wished to see me. I went, and remained with her all day, as she believed she was only waiting the summons. About 9 o'clock, she said, "I should like to see Mr. Payton; he would put up a prayer for me." In accordance with her wish, her husband went to inform him. While he was gone, she said, "I do not send for Mr. Payton because I think it is in man's power to do

anything for me." I said, "The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." "Ah!" she rejoined, "if he be not a righteous man, I know not one." She then asked for Watts's hymn book, selected a hymn, and sang it. Mr. Payton came, and offered a sweet prayer for her and hers, which we have seen evidently answered. She took her leave of Mr. Payton with great composure. After he was gone, she prayed most earnestly for her dear partner and children. As she had great pain in her side, I applied leeches, which the Lord was pleased to bless as a means of relief. I stood over her for three hours; she bore her pains with great patience. We got her into bed quite composed; but she said she dreaded the night, yet without giving a reason. I afterwards learned, however, that it was because I left her. I would not let that have been a source of uneasiness had I been informed before it was too late to remedy it; but, as it was, I stayed late, going again soon in the morning. When I entered the room, she smiled so heavenly that I think I shall never forget it. I asked her how she did. "O," she exclaimed, "I have been singing, and have passed the night better than I expected. I have had no pain." I sat by her during the morning while her husband rested. She said all earthly rest had fled from her; she now only waited for an eternal repose. I told her I thought it was fast approaching. Soon after she said, "I am getting cold; though I did not know last night whether I should not be raised up again; if I were I should want my ring again." I replied, "You will never want that ring again!" "No," she rejoined, "but I shall have a crown of glory, glory, glory!" I then asked her if she would be moved, to which she assented; after which she inquired for her children. They approached her bedside, when she gave them the parting kiss, which drew tears from every eye but hers. She exclaimed, "Rejoice, and praise the Lord!" Then she expressed a wish to see Mr. Payton to help her to praise. He came, accompanied by my husband. This was truly a solemn meeting; but all seemed heavenly and happy with her, for she kept blessing and praising with great fervency. She said, "Dying is nothing!" She kissed her children again, and bade each of us adieu. She then pointed up, and said, "The angels!

'A few more rolling suns at most,
Will land me on fair Canaan's coast.'

I remarked, "How you perspire!" and wiped her face. She replied, "Not drops of blood, as my dear Saviour did for me." She then closed her eyes, and sweetly fled into his kind arms, who had been her great Supporter and wonderful Deliverer.

Well might she call on us all to praise him. I thought much of Bunyan's Christiana crossing the river, as what he says so agreed with us. I looked at Mr. Payton as Mr. Greatheart, and her dear family and we as poor Ready-to-Halts left behind. O may we be found like the five wise virgins, having our lamps trimmed and the oil which will never be exhausted.

Edenbridge, March 27th, 1830.

E. C.

THE LIBERTY OF THE MINISTRY.

(Concluded from page 260.)

HAVING in our last Number attempted to prove that the practice of the Corinthian Church, on which the Plymouth Brethren so much rely, and to which they so confidently appeal, was not the regular usage of the apostolic churches, but merely transitory and exceptional, we proceed to our second point, which was to show,

II. That *the end sought* by the ministry of the word, viz., the edification of the church, is best obtained by the more scriptural and safe mode prevalent in our churches.

The end and object of the ministry of the word is most clearly and beautifully laid down in a passage already quoted, Eph iv. 11–12. “The perfecting of the saints, the work of the ministry, and the edifying of the body of Christ,” are there mentioned as the three main reasons, the three leading objects, why the risen Jesus has given such gifts to men as “apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers.”

This declaration of the Holy Ghost is, or should be, decisive of the whole question at issue between us. Nothing can be dearer to the Lord Jesus, no object more worthy of his boundless love and infinite wisdom above, than the building up of his mystical body below. Seated in glory and majesty at the right hand of the Father, filled with the wisdom and clothed with the power of Deity, the means he has chosen to build up his church on earth in faith and love must needs be the wisest and best. It were treason to his Sacred Majesty, an insult cast upon his infinite wisdom, love, and faithfulness to doubt or deny this.

Now, what means, as revealed by the blessed Spirit in the word of truth, does it please his exalted Majesty to employ for this end? Does he use *the members themselves* to build up one another? In a certain sense, and to a certain extent, *when they are brought together*, he does, as is plain from Eph. iv. 16; Col. ii. 19; but the office of bringing them together, of ministering to their spiritual wants and necessities, and building them up into a holy temple of the Lord, is not committed to the members themselves, but is entrusted to men, in a certain sense external to the body, and endowed with gifts and graces for that express purpose.

To set this in a clearer light, we may remark, that the Holy Spirit uses two figures to represent the saints below as in union with Christ and each other. The first is that of the members of a body, of which the Lord Jesus is the living Head; the other, is that of a temple, of which the saints are living stones, and Christ the foundation and corner-stone. (1 Cor. iii. 11–17; 1 Pet. ii. 4–8.) A few words upon each of these figures may help to clearer views on the subject of the ministry.

i. First, then, let us view the church of God here below as represented by the members of a body. These members, then, viewed before spiritual union with Christ and each other, are considered,

1, either as members out of joint, *i. e.* not in their right place, or, 2, as members scattered, *i. e.* not yet brought into that close union with the body which gives them union with Christ and each other. Both these ideas are contained in the expression "the perfecting of the saints," where the word "perfecting" has two senses corresponding to these two distinct ideas.

1. The primary meaning of the word in the original, is the *putting into its place a dislocated limb*. Now, just as a dislocated shoulder or a wrist out of joint is useless to itself and to the other members of the body, but when put into its place resumes its former strength and usefulness, so the members of Christ's church, when out of joint, are weak in themselves and unprofitable to one another; but, put into their right place, are strong, as receiving strength out of Christ's fulness, and profitable, as strengthening and aiding the other members. But, as in the natural body, the dislocated limb does not set itself, but is usually put into place by help from without—in other words, by the strong and skilful hand of the surgeon, so in the mystical body of Christ, the limbs out of joint need, for the most part, the help of another; in other words, of the apostle, prophet, pastor, or teacher, given for the purpose. We are thus brought to one main use of the ministry, using that word in its usual and extended sense, that it is to the mystical body of Christ what the surgeon is to the natural body a means of putting and keeping of the members in their place.

2. But from this original idea of setting in place a dislocated limb, came another akin to it, which the meaning of the word "perfecting" includes and embraces, *viz.*, putting *scattered* limbs into their places in the body. The church of God is viewed in Scripture as a body, of which the risen Jesus is the glorified Head. The members of this body are the elect, of which those not in manifested union with Christ are viewed as scattered, as Ezekiel saw the dry bones in vision. These scattered members, therefore, are to be spiritually united to the body of Christ, of which they form a real and integral, but, at present, not a manifested part. To do this, as the Lord uses means, he employs evangelists, pastors, and teachers. These, as regards their office, are external to the body, and as such ministerially take the scattered limbs, bring them together, and unite them to the body. To help our ideas, take the following figure. Here is a human body, of which all the various limbs are lying separate, say, in various parts of a room. They are at present dead and motionless. But some one comes and touches limb after limb. The limb moves, heaves, and gives signs of life. The same hand which first touched the limbs, and gave them life, now takes up the quivering members one by one, and brings them together. A mysterious power is put forth which, at the moment of their junction, unites the limbs with the body and each other. Life flows from limb to limb, and the whole now forms a complete body. To do this is the work of the ministry, and is done from without and not from within. In other words, as the members do not quicken themselves into life, but are quickened through the word from the

minister, so do they not bring themselves together, but are brought together (that is, they are, for the most part, blessed, delivered, and united to Christ, and his people) through the same word. Thus "the perfecting of the saints" as embracing these two ideas, means the placing of each member of Christ's mystical body into its right position—into that exact place where it shall derive most nourishment itself from the Head, and be of the greatest service and profit to the other members.

We are now perhaps better prepared to understand what share the body has in edifying itself. Here is the great mistake of the Plymouth Brethren. They do not see the difference between a body being built up from without and from within, and the distinct offices of the pastor to the people, and of the people to each other. Our figure will illustrate both. The body is an aggregate of members, that is, the members together make up the whole body; but it is only when brought together that the members exercise their separate offices for their own and each other's benefit. The eye, the ear, the hand, the foot, all help one another. By mutual prayer, conversation, acts of kindness and liberality, and, above all, the exercise of love, the members of the body comfort, strengthen, and build up one another. This is "the edifying of itself in love," and "the growing up into a holy temple of the Lord." But without food the whole body would still languish and starve. To give this food is the work of the ministry, and by the communication of it through the preached word is the body built up from without. Thus there is a twofold building up of the body—from without by the ministry of the word through pastors and teachers, and from within by the mutual love of the members. Food from without and love from within are God's appointed means of building up the church of Christ; so that the Plymouth Brethren, in despising the sent servants of God, are actually striking away the hands which feed the church of Christ, and are appointed of God for that express purpose.

And now comes the question, 1, Whether this putting of each member in its place is best done by the members themselves, or by some one individual supplied from above with strength and skill to do it for them? and, 2, Whether God's appointed way is the former or the latter? that is, whether his revealed will in the New Testament is that a church should do this for itself, or that it should have a pastor to do it for them? To our mind, the figure decides the point. Observe the three things that we have mentioned as necessary to the building up of the body. 1. There is the putting into it of the scattered members; 2. There is the setting in place of the limb out of joint; 3. there is the supplying of the body with food. Now, the body can do none of these things for itself, but all are done for it from without, *i. e.* by the external aid of the ministry.

ii. The figure of a spiritual temple brings us to the same conclusion. In a literal building, do the stones come together of themselves, or are they quarried, hewed, squared, brought to the building, laid each in its place, and cemented into union with the

rest, by the hand of the mason? So in grace. Did not Paul lay the foundation of the church at Corinth, and did not Apollos and other ministers build on that foundation? Thus the very church at Corinth, to which the Brethren so much appeal, was built up from without by the ministry of the word before it could build up itself from within by the mutual exercise of the gifts and graces of the individual members. Were there a doubt on the subject, the text before quoted would decide it, where the edifying, or building up, as the word literally means, of the body of Christ is expressly spoken of as accomplished by pastors and teachers.

And in this we see the great mercy, love, and wisdom of the church's exalted Head. We may, perhaps, be thought biassed from personal feelings in favor of the ministry of the word by pastors and teachers; but, apart from any such narrow prejudice, our deliberate opinion is, that, taking the children of God generally, they are not able to teach and edify themselves and one another. Many, perhaps the greater part, are very weak and ignorant, and so far from being able to teach others, need to be taught themselves. Most, too, are so much occupied with earthly callings, so overwhelmed with family cares, so overborne with the pressure of work or business from Monday morning to Saturday night, that body and mind are alike worn out by the Lord's day. On that day, therefore, they need rest of body and mind; and when they come to the house of prayer, so far from wishing to instruct and teach others, they are glad enough to get something for themselves, a word from God through the mouth of his sent servant to encourage and comfort their down-cast souls, and strengthen them for the sorrows and troubles of the week before them. A few restless, presumptuous spirits may want to get up and spout, some poor deluded creature may long to bring forth his wild fancies, or some noisy heretic may burn to infect others with his mischievous errors; but God's living family, especially the tried and tempted, the distressed and exercised, the plagued of heart and burdened in spirit, and all "the quiet in the land," would rather listen than talk, hear what God may speak to them than hear themselves speak to others.

But not to detain our readers too long, we will pass on to our third point, which was to show,

III. That the practice of the Corinthian Church was at the very time, in the purest days of the Church, *fraught with evil*, and that in our day it would be not only utterly impracticable, but pregnant with mischief and confusion.

In no Church in the New Testament were there such disorders as in that at Corinth. And the reason is evident. They had no governing head or heads, and no divinely-authorized teacher or teachers. The absence of elders, pastors, and teachers, made them like an army without officers, or a school without masters. Where all were equal, none would submit; where all wanted to teach, none were willing to learn. The sharp incidental rebukes of the Apostle throw great light on their internal condition as a church, and show an extraordinary laxity of discipline, and an equally strange state of

disorder in their public meetings. As regards discipline, there were two circumstances which the laxest gospel church would not now tolerate for a single month—a member living in adultery with his father's second wife, and members getting drunk at the Lord's Supper. (1 Cor. v. 1 ; xi. 21.) These fearful sins were winked at because the church was split into parties for want of a controlling head, and the sinning members belonging to the majority, the minority were powerless. We see, therefore, in the Corinthian Church that as laxity of discipline must prevail in an army without officers, and in a school without masters, so in a church there must be lax discipline, where there is no controlling head, or some authority which all the members recognise. "Obey them that have rule over you, and submit yourselves," is the Lord's own command.

But, besides great laxity of discipline, there were in the Corinthian Church the greatest disorders at their public meetings for the worship of God. Even that church, which "came behind in no gift," had its spouters. One had his "psalm," another his "doctrine," another "a tongue," (or some foreign language,) another "a revelation," (some manifestation,) and another "an interpretation" of the foreign language in which the preceding brother might speak. Here, then, they all were charged, as it were, to the muzzle, and each wanting the first say, the longest say, and the loudest say. They did not want to edify, but to show off. The man with the "psalm" wanted to display his musical voice or talent of poetry; the member with "a doctrine" to show his abilities to teach; the brother with "a tongue" to be admired for his fluency in Arabic or Syriac; the friend with "a revelation" to tell of some vision he had seen; and the interpreter to explain in Greek what his brother had been preaching to the people in Arabic. The consequence of all this rivalry was a scene of confusion, so that if unbelievers had come into their assembly, they would have said they were mad. (1 Cor. xiv. 23.)

Now, the question is, if we reverted to the Corinthian way, should we be much better than they? Lord's day morning comes. The people now meet together quietly because they know whom they are come to hear—we may assume a man of God, whose word has been before blessed to their souls. But what confusion would arise were it left to any member of the church to get up, and speak just as his inclination might prompt, or his pride lead him. The most ignorant would be the most forward; the humble would hang back, and the presumptuous rush on. There would be no security against the broaching of the wildest errors, or the vilest doctrines; and the church would probably soon be utterly swamped with heresies, or destroyed by divisions. It is easy to misrepresent the system of each church having its pastor, and argue against it by selecting instances of ministers who abuse their authority. But view the matter under its true, its scriptural light. View the pastor as the most deeply taught, the most humble and spiritually-minded man of the whole assembly; view him as disentangled from the worldly affairs which distract the rest, and therefore able to give himself to

the word of God and to prayer; view him as sent of God, and divinely qualified to teach and feed the church of Christ; and all this is no more than the Scripture assumes and declares. Is not this a more likely way of building up the church, of teaching sound doctrine, preaching sound experience, and inculcating sound practice, than letting any one speak who likes?

But if any say, "This silences at once all the rest, and quenches the gifts of the Spirit in the church," we answer, "No; there is still the prayer-meeting, where the members may exercise their gifts in prayer for the edification of the others; there are church-meetings where they may exercise their discernment and judgment, and we may add, their forbearance, tenderness, and affection; there are opportunities for conversation, and telling what God has done for their souls, much more edifying than spouting in the chapel; and there are sick members to visit, poor members to relieve, tempted saints to speak a word to, friends at a distance to correspond with, and a thousand kind offices to render in word and deed to members of the same body, far more conducive to the spiritual welfare of the church of Christ, than trying to preach once a week—an office to which God has not called them, and for which, therefore, they are totally unfit.

We have by no means exhausted the subject; but we forbear trespassing any further on the patience of our readers, and conclude with the expression of our desire that what we have advanced may be commended to their consciences, as agreeing with the oracles of God and the experience of the saints.

What thousands have arrived at home, who, in their way thither, had many hard thoughts of God! But now they know he did all things well, and can join in the song of Moses and the Lamb, and find that their afflictions wrought for them "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."—*Timothy Priestley*.

A broken heart is in the sight of God an excellent thing; because a broken heart is submissive; it falls before God, and gives to him his glory. All this is true from a multitude of scriptures, which I need not here mention. Hence such a heart is called an honest heart, a good heart, a perfect heart, a heart fearing God; and such as is found in God's statutes.—*Bunyan*.

By means of the gospel preached, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven at Pentecost and afterwards, multitudes of Jews and especially of Gentiles, were converted to Christ. It was, preached all along from Abyssinia on the south to Britain on the north, and from Persia on the east to Spain on the west. Wherever the Jews had synagogues, the preachers first presented to them Christ Jesus and his salvation. Even the malignant opposition of the Jews, and their persecution of its preachers, sometimes rendered the gospel more readily embraced by the Gentiles. The Lord restrained the Roman emperors from enacting any laws against Christianity till it had spread and taken deep root in almost every corner of their large empire.—*John Brown*.

P O E T R Y.

“Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”—(John xvi. 33.)

Though afflicted in body, and tempted in mind,
All help in my God to resign;
Still, still, gracious Lord, thou art faithful and kind,
Changeability only is mine.

Yet though from affliction I am not exempt,
Nor free from the enemy's power,
He cannot o'ercome, though he greatly may tempt,
O keep me, my God, in that hour.

And when he suggests, “Thou art carnal and cold,
The world has too much of thy thought,
For thee to conceive so presumptuously bold,
That Christ with his blood has thee bought.”

When thus I'm perplex'd, O Lord, help me to flee
To him on whose banner unfurl'd
Is inscribed, for the comfort of sinners like me,
“Rejoice; I have o'ercome the world.”

Let the words of thy grace be the stay of my heart,
Blessed Spirit, apply them with power;
So shall I believe that with Jesus I've part,
And be triumphing every hour.

W. P.

God's preservation is the good man's perseverance. He will keep the feet of his saints. Arminianism represents God's Spirit, as if he acted like the guard of a stage coach, who sees the passengers safe out of town for a few miles; and then, making his bow, turns back and leaves them to pursue the rest of the journey by themselves. But divine grace does not thus deal by God's travellers. It accompanies them to their journey's end, and without end. So that the meanest pilgrim to Zion may shout with David, in full certainty of faith, “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all my days, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.”—*Toplady*.

When Balaam, who it appears had a head knowledge of God, hired himself out for this world's gain, to curse the people of God; the Lord compelled this wretched man to do the reverse of what he wished; even to bless those whom he came to curse. When Caiaphas the high priest intended to consign our Lord to death, the Holy Ghost made him utter a prophecy of our most glorious Christ, of which he had no consciousness of what he said; but which has refreshed, and will refresh the church of God for ever. And when this damsel cried out; “These are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation;” she knew neither the Lord, nor what salvation meant; but the Lord overruled the whole for good. Paul was permitted to put an end to her soothsaying; and by exciting the indignation of her masters, for the loss of their craft, opened thereby a door for the furtherance of the gospel.—*Hawker*.

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THE UNIVERSAL INVITATION OF THE GOSPEL.

By RUSK.

(Continued from page 268.)

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."—ISAIAH LV. 1.

V. THE *provision* such are to have: "Buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price." If I were to be guided by my natural feelings this morning, I should not attempt to write upon this subject, for I feel quite averse to it. I feel pressed beyond measure; only I hope that, in the feeble attempt, I shall forget my troubles, as I have in times past.

1. By this "wine" in our text I understand God's everlasting *love* to us in Christ Jesus, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; which love never had a beginning, and never will have an end. There is no cause can be assigned why God should love us and not the non-elect, only because it was his will, his good will and sovereign pleasure; for "he worketh all things after the counsel of his own will;" and there we must leave it. He giveth no account of his matters. Now we read of the love of God the Father: "God so loved the (elect) world, that he gave his Son to die for it." "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God. Again. We read of the love of the Son. Hence Paul says, "What shall separate us from the love of Christ?" This love was manifested in giving himself up a sacrifice to divine Justice; as Paul says, "Who loved me, and gave himself for me." Again. The love of the Holy Ghost also. "I beseech you," says Paul, "for the love of the Spirit;" and this is manifested in his operations on the hearts of God's elect, in making them sensible of their real need of all the blessings of the new covenant, and then testifying of Christ to them, and bringing home the promises with power to their hearts.

2. The *atoning blood* of Christ is called "wine." Jesus Christ the Son of God clothed himself in our nature. He took it into union with his divine Person, and his divinity stamped an eternal dignity upon all his sufferings, and made them meritorious; so that Justice received full satisfaction for all the sins of the whole body of God's elect, so much so that, as considered in him, they never sinned in

thought, word, or deed, but are perfectly righteous by the imputation of his spotless righteousness to their persons; and God viewed them so in his eternal mind from everlasting. O that you and I, reader, could live more out of ourselves, upon the all-sufficient fullness there is in Christ Jesus; but we are dull scholars. Now, this blood is called "wine:" "And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament which is shed for many. Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

Now we are told to come to these waters for this wine, which is the love of God, the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, and a fresh supply of the Holy Spirit to subdue the old man continually, and to raise up the new man; and these things felt and enjoyed will be the delight of our souls; for what can be so precious as to be fully persuaded that God loves me with an everlasting love? What so precious as to be sure that Christ shed his blood for me? What so sweet as to feel the new man put on, so as to love God, his people, his truth, and his ways, and to feel peace reigning in our hearts, the fruit and effect of this atonement, which is pardon and justification?

Now, let us for one moment take a view of this blessed wine. I say, let us reflect for a while. As men and angels all fell alike into one state of apostacy, had the Son of God passed by all the human race, and suffered, bled, and died for angels, O reader, where should you and I have been? Why, then we should have every soul perished. But no: "Verily, he took not on him the nature of angels, nor the seed of the reprobate, but the seed of Abraham;" and thus secured the wine to such wretches as you and I.

ii. I shall now take a little notice of the *milk* in our text: "Buy wine and *milk*, without money and without price." We all know that milk literally is food for children, they not being capable of digesting such food as grown people can. And so it is spiritually; thus it signifies comfortable promises and the sweet invitations of the gospel. Hence Peter says, "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby." Now, the *word* is food itself; as Jeremiah says, "Thy word was found, and I did eat it;" but a new-born babe must have the *comfort* of the word, which is the milk; for his faith is very weak. For instance; if a gentleman make you a promise, and you firmly and fully believe him, his word alone is enough; but if you doubt it, how encouraging would it be for him to speak comfortingly to you, and to relate to you how many he had assisted who were as badly off as yourself. This certainly would strengthen your faith, and make it grow; and this is the way the Lord takes with us. Hence Peter says, it is that we may grow thereby, so that we may in time have stronger food. But of this I shall treat by-and-by.

Now a soul that is seeking the Lord is entertained largely with the *milk*. I remember this text being sweet to me one evening when going to hear the word: "They that wait upon the Lord

shall renew their strength." I felt a comforting power come with the words. Again: "Who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us." I believed for some time that it belonged to me; but when I lost the comfort, I got directly to the background. Again: "For he hath made him to be sin for us." While I felt the comfort, I was sure of it, but no longer. Again: "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me." Indeed, I had many of these sweet consolations, all of which used to encourage me, and draw me on as milk does a child. Now, spiritually, after we have been awhile seeking the Lord, these comforts greatly abate, and we have many hard lessons to learn out of our hearts and God's holy law, which in some go gradually on, and they learn little by little, moving on so slowly that they cannot believe they progress at all; and yet all this while the work is advancing. In this apparent stoppage, they learn much of their own weakness and foolishness, and they know that it all depends upon God's sovereign power whether they are saved or lost. They are in this way greatly humbled, and brought down in the dust. They find it a truth that "he that believeth shall not make haste," and often conclude that they might as well give all up, for they appear to go on like the horse in the mill; but after a long watching and waiting at wisdom's gates, and coming often to these waters, they shall find it a great truth that when all their money is gone, there is no want of milk, and therefore they shall have it more plentifully than at their first seeking the Lord. Canaan, you know, was typical of the church of God, and it was a land "flowing with milk and honey;" and so God's family find it in a particular manner in their first deliverance, when they are highly favored with this milk. As it is written, "Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her; rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her, that ye may suck and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations, that ye may milk out and be delighted with the abundance of her glory. Then shall ye suck; ye shall be borne upon her sides, and dandled upon her knees. As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you, and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem;" that is, in the covenant of grace; "and when ye see this, your heart shall rejoice;" that is, when you see your interest in this new covenant; when, as Paul says, you come to the heavenly Jerusalem, the church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven. Then you will find it a truth in your experience what the prophet Joel says: "In that day the mountains shall drop down new wine;" (election is one mountain; Christ Jesus is called a mountain, and the church also;) "and the hills shall flow with milk, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord, and shall water the valley of Shittim." Shittim signifies scourges, rods, and thorns; and God's family are well scourged before they come here. The rod is generally laid on pretty heavily; and many a grieving briar and pricking thorn do they feel, which brings them into a low state, or like a valley; and what can be more suitable to such than this new wine, this flowing of milk? so as to have an abundance of the Holy Spirit's

consolations, and to suck the sweet contents of every unconditional promise? Truly this is delightful to the soul. Such appear as though they were in a new world; and thus it is that "every valley is exalted," and the soul raised up to dwell on high that before was sunk so low. He finds his place of defence the strength of rocks. His bread is given, and his water is sure. His eyes see King Jesus in his beauty, and by a living faith he beholds the heavenly Canaan, which to the eye of nature is very far off. Now the King is held in the galleries. Every mountain and hill is now brought low. Election, which used to terrify him, is now in favor of him. He "rejoices that his name is written in heaven." Jesus Christ, who is also called a mountain, comes down into the valley, and gives him his loves, so that he can say, "My Beloved is mine, and I am his;" and as for the church, Mount Zion, his very soul is united to it.

But do not forget this, how high soever you may soar, namely, that you must know also what a weaning time is. You are not always to live upon milk. I know you will not like this, but it will be so, whether you like it or not: "Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts." Now, this is really truth, that we must be weaned before we are taught this knowledge, and before we are made to understand doctrine; which shows us that this knowledge and doctrine are something more than head work.

iii. Having, therefore, briefly treated of this wine and milk, and as the text says we are to buy and *eat*, I will show something of *food* which we get after we are thus weaned, called by the prophet a being taught knowledge, and understanding doctrine; for knowledge is food: "I will send pastors after my own heart, that shall feed them with knowledge and understanding." Now, one branch of knowledge which God teaches us after we are weaned is that we shall carry about us, till death, the *old man*, and this we knew nothing about at first. If you had asked me when I first sought the Lord, yea, more, when I enjoyed abundance of this milk, if I believed that I should carry about with me till death, or indeed at all, such a stinking, filthy, putrefied carcase as I find the old man is, I should have said, "No;" for old things appeared to be done away, and all things become new. As for head work, that's nothing. I am treating of experience. I really did not believe it in heart. The Apostle Paul found this out. Hence he says, "I know that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing;" and this will exercise us all our days; for, feeling so much indwelling sin, it will be no easy thing to hold fast that we are in a pardoned state, which is another branch of experimental knowledge, and which is food to the soul every time we exercise faith upon Christ Jesus, whose flesh is meat indeed, and who is the Bread of life; but God declares that we shall all know him, from the least of us to the greatest; and the way we are to find it out is this: he will be merciful to our unrighteousness, and remember our sins no more.

Another branch of knowledge which the Lord teaches us is, that

we shall be engaged in fighting against the world, the flesh, and the devil till death. Let me ask you seriously, did you ever expect to be engaged in such fighting as you have been, and in extreme weakness, having no stock in hand? "O no," say you, "I expected to be inlaid with grace so strong as to be as bold as a lion at all times and upon all occasions." Yes; but the Lord has taught you knowledge, and you find that all your strength consists in a manifest union with him—that you are only strong in the Lord. Thus you know the Lord Jesus. He is your Shepherd to feed both your soul and body all your journey through. Yes; he is your food, and by faith you live upon him, and not by bread alone. Now, you and I are to be engaged in this holy war, this fight of faith; but, through the unbelief which we shall feel, we shall often draw wretched conclusions; but Christ is our Captain, and he will guide us on. He is a Leader and Commander to the people. He knows his sheep, and he is known of them.

Once more. The Lord teaches us that many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it. This is a branch of knowledge that he teaches us by a very long experience. He gives us grace, and then tries it to the quick, some in one way and some in another, and some almost every way. Various are the trials that he brings us into, and leaves us in for a time, hardly holding us up at all, according to our feelings. Hence the complaints of some of the family of being cut off, of being forsaken, and so on. He does it by suffering all our corruptions to work strong in us, and we cry to him to subdue them, but he turns a deaf ear to us, and lets us be filled with our own way, cross providences, getting into debt, and living like beggars upon others; and although we plead his promises, yet for wise ends, in order to mortify and cripple our pride and high aspiring thoughts, he does not provide for us in our way, for he is not confined to any way, and yet is faithful to his own word; and his way humbles us, and brings him all the glory. Persecution is what we shrink at. No man living can glory in it without a wonderful supply of the Holy Ghost; and yet this brings God glory. "On their part (those who persecute) he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified." Likewise those who have families find very many sore troubles; the husband separated from a bad wife, or a good wife from a bad husband, or wicked children; and this is often of use to cut inordinate affections.

Now these waters, with many more, cannot quench this love; and I may add, Satan's temptation, fiery darts, &c., innumerable suggestions to the mind that we are deceived all through our profession, and shall make an awful end, that it is not God's work in us, and that he will not own nor honor it. O the storms that I have been in I never can relate as they were. God teaches us such knowledge as this after we are weaned; and in this way we learn that charity endureth all things. How could we find it out any other way? This is the way Paul went, as recorded in 2 Cor. xi.; and he tells us that he is persuaded that nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Now, after such sore trials, to feel this love again, truly this is wonderful ; and this agrees with our text, "Buy and eat;" for love to the soul, the love of God felt in the soul, is food, and he feeds our souls with it. This you will see by comparing these two texts together : "I drew them with the cords of a man, with bands of love ; and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them." Now, the prophet Zechariah tells us that these bands of love were the food ; as you read : "I will feed the flock of slaughter, even you, O poor of the flock. And I took unto me two staves ; the one I called Beauty, and the other I called Bands ; and I fed the flock."

From what has been written, it is evident that there is food of a stronger nature given to us after we are weaned from the milk, which we are to get by coming to these waters without money. I have shown you that multiplied pardons are feeding upon Christ's atoning blood, that he as a sacrifice for our sins is our food ; and the more you are exercised, the more you will discern between good and evil. Also I have proved that our food is enjoyed by a manifest union kept up between Christ and our souls, that he is our Shepherd, and will feed us continually, both soul and body ; and these trials are to lead us to live upon him, also that the love of God is our food ; and all this is eating.

But again. He not only teaches us knowledge, and gives us establishment in these things, but he makes us to understand doctrine. Say you, "This pure doctrine of the gospel I well understand, and have understood from my infaney?" Yes, and you are one that is wiser in your own eyes than seven men that can render a reason ; but it is not such an understanding as you have that is meant in our text. Neither is it so easily come at as you may suppose. It is something out of your reach, with all your wisdom. It is a teaching that comes from God to the weaned child, and he finds it no easy thing. I might go over many of the doctrines of Christ, and you might see them clearly as recorded in the letter of scripture ; but such understanding as this will not satisfy a weaned child. No ; what he wants is to make full proof of these doctrines in its own heart's experience ; for he is more or less tried about very doctrine which he holds, and that sorely.

Election is a glorious truth ; but say you, "I am afraid I am not elected. O that I could understand from God's word that I was !" Well, the Lord is pleased to shine upon his word, and you are helped to compare your experience with God's truth, which declares that they are God's elect who cry unto him day and night ; and you can see in his light how they went on for years crying, groaning, asking, seeking, and longing after him, and that they never could altogether give it up. "Why, then," say you, "this crying to the Lord, which, at the time, I could not believe was real prayer, it certainly was, and it was God's Spirit in me, and proves that I am elected. Bless God for this !" and thus you understand doctrine. Again. To God's elect the word is attended with power, and you can look back, and recollect when the word preached came with

power to your hearts. Thus you understand the doctrine of election.

Another doctrine is the *imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ*. Now, when the good Lord shows you that whenever he imputes this righteousness, it is attended with a solid peace, rest, quietness, and assurance, with a rejoicing in himself, as our portion, and when the soul can see that he has sweetly enjoyed these things, he really is delighted, that he is in the footsteps of the flock; and these understand the doctrine of imputed righteousness; and what makes it very clear indeed to him is, that it all came to him when he was sure he was ungodly, like Joshua clothed with filthy garments, in a sovereign way. O how pleased are such to understand doctrine. Perhaps, reader, I am a barbarian to you.

The doctrine of the *atonement*. The Lord leads him to see in his word that whenever the atonement comes, such are made nigh to God, which before were afar off by wicked works. Such can recollect when they found no access, the heavens being iron over their head and the earth brass beneath their feet, and of the change that took place when they found access with confidence by the faith of Christ, and how the Holy Spirit testified to them that Christ made peace for them by the blood of his cross, and how he led them to see that God the Father accepted them in him. Peace flowed into their souls, and they rejoiced in his covenant name all the day long. In this way we understand the doctrine of the atonement.

Again, *Regeneration and renewing*. This the Lord gives us to understand. We used to go to hear the word, all over sin, as vile as possible, and come away quite holy, as we thought; but if you were at that time to have asked us if we understood the doctrine of regeneration, you would have puzzled us. Regeneration is the putting of living principles of grace in a man that was chosen in Christ Jesus from everlasting. Now, through our ignorance, we expect for a long time to feel the old nature by degrees eradicated; and having such a large share of grace as we have in our first love, we conclude that this good work is certainly accomplished according to our will and wish; but after a while the old nature appears worse than ever, and then we say with Mr. Hart in one of his hymns,

“Can ever God dwell here?”

After we have had a fresh discovery of this vile nature, the Holy Ghost washes its guilt away for a time, and renews us, in that he calls forth into exercise his own implanted grace; but we shall feel these two natures alternately until death; and to distinguish these things well is understanding the doctrine of regeneration and renewing.

Again, The doctrine of *redemption*. How are we brought to understand this doctrine? Why, the Lord gives us again and again to see that, although we have a corrupt nature still in us, yet that God has given us a spirit different from this world, and that we are not of the world; and we learn that this is the fruit and effect of redemption, that he has “redeemed us from amongst men;” and O

how it delights us to make this out! It is said that we are redeemed with judgment and righteousness. The judgment due to us was fully executed upon Christ the Surety, and he fulfilled all righteousness; and by the eye of faith we can see that he was made sin for us that knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him: and having this righteousness upon us by faith makes it all very clear indeed, as the Lord is pleased to shine upon his work and the holy word.

Again. The doctrine of the *Trinity*. Now, what can carnal unenlightened reason make of this? How can they believe that Three are One? Yet faith credits it. 1. We are taught out of the law. 2. We are succored under sore temptations, and a word spoken to us in due season. 3. We are fretted, and we go on very unsatisfactorily till the Lord make us understand the doctrine; and when he does, we can feel that the work of the Holy Trinity has been done, and is being done in our hearts. God the Father taught us out of his law, and made us tremble at his word, as he did Israel at mount Sinai; there we learned his holiness and our sin; his righteousness and our condemned state; his justice and that we are unjust; his immutability, because we cannot turn him, do all we can, and his terrible majesty, for we feared he would consume us. Having learned these things of the Father, we come to Christ, being drawn by the Father's love which is in Christ; and here we find rest and peace, with many other things; though Satan is permitted to harass, perplex, torment, and tempt us in various ways. And this is the work of God the Son. It is he that binds up the broken-hearted, proclaims liberty unto captives, and opens the prison doors to such as are bound. He is the great and only Physician that cures the soul, yea, and body too; and so I might go on. The Holy Ghost is particularly to be known in helping our infirmities. You and I feel at times as though we hated everything of godliness. We are reluctant to prayer, reading, hearing, and writing to God's family; and sometimes so bowed down with guilt and fear, sin and shame, that, like the publican, we dare not lift up our eyes to heaven; but this blessed Spirit so assists us that we are able to come with holy boldness, and pour out our souls before the Lord. Reader, these are plain and simple evidences. If thou hast them, they prove that a Trinity of persons is in thy heart, and thou never canst deny these truths; but however clear thou mayest have them in the head, they will stand thee in no stead. I have proved this to be sure ground.

Finally. The *perseverance of the saints*. How long do God's family go on, ignorant of this doctrine in experience; but after many ups and downs, sore temptations, repeated backslidings, strong oppositions from all quarters, they are a little established in this truth, and say with David, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever;" for God says, "the righteous shall hold on his way." In this way the Lord teaches us knowledge and makes us to understand doctrine; and this is food to one who is weaned from the

milk and drawn from the breast, what Paul calls, "strong meat." Where can you get such provision as I have been treating of? Only by coming to these waters; and this you can only do to purpose as the Holy Ghost keeps you truly poor, self-emptied, and feelingly destitute of all good. This is having no money; and the reason you come then is only and altogether owing to you being led. The Father draws you to Christ, and when you come to him you drink at the Fountain-head. The Holy Spirit leads you to Jesus, testifies of him, and draws out faith and love to lay hold of him: "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God;" and here is food as well as drink: "He that eateth me, even he shall live by me;" so that we are indebted to the Holy Ghost who leads us for every step we go. This made Asaph say, "Thou shalt guide me by thy counsel;" and David, "He leadeth me beside the still waters;" and remember, all we get here is but a taste at most, called the streams that make glad the city of our God; but an eternity will come, when the Lamb in the midst of the throne will feed us and lead us to fountains of living waters.

God grant it for Christ's sake. Amen.

The world knows not what to make of it, nor what to say to one that has a broken heart, and therefore they despise it, and count that man that carries it in his bosom a moping fool, a miserable wretch, an undone soul. But a broken and a contrite spirit, O God, thou wilt not despise.—*Bunyan*.

God loves importunity. He not only condescends to let Jacob take hold of him, but gives him strength and boldness to wrestle with him. What hold could we have of God, if he had not encouraged us? What heart should we have to pray if he did not draw us by his Spirit? Would he give a Spirit of supplication, and give such testimony of his approbation, if it were not pleasing to himself? How does Christ confirm the doctrine, (Luke xviii. 1,) "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint." The contrast between the unjust judge and our heavenly Father proves what great encouragement we have to pray.—*Timothy Priestley*.

We that are old men, which have been so nursed up in this pernicious doctrine of the Papists, that it has taken deep root, even in our bones and marrow, have conceived an opinion quite contrary to that which Paul here teaches. For although we confessed with our mouth that Christ redeemed us from the judgment of the law, yet in every deed in our hearts we thought him to be a lawgiver, a tyrant and a judge, more terrible than Moses himself. And this perverse opinion we cannot yet, at this day, in so great light of the truth, utterly reject; so strongly are those things rooted in our hearts which we learn in our youth. But ye which are yet young and are not infected with this pernicious opinion, may learn Christ purely with less difficulty than we that are old can remove out of our minds these blasphemous imaginations which we have conceived of him.—*Luther*.

A LETTER BY THE LATE WILLIAM ABBOT, AFTER A SEVERE BODILY INJURY.

Dear Friend,—As I am in a fair way of recovery, and believing that you and the rest of my friends are anxious to hear of my welfare, I send this letter in order to give you some of the particulars of what has befallen me. When going to Maresfield last Saturday, and when not far from Buxtead Bridge, the horse I rode trod on a loose stone, stumbled, and fell, and so suddenly that it seemed as if his legs had been chopped from under him. I suppose I was thrown over his head, but can recollect nothing further, and that indistinctly, than the noise of his scrambling on the ground. I was so stunned by the fall, that I have no remembrance who went with me, or how I was conducted to the room of a passing friend, who resides about half a mile from the scene of my disaster. A personal friend hearing of the accident, came over and fetched me to his house. Mr. Prince, of Heckfield, was sent for. He bled me, and otherwise ministered to me; and on leaving desired that I should be kept exceedingly quiet. The doctor said my friends must excuse me from preaching the next day by reason of the dangerous state I was in. Next day I found my head in a sad condition, and my right eye bruised and nearly closed up. I consulted with my friends what was to be done at chapel; they proposed reading, but requested me to speak in prayer. This I consented to; and having a portion of scripture on my mind, I read it; I told them what had happened, and that they must not expect a sermon. However, a flow of truth gushing forth, I went on, in an easy, deliberate manner, for nearly an hour. The chapel was very full, and my hearers remarkably attentive. The power and presence of the Lord were evidently with us. After I was done, I was sensibly refreshed and invigorated. I returned to Mayfield in a chaise, and preached at the chapel in the afternoon even more strongly than in the morning. Mr. Stone, our doctor, soon came to me, and expressed his surprise at my preaching in such a manner after so severe an accident. He advised me to go to bed early, and attend to his directions. He visited me early next morning, and discovered there was danger of inflammation in the head. I had not fully felt the injury I had received till then. I had no refreshing sleep for several nights; but if I fell into a doze, I was like one in a storm. While I had the power of reflection during the early part of the week, my mind was fixed on the truth and truthfulness of God; and my many former deliverances were at times in view, which encouraged me to expect that all things would end well. Thus matters proceeded until Thursday night, when it was somewhat stormy within. The expectation of leaving the world with a distracted brain, which appeared probable, was by no means assuring; and the contemplation of leaving my wife and children surrounded by difficulties increased the load of trouble on my mind. On the following morning, however, I was enabled to pour out my heart unto God, who heard my cry, and favored my

soul with such assurance of interest in the Saviour's love and blood, that the tumult and storm were silenced, and I enjoyed a sweet calm within, content that all should be left to him, believing that "Christ would be magnified in me whether by life or death." Since then I have enjoyed much tranquillity of mind. We had no meeting on Sunday. Finding that I am gradually recovering, (though I cannot think yet of coming into Kent,) I purpose speaking once next Sunday, and hope by the blessing of the Lord to be at Oxford next month. What with the loss of blood, and living on a spare diet, I am in so weak a state that writing tries my head. But, thanks be unto God, things are as well as they are. Our kind regards to all friends.

Yours affectionately,

Mayfield, August 23rd, 1827.

WILLIAM ABBOT.

BUDDINGS OF HOPE.

My Dear Father,—I was very sorry to hear that you had so many difficulties and disappointments to encounter: but, though the Lord seem to chasten you sorely, may we hope it is not in wrath, but in love, and that he will not chasten you more than you are able to bear. Dear father, you say you hope I am able to cleave to a throne of grace. O that I could say I am. I do at times feel free access there, and at the feet of Jesus pour out my complaints, and murmur to the Lord my sore distress, while I plead his precious blood, hoping it was shed for me, but dare not yet say it was. O that the time of the singing of birds would come, and the voice of the turtle be heard in our land! I feel myself a guilty sinner before God, and long to be clothed in the glorious robe of Christ's righteousness. How can I bear to appear at the judgment-seat (where all must appear one day) without it? It was this thought that struck me, dear father, when you were in prayer one evening on my behalf. "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." I felt I deserved the sentence, and could not charge God with injustice if he pronounced it on me. I have since felt a sorrow over sin and self. O may it not be sorrow which worketh death! Isaiah says, "Weeping endureth for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." I feel sometimes encouraged by this to hope the Lord will soon give me a token for good. Pray, dear father, that I may not rest satisfied with anything short of a sweet revelation of my interest in Christ's precious blood; but may still be kept humble, and a deep sense of my depravity, till it shall please the Lord to set free my burdened soul. Receive my kindest love, my dear father, and

Believe me to remain,

Your ever affectionate daughter,

C—, July 4th, 1852.

H. C.

Generally the darker the dispensation, the more comfort is intended.—*Timothy Priestley.*

A FEW WORDS ON THAT PORTION OF THE WORD RECORDED IN ISAIAH XXVI. 2. BY THE LATE MRS. PANTING, BERKSHIRE, BEING A FRAGMENT OF HER EXPERIENCE FOUND AMONG HER PAPERS AFTER HER DEATH.

“Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation that keepeth the truth may enter in.”

HAVING heard a good man speak very sweetly from these words this morning, I received much satisfaction from the discourse, but in consequence of his not taking up the clause “which keepeth the truth,” I found my mind, I trust, most forcibly led to the words before named, “keeping the truth;” and as the blessed Revealer of truth directed my mind to several portions of the word, I will, as the Lord shall enable me, commit a few thoughts to paper as they pass through my mind.

It is evident that most of the Lord’s family that have been of any long standing must know that our dear Jesus is “the Truth,” for the Lord himself declares, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life;” but there is a knowing this even, I believe, by a believer in the letter, as it stands in the word of truth, as well as in a manifested view of Christ as “the Truth” to the soul. May the Lord enable me to describe the difference, as I received it, in the different stages of my experience.

In the early stage of my experience, the Lord was pleased to show me my lost and undone situation, and my conscience was arraigned and brought in guilty at the bar of God’s justice. I stood as a condemned criminal, assured of everlasting condemnation; and as I was at that time living and delighting in all the vanities of this life, being particularly fond of novels, songs, dress, yea, everything that was offensive to a most Holy God, no wonder with the eye of God on every action, I became truly miserable. I could neither take pleasure in what had been the life of my carnal nature, nor could I altogether leave them. About this time, after having been dreadfully overwhelmed with guilt and agitation of mind, after a violent storm of thunder and vivid lightning, expecting every flash to send me to a deserved hell, I took up “the Dairyman’s Daughter,” and opened it in a part where my eye was fixed on these words, “And O that her Saviour might be my Saviour too.” I felt a sweet desire flow into my soul after Christ, and laying down the book, went to my bed-room, and kneeling down by the bed-side, attempted to ask for mercy through a Saviour. It appears evident to me on looking back, that here was the desire after Christ given; and the word of truth declares, “the desire of the righteous shall be satisfied.” The Lord was as good as his word, and has been a fulfiller of his promise in his own time. In this state of mind I went on, I think, nearly two years. I had an earnest desire for salvation, but how to obtain it I knew not. I attempted to amend my life; but in vain, for what I did one day, I undid the next. My conscience was evidently made tender and honest; but my carnal desires were so strong as to keep me in perpetual bondage. After two years passing on in this

way, my convictions began to be much stronger, and I thought an entire reformation of conduct the only way to obtain that peace I so earnestly sought for. Accordingly I set about it, and I think if salvation could have been obtained by works, I should have stood some chance. But now the Lord, in infinite goodness and mercy, began to appear for me, and as my convictions increased in strength, a faint hope of mercy through Christ seemed to spring up in my soul, and as a reformation, as I before hinted at, and which I had endeavoured to abide by, lost its charms, so I began to find infinite Justice would not be satisfied by short comings, and I appeared to be left now almost at times without hope. Just at this time my importunity and wrestlings with God in prayer began to be increasing, being obliged to leave whatever work I was engaged in many times in the day to retire to my bed-room, or any unfrequented part of the premises where I considered I should be unnoticed, and to pour out my soul in some such language as this: "Jesus, thou son of David, if thou art now passing by, have mercy on me; Lord, in mercy remember me; Lord, save me, or I perish;" and many more such short but earnest breathings for mercy, which were I trust, answered, for the Lord directed my mind, while on my knees, first to this portion of his blessed word, "Though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come; it will not tarry;" from which I began to hope the Lord would at some future time hear me. But this did not stop my importunity; I was enabled still to wrestle with him; and again he in mercy appeared for me, strengthening my soul with this portion, "The bruised reed will he not break, the smoking flax he will not quench till he has brought forth judgment to truth." My hope at times began now to brighten. About this period, being the month of December, 1812, the Lord in kindness and love, set me at a happy liberty from the dreadful bondage of soul I had groaned under for about three years, in the following manner. Having retired to rest, but being unable to sleep from a violent pain in my face and head, my soul being engaged in earnest wrestlings with God for deliverance, all on a sudden the eye of faith was directed to Christ on the cross in his expiring moments, and these words appeared to flow into my soul, "It is finished;" and though I heard no sound with my natural ear, yet it sank into my heart. I directly exclaimed, "Lord, didst thou die for me?" The reply was instantaneous: "Yes; for thee." At that never-to-be-forgotten moment, my whole soul was absorbed in divine rapture and ecstacy, which I cannot describe; every faculty of my soul was drawn out in love to the adorable object presented to my view. My guilt was gone; no terror, no bondage left; all that I could say was, "Why, O Lord, such a vile wretch as I?" I lay until daylight in such a state of sweet serenity, that when I arose I was scarce able to keep what I had passed through from my family. I felt entirely delivered from every care, and could scarcely keep myself from going about a mile from home to my husband's mother, with these words, "I am born again, I am born again!" I will not endeavor to describe what I

passed through for some weeks. My Lord favored me with his presence, my conscience was tender; I loved his ways, and his people were dear to me, though I had no acquaintance with them. At that time, being so shy and fearful of being thought a deceiver, my mind was kept staid upon Jesus, and of course was in perfect peace. These were happy days; I often look back with a longing for the same feelings. In this part of my pilgrimage, I believe there was an entering into Christ in the everlasting doors, for Christ calls himself "the Door," and I am sure by precious faith I entered into him.

LETTER OF MRS. HANCOCK TO MR. R. DREDGE.

THE following correspondence took place between the late Mr. Robert Dredge, of Devizes, and Mrs. Hancock, his wife's sister, to whom his conversation had been blessed during a former visit at his house. Previously to a second visit, the Lord had delivered her soul, when under a good deal of distress, in a marked and conspicuous manner; but being a widow, and residing with her aged parents, strict church people, to whom she was much attached, she was in the occasional habit of attending the church services. Her letter is chiefly valuable as drawing out Mr. Dredge's reply.

Mrs. Hancock's life was not long spared after this period. Her frame, always delicate, sank under a severe attack of inflammation of the lungs; but she was much favored during her illness, and was blessed with a peaceful and happy death-bed.

Mr. Dredge died a few years ago, and left a most remarkable testimony on his dying bed to the power of God's grace, manifesting the sweetest assurance of his interest in that love which was shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost. As we well knew both the parties, especially Mr. Dredge, we can not only testify to the truth and reality of what we here insert, but feel a solemn pleasure in reviving the recollection of a gracious man and a highly esteemed friend to whom to live indeed was Christ and to die gain.—ED.

My dear Brother and Sister,—I was glad to receive your letter, and can with truth say I feel grateful for your kindness in taking so great an interest in all that concerns me, especially those things relating to the eternal welfare of my soul. When I wrote last to you, I had not been to church since my return, and as I believe I promised to give you an account of the motives which induced me to hear Mr. E—, I will say a few words on the subject—not that there can be the least benefit arising to you or me. Previous to Sunday, I had not heard Mr. E— but once, I think, for some months. In the morning I felt much exercised in mind about going to church; conscience seemed to say it is not the way the Lord has laid out for you to walk in. Mother was going, and it being too cold for father, I must either have gone or suffered mother to go alone. Mr. E. went through the service; all was dry and spiritless to me;

I will not say barren, for I believe what is not productive of good, is of evil. Now as to Mr. E.'s sermon. I do not wish to be severe, trusting that the Lord will enable me ever to bear in mind who it is that makes us differ. He took his text from Romans vi. 21, 22. From the words, you will be able to see that it was the Christian's life he wished to speak of, as well as of salvation by Jesus Christ; but it was a sad complicated discourse. At times he would allow that salvation by Christ was complete, but then he would not concede that any should trust to being made righteous in this way, without bringing some of their own doings. He further said, in speaking of the privileges enjoyed by those born in a Christian land, that all baptized infants were heirs of the kingdom of God and joint-heirs with Christ. No doubt you will be surprised that any minister could advance such a doctrine as this from the pulpit. I was astonished, and really, had I not heard for myself, scarcely could I have believed it possible. I have some reason to suppose this sermon was chiefly intended for my profit, having at different times, when in conversation with Miss E— spoken of the church service as well as of many of her ministers; and, in addition to this, last week I sent Nanny Carpenter the testimonial letters of Mr. Huntington. At times he bore hard on Antinomian principles. Some listened, he said, to the carnal reasoning of man, and perverted the scriptures to their own destruction. We received a visit from him this morning. Not a word was said. He was polite, as usual, to me; and very kindly said he hoped I did not take cold on Sunday. It is much to be lamented that men should stand up for ministers of Christ, who are strangers to the efficacy of the merits of the Saviour. Now it becomes a solemn consideration how in conscience I can sit under such a man's ministry. I see many difficulties present themselves to my leaving the church. I do not think father would object to my going to any Baptist chapel in F—; but how he would feel my forsaking them altogether, I know not. I would not desire to cause uncomfortable feelings in a house, could it be avoided, much less with those so near and dear to me; but what says the Saviour: "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." This is very plain and powerful language. What, my dear friends, can be done? To feel condemned in going to a place of worship is indeed bad; and really, under my present state of mind, I cannot, indeed I ought not to go. You will, I know, give me your advice. I hope this letter will not be the means of disturbing your peace of mind. If I thought it would, I would remain silent. These difficulties are not more than I expected; trials we must all have, more or less; and when we consider it is the concern of a never-dying soul we are seeking, surely we shall not count it too much. Have I not the greatest cause for thankfulness, that it has pleased the Lord to open my eyes, that I may see the things which belong to my everlasting peace? This, I trust, he has done. Has not the same gracious God promised to teach sinners the way unto him? May I ever be enabled to look to

him, feeling my own insufficiency. I must not say more on this subject. Father, I am sorry to say, is not so well the last two days. Sometimes I fear he will not live long. I cannot but be anxious about him. At times, really I feel more than I can express concerning his future state. I do not think him at all satisfied; indeed, I have heard him express himself so. We know that by nature we are all of us very proud; and unless the Lord bring down those high thoughts and proud looks, we cannot see our depravity. O may it be the will of God to manifest the blessings of salvation to him before he calls him from this world. Then our sorrow would not be without hope. Father's coldness to me is quite passed off, and he is as usual, very kind, and has several times asked me to read to him, which for some time past he did not. I was sorry to hear that Mr. P— had been unwell. May it please God to bless him with better health, and render his ministry a blessing to many. I must conclude, hoping your children are well. Desires to be remembered to all friends,

I remain, my dear Brother and Sister,

Yours in true affection,

March 18th, 1836.

E. HANCOCK.

MR. R. DREDGE TO MRS. HANCOCK, BEING AN
ANSWER TO THE PRECEDING.

My dear Sister,—We received yours with pleasure, and shall always be glad to hear from you at any time when you feel disposed to write. I am glad that you went to church, and that Mr. E. is in some faint measure made manifest to you. You have met with as clear and manifest a deliverance as Paul, and the Lord will, I have no doubt, be with and support you, whenever you are called upon to act faithfully as he was with Paul. Only read Paul's defence before the king and great men of the earth. I can assure you that, were I as young as you in the things of God, though I am not very old, and I am sure very ignorant, yet I should be more afraid of the F— religion than of Mr. E.'s. For my own part, I think there is not that in all F— which is worth going out of your garden-gate for. You have the book that the Lord blessed to your soul when you were delivered; I mean the bible, the best of all books, when the Lord by his Spirit shines upon it, which he will, from time to time, when you need it. It will not lead you astray or into error, which erroneous preachers may do, before you are aware of their craft. I believe the devil has more traps to catch the heaven-born soul with amongst his preachers, than he has in the open profligate world. Therefore, if you were to take my advice, you will stay away from them. I am convinced your soul will be more healthy, and you will fare better at home by reading. If the Lord bless his word, you cannot enjoy more if you were sitting under Mr. P—, or any other gospel preacher. Therefore, at present, situated as you are, I should keep at home, unless I could hear the gospel. I know those who have suffered

for years by hearing erroneous men. I think the nearer men come to truth and experience, and yet are not under the Holy Spirit's teaching, the more they are to be dreaded. If at any time you read or hear what does not accord with what the Lord has taught you, do not receive it, though seemingly it come from an angel's mouth. The gospel tells us "to take heed how we hear, and what we hear." To me it appears as though you and I were going over a narrow plank across a river, and that the Apostle was giving us his advice to take heed of every step, for there is danger of our falling. Depend upon it, the Apostle saw it necessary for the caution to be left on record. The passage out of Romans Mr. E. made the subject of his text, you could better understand than he: "What fruit had ye then in those things, whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death." My dear sister, what real fruit had you and I in any one thing that we ever attended to in our unregenerated state? Was not death written upon everything that we attended to? What were all our church and chapel goings? What was our going to the law for life, our being christened in our infancy, our taking the bread and wine, our prayers, our readings, our everything of the sort, that we were going to Christ with? "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." The 11th verse in the same chapter throws light upon this verse: "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Are we not "dead indeed unto sin?" Can we delight in the things that we once delighted in? Will the religion we once delighted in do for us now? Can the world charm us now, as it once did? O no! I seem to hear my dear sister say, "I lament that I have such a body of sin and death." This is as it should be; as all the saints of old have ever found it. They were alive unto God only through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Just as you found on that night when the Lord shone into your poor distressed heart, and you received him as a lost perishing sinner, so to the day of your death you must receive him in the same way, without any fitness for him on your part. Hart very beautifully says,

"All the fitness he requireth,
Is to feel your need of him.
This the gives you,
'Tis the Spirit's rising beam."

"But now, being made free from sin, and become servants of God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." Our experience, when we were delivered, was just the fulfilment of this verse. It is only regenerated persons who can enter into it. Did we not feel that we were made free from sin? and do we not feel it now, when the Lord appears to us? Are we not convinced that we are servants to God and not to the devil, whom we had all our life-time served? And is not our fruit unto holiness? The scriptures say, "From me is your fruit found;" and in Philippians, "being

filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ." My dear sister, there is no fruit out of Christ. What fruit you found in your poor soul when he filled it with his presence, when you saw the blood streaming from his side, and that blood spilt for a poor sinner like you? Would you have deprived him of any of his glory then in saving such a one? No; I know you would not. May you and I be kept to receive Him now, and at all times, just in the same way; then shall we find the end everlasting life. I hope that you and I shall be kept from adding to what Christ has finished; and so try to rob him of his glory. But where you can go to hear such things preached in your neighbourhood, I cannot inform you.

Since writing the foregoing, this morning, we have heard Mr. P— this afternoon from the following: "That I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." A very experimental discourse we had; it would have done you good to have heard it. Mr. P. said that there were those who would preach very nicely-worded sermons, one part doctrine, another experience, and the third precept. As for his part, his must be all experience from beginning to end, the same as he believed the bible to be; everything within the covers was the experience of the saints, if opened up to the mind by the Spirit. He said you may begin with Genesis. When God made the world, all was a chaos, till he made the sun to shine upon it. This sets forth man, dark and blind, till God shines into his soul. Election, &c.; what is all this, unless experienced in the heart? My dear sister, everything short of this is nothing worth; nothing but experimental preaching will suit me. Mr. P. said that every regenerated soul desired to know Christ and the power of his resurrection; but it was only to be known by the fellowship of his sufferings. If we felt it to-day, we want to feel it again to-morrow. But, he said, we should have it only by being brought into fellowship with him in his sufferings; for we must know something about suffering, before we shall long for the power. This I can set my seal to; it is indeed through tribulation that the Lord appears to the soul; for if we find nothing to distress us, we get barren, dry, and lifeless, and then the Lord sends us a cross. Then we look unto him, and he comes and saves us, and delivers us from our distress. You find yourself in a strait, and know not how to act. This you will often find; but you must go to him who has heard you before, and answered your requests. Ask counsel of him who is the mighty Counsellor, who makes crooked things straight, and rough places smooth, who gives strength to them that have no might, and power to the faint. He will direct you and establish your goings. But sometimes it is a long time before we can go to him in real simplicity, and a longer time before he seems to hear our poor breathings; but if our breathings go up from the heart, as Mr. P— said yesterday; if we can only sigh and mourn out our prayers, "Lord save us, Lord guide us, Lord protect us!" and so on,

from the heart, he would be sure to hear us, and answer us. For my own part, I believe such prayers to be acceptable, and the only prayers that are acceptable to God. It is the breathing of a contrite and broken-hearted sinner that God will not despise; but whole-hearted and clean-hearted hypocrites' prayers, we are told in scripture, are a stench in God's nostrils. Therefore may you and I be ever kept from uttering things to God that are not from our heart. O how it becomes poor sinners to be upright and sincere before God. I pray God that we may ever be kept so. I do not wonder at your feeling so anxious about your Father's eternal welfare. It seemed when the Lord began with me, I would have given the world if I could have brought my relations to see as I did; it seemed I could have laid down my life for them. Paul goes farther; he says that he almost wished himself accursed on account of his having no hope for his kinsmen after the flesh, viz., he almost wished that he had not had salvation himself; but this proceeded from his natural feelings. My dear sister, all that you can do for your parents is to pour out your soul to the same Almighty God, who snatched you as a brand from that pit that was ready to close its mouth upon you for ever. Who can tell, but that you may be made an instrument in convincing some of your relations? When you find your mind melted down by the goodness of God, I would speak out to them of what the Lord has done for you. I cannot help thinking that something of this sort was useful to you, when you were in Devizes in the summer. I found myself several times melted down when talking and reading to you. Then in private, I poured out my soul to God for you, and I think that my poor sighs did not fall to the ground. Now, my dear sister, as God heard a poor wretch like me, who can tell but that he may hear you in behalf of those that are near and dear to you? May God grant that both your parents may in very truth know what it is in this life to be passed from death unto life, and to have eternal life abiding in them; then I am sure they will never come into condemnation. I think it a good sign that you are exercised about your father. I recollect that I was so about a dear sister of mine, and I hope that the Lord has done something for her. O what debtors to God are poor sinners continually. O God, hold us up, and we shall be safe. Preserve us in our goings out and our comings in, in our lying down and our rising up. O God, our mercies are new every morning.

Since writing the foregoing, in which I have found some liberty, I have found myself dead, dark, benighted, wretched, miserable, and everything but what I would. Really sometimes I feel anything but fit society for my own family. These things are not in theory, but I have really felt them, and painful work it is. I suppose you are not altogether a stranger to them; but as you go along, you will find more and more of it. But I am sure these are the only things that keep us humble, and drive us to a right quarter. My dear sister,

Yours in affection,

Devizes, March 30th, 1836.

ROBERT DREDGE.

SEND FORTH THY LIGHT AND THY TRUTH.

Dear C—,—I began to wonder, but the arrival of your letter dispelled it. My health is somewhat better, but not quite restored. I desire to bear patiently what the just Lord sees desirable to lay upon me. My evil nature requires so much chastening and mortification, in order that a small measure of humility may be known to abide within. I fear that I have reason to apprehend,

“As every trial passeth o'er,
I may expect another as sore,
Perhaps a sorer yet,
As when the clouds begin to rise,
They blacker grow, and fill the skies,
And threaten ruin great.”

And but for his word, power, and never-failing faithfulness, I must give over the struggle, faint, and entirely sink. To get at divine and heavenly things, some men have been driven from their homes, and made to wander they knew not whither. John was banished to the Isle of Patmos; Bunyan was shut up in prison. Mr. Huntington was hated, despised, and deeply exercised. Luther says that temptation, meditation, and prayer, are necessary to make a minister of the word of the Lord. I have had my share of losses, crosses, and afflictions, yet still am a very unprofitable servant. I often think I must resign my pastoral charge, and betake me to the itinerant's life to find out the dry places where the waters of life flow scantily, and the flocks suffer. I often think I shall preach my present hearers all away, their desertion not arising by my faithfulness, but by the staleness and sameness of subject; yea, I often fancy they come, and go away disappointed, finding no dew or rain with the word. Last Saturday, I fainted, and my spirit sank within me, so that in my feelings it was as though I could not even make the attempt to begin. I cry, “Make haste, O Lord, and speedily help me, or I shall be as a dumb man before them.” O I could not have thought that I must be tortured in such a way as I am; but I still believe it to be needful, in order to keep life within me, and to enable me to preach life unto others. I once thought and said, By all good and pleasant things, I know I am right; but now I am necessitated by all that which is the reverse to judge of my state that it is right before the Lord and my Master Christ. We desire your acceptance of our poor love, and tender the same to all who know us in the Lord.

Wadhurst, July 17th, 1854.

W. C.

Whence was it that Esau tarried so long at hunting, that he was over-faint? that Jacob was making pottage just as Esau comes in, which set his appetite on edge after it, but that the purpose of God, according to election might stand? the elder must serve the younger; which now come to pass, by the sale of his birthright? and thus the providence of God makes even the profaneness of men subserve to his end.—*Coles.*

THE EXPERIENCE AND DEATH OF THE LATE
MR. JAMES CHURCHER, OF BROMLEY, KENT.

Dear and highly-esteemed Friend,—According to my promise I now give you an account of my late and much-beloved father.

Mr. James Churcher departed this life on Feb. 28th, 1838, in the 78th year of his age. He was a native of Tarring, a village near Worthing, Sussex. His parents were poor, but of honest, sober, and industrious habits, alike ignorant of learning and religion; nor have I ever ascertained that any one of his kindred had been raised by grace above the level of fallen nature. His father was a shepherd, and brought up his son to the same peaceful employment. My father, from a child, venerated the Church of England, but the name of a Whitefieldite (for such he took all dissenters to be) he held in abomination, and blindly determined never to mix with such people.

The following very remarkable circumstance took place in a ploughed field while he was a lad. The boy who drove the horses took the name of God in vain. The ploughman (who appears to have been a God-fearing man, and travelled far on Lord's Days to hear the word) sharply reprov'd him, and said, "Do you not know that for every idle word we must give account?" I never heard what effect this had upon the mind of the boy, but it was to my father "a nail fastened in a sure place," and the consideration that he should one day be called to give an account of his words and actions, was (under God) the means of his steady rectitude of conduct throughout his unregenerated state.

Some time after the above circumstance, a kind-hearted fellow-servant, a female, taught the rustic swain to make strokes and to form letters, an acquirement his parents had never attained, nor could they confer it upon their children, eight shillings weekly being found too little for any other purpose but supplying the coarsest necessaries of life. Parochial schools were not established at the period of which I write. At 19 years of age he sprained one of his ankles, and not being able to obtain the proper assistance, it was neglected, and so great was the injury, that he felt a weakness in that part till his death. This accident compelled him to leave his loved pastoral employment, and quit the South Downs, the scenes of his childhood and youth, and seek a less congenial business. He apprenticed himself to a shoemaker at Shoreham, a small seaport town, near Brighton. This apparently sad circumstance I have heard him mention even to his old age, as one of the links in the chain of that Divine Providence which attended him. Having served the specified term, he left Shoreham, and worked a short time at Littlehampton; but, deeming it important to acquire a still further knowledge of his trade, in order to commence business on his own account, he resolved to travel towards London, as the best source of information, his design being to return to the place of his nativity, and maintain his parents when they were past labour. This was a laudable motive. God, however, had appointed

otherwise. He journeyed on foot, and worked at Westerham, in Kent, then at Bromley, afterwards at London, where, by intense application, he secured the object of his pursuit. Here, although ignorant of himself as a sinner, he was kept from the immoralities which surrounded him. At this time Mr. Romaine was preaching in London. My father heard him on one occasion, but observed nothing which appeared in any way extraordinary, for, as Dr. Hawker, says, "He had neither eyes nor ears for Christ."

From London he went to Sydenham, where he obtained employment at his trade. He had not been there long before he was taken ill. A benevolent lady of the place, hearing that a stranger lay ill, sent him articles of nourishment by the hand of her servant-maid, and the acquaintanceship thus peculiarly commenced with the messenger of bounty, ripened into a well-grounded affection, and she became the partner in his joys, and the sharer of his sorrows. They were married at the parish church of Horsleydown, London, my father at this time being 25 years of age, my mother one year older. In the same parish my father commenced business, and here their first child, John, was born; but London not agreeing with my mother's health they left, and went to live at Bromley, Kent. In Bromley, Providence prospered them in business, and here they ended their days. Eight more children were added to their first, of whom two died in their infancy, of hooping-cough, and I have heard my father mention that the words of David in 2 Sam. xii. 23, were a support to his mind under the bereavement: "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." The remaining seven outlived both our parents, and on the day on which they had been married half-a-century, we all sat in a circle, the aged pair opposite each other, and their children placed in the order of their ages. It was a solemn, if not a silent meeting, affording an opportunity for meditation to each, on the *past*, the *present*, and the *future*.

My father having known the want of education in himself regarded it as a treasure for his children, and no sacrifice on his part was deemed too great to afford his children the means of acquiring knowledge. He would frequently work 19 hours a day, regardless of the injury he was inflicting upon his health, for the purpose of giving to his children what he deemed of so much importance; and these difficulties were enhanced by the extraordinary price of provisions. My eldest brother had by far the least, and yet profited most, and was a very great comfort to his parents from first to last. I may say to my shame, I profited least. I seemed incapable of learning, was disobedient, mischievous, and restless, a plague, pest, and torment, to my parents, possessing every evil propensity. I have often believed that had it not been for an unseen hand I should have met with an early death, either by my own hand or by the laws of my country.

The Sun of righteousness arose upon my father in the following manner: One Lord's Day, while sitting in the parish church of Bromley, Kent, under the "do as I say" preaching, Dr. Smith gave

out this text, "If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself, but if thou scornest, even thou alone shalt bear it." (Prov. ix. 12.) This arrow from Jehovah's quiver entered his heart, and his own Pharisaical righteousness gave way. He found the commandment exceedingly broad, and sank into distress. At this time he heard a sermon from 1 Peter iii. 15: "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you." "Ah!" he said, "what hope have I? Had I been alive when Christ was on earth I would have followed him, but now there is no hope." Bromley at this time was dark—indeed, "like priest like people." The so-called Reverend Doctor was well known to be a slave to his bottle, was fond of hunting, and declared he would not believe that Jesus Christ is God if an angel from heaven told him so. (This man held two livings.) There was no place of worship besides the parish church; when Mr. Wills and others came and sounded an alarm by preaching in the open air. Tin kettles were beaten to drown their voices, and stones and mud were thrown at them; and the doctor enjoyed the sport. The ringleader pointed to him, saying, "That is the man who set me to work." The doctor, however, had the mortification to see a chapel built on the spot; this happened in the year 1788. My father was one of the subscribers, which shows that his prejudice in favor of high church was gone.

In 1790, when an Independent Church was formed, he became a member; but their minister was one of those who, as Bunyan says, "would cry out against sin in the pulpit, and yet abide it well enough in the heart, house, and conversation;" and his end appeared to be according to his works. Well, this wolf in sheep's clothing constantly preached "duty faith," and what he called "progressive sanctification;" but my father was laboring under the spirit of bondage, daily feeling himself growing worse; as Paul says, "The law worketh wrath," and "by the law is the knowledge of sin." When others rose to sing, he would sit and inwardly groan. Still it was some years before he discovered where the mistake lay, but strove hard to get holier in himself, but in vain, till at length these words came to his mind with power, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean, not one;" and "How can he be clean that is born of a woman?" (Job xiv. 4; xxv. 4.) "Ah!" he said, "who, indeed, Job?" By this the Lord gave him more understanding than his teachers, and he at length mentioned the conviction of his mind to the pastor, who, by way of contempt, replied, "You are a Huntingtonian!" This required consideration, as my father had never heard of that despised but honored servant of God, and thought it some awful epithet. Still my father's influence seems to have been considerable in the church, for Mr. E. felt himself driven to desperate measures. He gave away their chapel to the London Itinerant Society, declaring, "that as they could not hear him, they should not have those they would like to have." Soon after this he disposed of the sheepskin for ever, "for his end was according to his works." (Prov. vii. 26.)

The new supplies did not afford my father the satisfaction he was seeking, and the following words resting upon his mind, "I will give you pastors after my own heart, who shall feed you with knowledge and understanding," he thought it might not be just at his own door, but might be at some other place; and hearing that Mr. Huntington was expected to preach one evening at Deptford, six miles from Bromley, he ventured to hear him, thinking Mr. Huntington could not be worse than *he* felt himself to be. Mr. Huntington's text was Psalm lxxxv. 10—13: "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven. Yea, the Lord shall give that which is good; and our land shall yield her increase. Righteousness shall go before him, and shall set us in the way of his steps." My father was struck with the exquisite beauty of the subject; it was the first time he had heard the harmony of the Divine attributes, in the plan of salvation, set forth, and the work of the Holy Ghost described, in setting a redeemed sinner's feet in the way of peace. His soul cleaved to the divine truths he heard, and from that day he never disclaimed the name of a Huntingtonian.

Mr. Hart's hymns at this time fell into his hands, having heard one given out; it was the 56th, O. E.,

"Let us ask the important question."

This hymn discovered wonders to him, showing the absolute necessity of a personal knowledge of interest in Christ. His esteem for that book was so great that he would often quote the words of David, respecting Goliath's sword, "There is none like it." Subsequently he cast in his lot with the Lord's people at Deptford; and as the pulpit was supplied with such men as Mr. Olive, Mr. Barret, Mr. Oxenham, &c., on Lord's Days, he travelled on foot, accompanied, as much as circumstances would admit, by his wife and children. He seldom heard without profit, although the encouragement he obtained frequently left him ere he left the chapel. He felt repeatedly raised to hope, but before his deliverance took place he sank into despondency to so dreadful a degree, that he feared the earth would open and that he should sink into hell. His sons and daughters could not discover his malady. One neighbour said, "We shall soon have him shoulder high," and the mere professors of Bromley cast out his name as evil; his strict observance of the Lord's Day and family prayer, marking him out as an object of their ridicule. Truly did the prophet say, "He that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey;" and, as Paul says, "He endured a great fight of afflictions." One abandoned youth discharged a loaded musket at him, as he stood at his cutting board in his front shop. True, it was only charged with mud and small stones, yet it smashed the window, and left marks of the outrage upon my father's apparel, which he would not suffer for some time to be removed. (Shall I trace this youth? First I see him a profligate; then I hear he has broken his thigh; then his son, at thirteen years of age, dies by his own hand; then his wife leaves him for life; and

now he much resembles the ancient fugitive.) (Gen. iv. 12 ; Zech. ii. 8.) But in that same house, and in that identical room, the Lord was graciously pleased to set his soul at happy liberty, by speaking home the following words with power to his heart: "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." (Rom. x. 4.) "And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." (Acts xiii. 39.) "He shall magnify the law and make it honorable." (Isaiah xlii. 21.) Here he found what he had so long been seeking. The burden of guilt was removed from his mind, together with the fears of death, and love, joy, and peace, sweetly flowed into his soul, the tears streamed from his eyes, and he blessed and praised the Lord.

But as the "heart knows its own bitterness, and a stranger intermeddeth not with its joy," who can describe what he felt of the one or of the other? I am most happy to say that, although now dead, he still speaks for himself, in a letter addressed by him, soon after the above memorable circumstance, to his widowed mother and brethren, in Sussex, they having sent him word of the death of his father, which took place by accident, having and mentioned that he had partaken of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper before he expired. The following is a copy :

Dear Brother,—I received yours, and am sorry to hear of the affliction of our mother. I hope she is now better. Affliction in this life is not all; "Death must come, and after death the judgment." Job says, "Man dieth and wasteth away, yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?" A very awful consideration! for if we die in the state in which we were born into this world, the Saviour tells us we "cannot see the kingdom of God," much less enter therein again, except ye be converted, &c.; and, "except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." We are all born under the law and under the curse; as it is written, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them;" "we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God;" "therefore condemnation is passed upon all, for that all have sinned."

Perhaps you will ask, as the people did Peter, when he preached his first sermon after the Holy Ghost was given, "What must we do to be saved?" and I must answer, as he did, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and ye shall be saved; for there is no other name given under heaven, amongst men, whereby we must be saved;" and, "He is exalted, a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins, through faith in his blood." It is not enough to give our assent or consent to the word of God, neither is it enough to go to church or chapel, or to join ourselves to any society amongst men; since, "without faith it is impossible to please God, for whatsoever is not of faith is sin." And what an awful thing it is for the clergy to administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper to persons going out of the world, which is to them a strong delusion, so that they cannot see the snares of Satan, nor the lies of men, but depart, thinking all will be well, as they are taught, whereas, according to the Scriptures, it will be otherwise. This I am fully convinced of, since my understanding has been enlightened to see, and my conscience quickened to feel sin, in its consequences, as exposing me to the wrath of God in a broken law, shut up in bondage and unbelief, and by no means able to get rid of that heavy burden, which was too heavy for me to bear of myself; as Solomon says, "A man may sustain his infirmities, but a wounded spirit who can bear?"

After being many years in soul trouble and distress, supported and kept by an invisible power, and thinking at times, by the distress I felt, I should sink

into hell before death, I was led to search the word of God, and to pray that God would open my mind to understand the Scriptures; and he showed me that I could do nothing of myself, whereby I could be saved. I could not believe in Christ, to the saving of my soul, nor repent with that repentance which is unto life; for faith and repentance are the gift of God; as says the Saviour, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Jesus Christ whom he hath sent." Now when faith came, and brought to my soul the benefits of Christ's life, obedience, sufferings, and death, my guilt was removed, and I found there is redemption in his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, and that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. This is that "experience that worketh hope," and that "hope that maketh not ashamed, having the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost," given to all the Lord's redeemed people. In this faith I desire to live and to die, and never to glory, "save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is, in some measure, crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

Thus, my dear friends, I have given you, in a small degree, a reason for the hope that is in me. Perhaps you will say I write mysteries, but it is all "plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge." As God says, "I will bring the blind by a way they know not, and will lead them in paths that they have not known. I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight, and rough places plain. These things will I do unto them and not forsake them."

I must conclude, praying that God will bless these few lines to your poor souls, for I can say, with Paul, "my heart's desire and prayer to God for you all is, that you may be saved," so that, if we never see each other again in the flesh, we may have a happy meeting in a brighter and better world, where the inhabitants shall not say, "I am sick."

Bromley, Kent.

I am, dear brother, yours affectionately,

JAMES CHURCHER.

(To be continued.)

That one covenant assurance, (Lam. ii. 31,) "The Lord will not cast off for ever," is quite sufficient to keep from despair a convinced backslider who sees no light. He may cast off, but not for ever.

God promises to be gracious to sinners at the voice of their cry, and to wipe away their tears of sorrow. Matters, both within and without, being adverse, or running contrary, and these being uppermost in the mind, and always before our eyes, are called sorrowful meat, the bread of adversity, or bread of mourners; while the boiling of inbred corruption, the overwhelming floods of guilt, and Satan's rage, are called waters of affliction.—*Huntington.*

Has God given you genius and learning? It was not that you might amuse or deck yourself with it, and kindle a blaze which should only serve to attract and to dazzle the eyes of men. It was intended to be the means of leading both yourself and them to the Father of lights. And it will be your duty, according to the peculiar turn of that genius and capacity, either to endeavour to improve and adorn human life, or by a more direct application of it to divine subjects, to plead the cause of religion, to defend its truths, to enforce and recommend its practice, to deter men from courses which would be dishonorable to God and fatal to themselves, and to try the utmost efforts of all the solemnity and tenderness with which you can close your addresses, to lead them into the paths of virtue and happiness.—*Doddridge.*

R E V I E W.

The History of an Idol, its Rise, Reign, and Progress. London: Simpkin and Marshall. 1849. 1s. 6d.

IDOLATRY is a sin very deeply rooted in the human heart. We need not go very far to find of this the most convincing proofs. Besides the experience of every age and every clime, we find it where we should least expect it—the prevailing sin of a people who had the greatest possible proofs of its wickedness and folly, and the strongest evidences of the being, greatness, and power of God. It amazes us sometimes in reading the history of God's ancient people, as recorded in the inspired page, that after such wondrous and repeated displays of his presence, glory, and majesty, they should again and again bow down before stocks and stones. That those who had witnessed all the plagues of Egypt, had passed through the Red Sea by an express miracle, were daily living on manna that fell from heaven and water that gushed out of the rock, who had but to look upward by day to behold the pillar of the cloud, and by night the pillar of fire to manifest the presence of Jehovah in their midst—that this people, because Moses delayed coming down from the Mount, should fall down before a golden calf, and say, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt," does indeed strike our minds with astonishment. And that this sin should break forth in them again and again through their whole history down to the period of the Babylonish captivity, in spite of all the warnings of their prophets, all the terrible judgments of God, all their repeated captivities, and, what would be far more likely to cure it, all their repeated deliverances, does indeed show, if other proof were wanting, that it is a disease deeply rooted in the very constitution of fallen man.

If this be the case, unless human nature has undergone a change, of which neither scripture nor experience affords any evidence, the disease must be in the heart of man *now* as much as ever; and if it exist, it must manifest itself, for a constitutional malady can no more be in the soul and not show itself, than there can be a sickness in the body without evident symptoms of illness. It is true that the disease does not break out exactly in the same form. It is true that golden calves are not now worshipped, at least the calf is not, if the gold be, nor do Protestants adore images of wood, brass, or stone. But that rank, property, fashion, honor,* the opi-

* We have been much struck with one circumstance connected with the present war—the idolatry paid to honor. A father loses his son in the hospital of Scutari of fever or cholera. His lamentation is not for the youth's soul, but that he did not fall in battle. Another loses his first born at Alma or Inkerman. His balm is, that he was shot down as he was hurraing on his men. A colonel's widow has her son's name mentioned with honor in the despatches. If she had twenty sons, for such a distinction she would send them all to the Crimea. The only scion of an ancient house, just after he has captured a flag, falls mortally wounded. The colonel of the regiment sends the flag to his family, and it is hung up in the ancient hall to dry the tears of the grey-haired parents. A step in rank, a medal, a ribbon, a word

nion of the world, with everything which feeds the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, are as much idolised now as Baal and Moloch were once in Judea, and Juggernaut now is in the plains of Hindostan is true beyond all contradiction.

But what is *idolatry*? To answer this question, let us ask another. What is an *idol*? Is not this the essence of the idea conveyed by the word, that an idol occupies that place in our esteem and affections, in our thoughts, words, and ways, in our dependence and reliance, in our worship and devotedness, which is due to God only? Whatever is to us what the Lord alone should be, *that* is to us an idol. It is true that these idols differ almost as widely as the peculiar propensities of different individuals. But as both in ancient and modern times the grosser idols of wood and stone were and are beyond all calculation in number, variety, shape, and size, so is it in these inner idols of which the outer are mere symbols and representations. Nothing has been too base or too brutal, too great or too little, too noble or too vile, from the sun walking in its brightness to a snake, a monkey, an onion, a bit of rag, which man has not worshipped. And these intended representations of Divinity were but the outward symbols of what man inwardly worshipped; for the inward idol preceded the outward, and the fingers merely carved what the imagination had previously devised. The gross material idol, then, whether an Apollo, "the statue which enchants the world," or a negro fetish, is but a symbol of the inner mind of man. In that inner mind there are certain feelings and affections, as well as traditional recollections, which sin has perverted and debased, but not extinguished. Such are, a sense of a divine Creator, a dread of his anger and justice, a dim belief in a state after death of happiness or misery, an accountability to him for our actions, and a duty of religious worship. From this natural religion in the mind of man, a relic of the fall, sprang the first idea of idolatry; for the original knowledge of God being lost, the mind of man sought a substitute, and that substitute is an idol, the word, like the similar term "image," signifying a shape or figure, a representation or likeness of God. Against this, therefore, the second commandment in the Decalogue is directed. Now, this idea of representing God by some visible image being once established by the combined force of depraved intellect and conscience, the debased mind of man soon sought out channels for its

from the Queen, mention in parliament, a newspaper paragraph, are considered ample recompenses for the greatest privations, dangers, wounds, sickness, and death itself. If there were an image at the head of every regiment, and on the poop of every ship, before which daily sacrifice was made, and daily prayer offered, there could be no greater idolatry than is now paid to the unseen but all-influential image—Honor. We do not wish it were otherwise, for men being what they are, and needing both a powerful stimulus as well as a guiding rule, if honor were gone, every noble principle distinct from religion, which is the noblest of all principles, would be gone; but we note the fact, and looking beyond time into eternity, feel what a miserable balm honor is for a dying bed, and what a poor refuge in the great judgment day from the frowns of an angry God.

lusts and passions to run in which religion might consecrate; and thus the devilish idea was conceived and carried out, to make a god of sin. Thus bloodshed, lust, theft, with every other crime, were virtually turned into gods named Mars, Venus, Mercury, and so on; and then came the horrible conclusion, that the more sin there was committed, the more these gods were honored. Need we wonder at the horrible debasement of the heathen world, and the utter prostration of moral principle produced by the worship of idols, or at the just abhorrence and wrath of God against idolatry?

But we need not dwell on this part of the subject. There is another form of idolatry much nearer home; the idolatry not of an ancient Pagan or a modern Hindoo, but that of a Christian. Idolatry is the very breath of the carnal mind. All that "the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts," desires, thirsts after, is gratified by, or occupied with, is its idol; and so far as a Christian is under the influence of this carnal mind, this old man, this evil heart of unbelief, this fallen Adam nature, this body of sin and death—all which are Scripture terms to express one and the same thing, he bows down to the idol set up in the chambers of imagery.

There is an old Latin proverb, that "love and a cough are two things impossible to be concealed;" and thus, though an idol may be hidden in the heart as carefully as Laban's teraphim in the camels' furniture, or the ephod and molten image in the house of Micah, (Judges xviii. 14,) yet it will be discovered by the love shown to it as surely as the suppressed cough of the consumptive patient cannot escape the ear of the Brompton Hospital physician. Nor need we go far, if we would but be honest with ourselves, to find out each our own idol—what it is, and how deep it lies, what worship it obtains, what honor it receives, and what affection it engrosses. Let me ask myself, "What do I most love?" If I hardly know how to answer that question, let me put to myself another, "What do I most think upon? In what channel do I usually find my thoughts flow when unrestrained? for thoughts flow to the idol as water to the lowest spot in a field. If, then, the thoughts flow continually to the farm, the shop, the business, the investment, to the husband, wife, or child; to that which feeds lust or pride, worldliness or covetousness, self-conceit or self-admiration—that is the idol which, as a magnet, attracts the thoughts of the mind towards it. Your idol may not be mine, nor mine yours; and yet we may both be idolaters. You may despise or even hate my idol, and wonder how I can be such a fool or such a sinner as to hug it to my bosom; and I may wonder how a partaker of grace can be so inconsistent as to love such a silly idol as yours. You may condemn me, and I condemn you; and the word of God's grace and the verdict of a living conscience condemn us both. O how various and how innumerable those idols are! One man may possess a refined taste and educated mind. Books, learning, literature, languages, general information, shall be his idol. Music, vocal and instrumental, may be the idol of a second;

so sweet to his ears, such inward feelings of delight are kindled by the melodious strains of voice or instrument, that music is in all his thoughts, and hours are spent in producing those harmonious sounds which perish in their utterance. Painting, statuary, architecture, the fine arts generally, may be the Rimmon or Baal, the dominating passion of a third. Poetry, with its glowing thoughts, burning words, passionate utterances, vivid pictures, melodious cadence, and sustained flow of all that is beautiful in language and expression, may be the delight of a fourth. Science, mathematical or mechanical, the eager pursuit of a fifth. These are the highest flights of the human mind; these are not the base idols of the pipe and glass, the low jest, the mirthful supper, or even that less debasing but enervating idol, sleep and indolence, as if life's highest enjoyments were those of the swine in the sty. An idol is not to be admired for its beauty or loathed for its ugliness, but to be hated because it is an idol. You middle-class beings, who despise art and science, language and learning, as you despise the alehouse and skittle-ground, may still have an idol. Your garden, your beautiful roses, your verbenas, fuchsias, and dahlias, wanting all the care and attention of a babe in arms, may be your idol; or your pretty children, so admired as they walk in the street; or your new house and all the new furniture; or your son who is getting on so well in business; or your daughter so comfortably settled in life; or your dear husband so generally respected, and just now doing so nicely in the farm; or your own still dearer self that wants so much feeding, and dressing, and attending to—who shall count the thousands of idols which draw to themselves those thoughts, and engross those affections which are due to the Lord alone? You may not be touched: Your idol may be so hidden, or so peculiar, that all our attempts to touch it have left you and it unscathed. Will you therefore conclude that you have none? Search deeper, look closer; it is not too deep for the eye of God, nor too hidden for the eye of a tender conscience anointed with divine eye-salve. Hidden love is the deepest of all love; hidden diseases the most incurable of all diseases. Search every fold of your heart till you find it. It may not be so big nor so ugly as your neighbour's; but an idol is still an idol, and an image still an image, whether so small as to be carried in the waistcoat pocket, or as large as the Colossus at Rhodes.

But it is time to introduce to the notice of our readers the little work at the head of the present Article. We have read it with much interest as a piece of spiritual anatomy. The rise, progress, history, and fall of the writer's idol is traced out with the greatest clearness and the most minute, though not tedious or strained, accuracy. And there is, besides, an honesty of confession, and, in many places, a tenderness and depth of feeling, which to those who know what an idol is, and have felt its power, come very close home. The idol which cost the writer so much grief and pain, which reigned so long, wielded such sway, and cast down, again

resumed its seat till dethroned, as he hopes, for ever, was of a very peculiar nature, and one which to the great bulk probably of our readers would be no idol at all—*love of painting*. None but an artist, or one possessed of that refined taste for works of art which makes him an enthusiastic admirer of them, can enter into the sway and power such an idol exercises over the mind. This taste must have been born with the writer, for it early manifested itself, gained more and more force, and when the Lord quickened his soul, was the daily and hourly besetment, the passion and the plague, the delight and the torment, the lust and the grief of his life for many years; in a word, the *idol* which, as the carnal or spiritual mind prevailed, he set up in the chambers of imagery or broke to pieces, kissed or hugged or hurled from him with indignation, took into his bosom or threw upon the dunghill. Most graphically and feelingly has he described these changes, and this with the honesty of his confessions and the minute, unsparing self-anatomy, which run through the whole work, render it not only very interesting as a piece of autobiography, but full of warning, instruction, reproof, and counsel to those who are entangled in the same snare, and are setting up an idol in the secret chambers of imagery.

It was our intention to conclude the subject in the present Number; but the rest of the Review, whilst still in manuscript, as well as the book itself, from which we had marked numerous extracts, having unhappily been lost in their transit to London through the Post Office, and as this occurred too late to repair the loss, we are unavoidably compelled to defer to another month the further considerations of "The History of an Idol;" and this must be our apology for our present abrupt and unfinished termination.

When the Lord's children see their coats wearing out then their fears arise that they shall not get others. Now, if the Lord were to give you ten coats, make you wear them all, and send you a journey of 100 miles, how glad you would be if you had but one coat.—*W. T.*

The new creature, as it comes from God, so it exists in him, and lives upon him, and it is natural to it to seek its nourishment where it had its original; nothing can satisfy it, but that great deep from whence it sprang; as a new-born child, that has not the use of reason, will hunt for the breast by natural instinct, and not be quiet without it.—*Elisha Coles.*

Nothing more effectually tends to banish virtue, and introduce all manner of vice into a nation, than the indulged public profanity of the Lord's Day. The Christian Sabbath, and all the ordinances to be observed in it, are calculated to promote the knowledge, belief, and impression of the existence, infinity, supreme authority, unbounded wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth of God, and of his future judgment of the world, and the infinitely important and everlasting consequences of it. Such views, belief, and impressions are the most powerful deterrents from vice, and excitements to virtue of every kind.—*John Brown.*

POETRY.

ZION'S PATH.

O when sorrows press upon me,
And the Saviour hides his face,
Everything seems out of order,
Everything seems out of place,
Satan and my feelings tell me
I am destitute of grace.

Hundreds with a dead assurance,
Settle down upon their lees,
Say if they are but elected
They can do just as they please;
Frames and feelings don't distress
them ;
Thus presumption dwells at ease.

What an easy path to walk in,
Such an one I cannot find,
Jesus there would never let me,
If my heart were so inclined.
Trials tear me from that refuge
Sorrows hurl it to the wind.

Frames and feelings, are not Jesus,
Yet to Zion I would tell,
Whosoever is without them
Travels on the road to hell ;
Better far to fear than trifle,
Dead assurance ends not well.

Lew Down, Devon.

Very well do I remember,
When conviction's arrow came,
Split my carnal hopes asunder,
Rent and tore my feeble frame,
Stripped me of Arminianism,
Showed my nakedness and shame.

Nor the less do I remember
When the Saviour pardoned me,
Wrapp'd me in the wedding garment,
In his spotless purity.
Blessed feeling, not forgotten,
There stands my Security.

Let who will or may laugh at them,
I can never, never rest
If I've not my Saviour's presence
Onward through the wilderness.
When I prove his righteous absence,
Nothing gives me more distress.

Un'ried souls in dead assurance,
Call it "dung-gate" if you please;
But I fear you are not walking
In poor Zion's heaven-bound ways.
Those must pass through tribulation,
Here they cannot dwell at ease.

R. B.

There is no desertion of the saints that we read of, but there is as much of Christ in it as gives it some taste and smell of heaven. Heaven is stamped upon the hell of the saints ; life is written on their death ; their grave and dead corpse do breathe out life and glory ; their ashes and dust smell of immortality and resurrection to life. Even when Christ is gone from the church, he leaves a pawn or a pledge behind him, as love-sickness for the want of him.—*Rutherford*.

If the earthly Canaan, which was only a transitory inheritance, was unattainable by human merit ; if even worldly possessions are not given us for our own righteousness sake ; who shall dare to say that heaven itself is the purchase of our own righteousness ! If our works cannot merit even the vanquishing conveniences and supplies of time, how is it possible, that we should be able to merit the endless riches of eternity ?—*Toplady*.

The appellation of children, not only implies a perfect equality in all of that description in a family, but also all being passive in the appointment. Children, born to an inheritance, are equally born, and equally obtain it as a gift. The heir of a kingdom, or the child of a cottage are alike begotten to it without any act of either ; and very eminently so in the heirs of grace, they are all alike declared to be born, "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."—*Hawker*.

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NOTES OF AN UNPUBLISHED SERMON,
PREACHED BY MR. H. FOWLER, ON LORD'S DAY MORNING,
MARCH 9, 1823, AT GOWER STREET CHAPEL, LONDON.

“He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.”—JOB v. 19.

THESE words the Holy Ghost spake by the mouth of Eliphaz the Temanite, who, although a legal preacher, was a good man, which gives us reason to hope that there are some legal ministers in our own day who, in the main, are good men. This may be seen in this kingdom by an observant person, if he have much acquaintance with the church and the world. God gave this testimony concerning Eliphaz and his two friends, “that they had not spoken of him the thing that was right, as his servant Job had;” yet he appointed a sacrifice to be made for them, as a token that he forgave their folly; and it is added, “the Lord also accepted Job.” (Job xlii. 7–9.)

There are not two ministers alike in their talents and usefulness. Yet who shall heap contempt upon Thomas because he had not so great a share of gifts as John, nor made those he had so useful to the church? It is an insult offered to him who divides to every one of his servants severally as he will. A man cannot be a judge of his own usefulness so as to gather from it that he is called to preach; for instance, he may think his ministry has been blessed to such a hearer; and yet, as time and circumstances revolve, may be sorry he ever knew that person. In a variety of cases a minister cannot be a competent judge of his own usefulness. I believe every one of God's ministers has a special promise given to him in regard to his ministerial work. I know I had before I set foot in this chapel. You may ask what it was. I will tell you: “I will make thee unto this people a fenced brazen wall, and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee, for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee.” (Jer. i. 19.) That is the passage, and you may extract as much sweetness from it as I have, and ten thousand times more if you can. I have seen it fulfilled in many instances, and shall in more. A man may not have one seal to his ministry, and yet not have just ground to believe that he is not called to preach. Noah was a preacher of righteousness all the time the ark was building; yet I do not know that one soul was saved by it. The servant of God feeds in his own soul

on the things he delivers, and does the work he is called unto, as says the prophet Isaiah: "Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord." Nevertheless, in one way or other, every one of God's ministers is a real blessing to the church.

In speaking from the text, I shall not pretend exactly to determine what is the meaning of the Holy Ghost in the words; but I will, by the help of God, tell you of six troubles out of which the Lord delivers his people, and of a seventh in which there shall no evil touch them.

1. The first trouble I shall speak of is that which arises from a *discovery of the ignorance, darkness, and blindness* in which all mankind are by nature; and this is not like any other darkness experienced by God's people after they are brought to a saving knowledge of the truth. It is an entire ignorance of the Author and of his plan of salvation, an alienation from the life of God, a being without hope, and without God in the world; it is a darkness which may be felt; but till this discovery be made, so blinded are all men by Satan, that they think they can find the way to heaven at any time if they set about it. But now the soul knows nothing good, nor where to find any; and this is the cause of his trouble; the sins also of his past life and his depraved nature cause him to fear eternal damnation. But out of this trouble the Lord delivers him by making known to his soul the plan of his glorious salvation. He now views the truth made known as great and precious, and finds such discoveries of the love and mercy of God as he never before thought of: "Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord."

2. Another trouble that the Lord delivers his people out of is, that which they bring upon themselves *by making too free with what they have experienced*; they are so full of zeal, and are so liable to go to extremes, being desirous of doing good if possible. Satan, the arch-hypocrite is glad to meet with a young prattler, whose heart has lately been enlarged, that he may make him his prey. I once thought of going to Otaheite to convert the heathen; and on one occasion took the third chapter of John's gospel and the third of Galatians, to convert two aged persons, a parent and a friend. I read the chapter, and explained them as I saw them; I thought as they were so plain to me, they would be equally so to them; but I had as little effect upon their minds as water thrown against a rock would have to split it.

3. Another trouble out of which the Lord delivers his people is *opposition and persecution*. Often a man's relatives dislike his new religion, and show it by depriving him of family privileges, perhaps of his right of property, and render him the jeer and jest of other people: "Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word; your brethren that hated you, and cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified." Those that hate God's people, and cast them out, say, "Let the Lord be glorified. As for your new religion, election and the like, they dishonor God, and

make him unjust. What glory can it be to God to pass by so many, and take, as you say, so few? To pass by your parents and kindred, and take you, to be sure, as though you were better than they. O no! let the Lord be glorified, in returning to all that you have turned your back upon; recant, and come back, and let the Lord be glorified; but don't set yourself up for somebody, and by so doing condemn everybody else." Some have been thus cast out of the church they belonged to, and out of their affections. Now, observe the promise in the text I am speaking upon: "But he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed." Whose joy? They that cast you out? O no! but to the joy of them that are cast out; and they that cast them out shall be ashamed. Jesus, when the Jews had cast out the man whose eyes he had opened, found him, made himself known to him as the Son of God, and the man said, "I believe," and worshipped him; yet the Jews had cast him out, and in derision of Christ, had said, "Give God the praise."

Again. A man's employers may oppress him because of his religion, and perhaps turn him out of their employment, which may cause him trouble; but take notice how the Lord punishes the enemies of his people. I have known some who, upon a bed of sickness, have sent for those they have persecuted to ask their forgiveness and prayers. How soon may the Lord send an affliction, and cut off the person in the midst of his rage and fury; or perhaps cause a horse to throw its rider. There was Pharaoh, an oppressor, in all the confidence of power, driving his chariot furiously after Israel. The Lord made a way for his people through the sea. Pharaoh followed. When Israel had arrived safely on the other side, the Lord caused the sea to return, and overwhelmed their foes in the midst of the deep. Moses and the children of Israel sung to the Lord, saying, "I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he cast into the sea."

Moreover, the Lord can change the heart of the greatest persecutor you have, and bring him into the same state of mind you are now in, as is seen in the case of Paul, that fierce persecutor of the church. God struck him from his horse, and brought him to cry, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" It was soon told that he prayed, and that he preached the faith he labored before to destroy.

My dear old friend, John Radford, in a book he has lately published, mentions the following circumstance: "A farmer's widow went to hear the preachers in Mr. Whitefield's connexion. Her son, who carried on the business for her, aware of the reproach which was likely to ensue to the family, advised her to discontinue her attendance; but, finding he could not succeed in his entreaties, he threatened if she went again, he would follow her into the chapel with a knife, and there become her executioner. His mother, putting her trust in God, went as usual, which so exasperated her son that, with his sharpened knife, he entered after her, determined to perpetrate the horrid act, when, the terrors of God seized him, and, throwing down the knife, confessed to the congregation what had been his intention, and how he had been restrained. Subsequently

he became, by the grace of God, a preacher of the gospel in that same chapel. He never lost sight of this mercy, for he would seldom preach a sermon without mentioning these words:

“O to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrain'd to be.”

This event occurred about five miles from Norwich 56 years ago.

4. Another trouble out of which the Lord delivers his people is that caused by *the fear of death*. You read of “them who were through fear of death all their lifetime subject to bondage.” How different are such from persons in a state of nature, who often speak of death in as trifling a manner as they will talk upon any other subject; or, like the mad man who plays with fire, they sport with what others are afraid of. The awakened soul hears with alarm the funeral knell, or of the execution or suicide of his fellow-creatures. He sees the passing bier. “Ah!” he says, “there is one more gone to his long home.” He thinks also of himself, knowing that this condition must shortly be his own. He contemplates eternal death, and dreads it. The promise to such is, “Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall;” under which sweet influence the child of God is enabled to look beyond this dreary scene unto the rest which remaineth to the people of God.

5. Another trouble out of which the Lord delivers his people is connected with *their striving to keep the law*. While you are under the law, the more you strive, the more power will sin have over you, because it is *for* life, and not *from* life; therefore, though you resolve to keep it again and again, you must always fail:

“The more I strove against sin's power,
I sinn'd and stumbled but the more.”

Said Mr. Cennick, in his sweet hymn, “The law is our schoolmaster until Christ; but when faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster;” the soul does not now want to go to school to the law. Sin has a sting, deadening as the touch of the torpedo. If a man could outwardly walk consistently with the law, he is yet under its curse. I knew a man in whose life and character you could not find a blemish, who, after being deacon of a church for 30 years, fell into the damnable errors of Winchester, and died in the strongholds of that opposer of God. Though a man might see hell's door open, and damnation as the punishment of sin, yet the devil and sin would drive him headlong in, if grace prevent not:

“Law and terrors, do but harden,
All the while they work alone.”

Paul says, “We are delivered from the law wherein we were held.” But it is “not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.” There is no hope of salvation by the works of the law, “for cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them;” and “who-

soever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." Nor do the Lord's people get deliverance till their eye is directed to Jesus: "they looked unto him, and were lightened, and their faces" (did shine; or, as in our translation,) "were not ashamed."*

6. Another trouble out of which the Lord delivers his people is caused by *their apprehension of the terrors and wrath of God*. You may see it mentioned in many places in the bible; such as, "the terrors of the Almighty;" "When thou with rebukes dost chasten man for his iniquity, thou causeth his comeliness to turn into corruption." David personates Christ when he says, "Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts; all thy waves and thy billows have gone over me." It was from the beginning Satan's aim to persuade men either that there is no hell, or that they shall not go into it. He began in Eden. He there first gave the word of God the lie, saying, "Ye shall not surely die." He now sends some to preach there is no hell; others to deny the whole volume of revelation; and others to preach there is a chance for all men to be saved: "Ye shall not surely die." Many believe that God is too merciful to take vengeance on them for such sins as they have committed. But Dr. Young speaks truly when he says, "A God all mercy were a God unjust." No one can describe all the horrid temptations which come from Satan to distress and trouble a child of God, who nevertheless is enabled to cry to the Lord for deliverance. Satan trembles when a saint prays. If Satan knew you were going to hell, he would not thus torment you. But no one who has ever prayed from his inmost soul to be delivered from hell and the devil, shall ever go there. The Lord will enable such to sing with Toplady:

"The terrors of law and of God
With me can have nothing to do;
My Saviour's obedience and blood,
Hide all my transgressions from view."

Thus the Lord delivers his people out of one trouble after another, and gives them to rejoice in his mercy; but they soon forget his delivering hand, and want trouble to bring them to their senses again.

7. I shall now speak of the seventh trouble, and, as I promised, show what it does and what it does not touch. It comprises *the trial of faith*. To this some of God's people are liable, while some are not. The diving thief was not, for his sins were pardoned, and he was taken that same day to paradise. Hart thus speaks of it:

"When all this is done, and his heart is assured
Of the total remission of sins,
When his pardon is sign'd, and his peace is procured,
From that moment his conflict begins."

The man is brought into conflict with the fiery darts of the devil,

* The literal translation is, "They looked unto him, and did shine, and their faces did not blush," *i. e.* with shame and disappointment. The face of Moses on the Mount is a sweet illustration of the shining of the face here spoken of.

and wonders to find the old man he thought was dead reviving again. If he be overtaken in a fault, or an act of folly, it is a grief to him who is one of the children of the day, and not of the night, nor of darkness. He might feel sorrow for sin while under the law; but the sins committed against the light, known and enjoyed, cut him to the quick. David said, "I have sinned against the Lord;" and Nathan said unto him, "The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die; howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme," &c. (2 Sam. xii. 13, 14.) It touches a man's reputation also. But what is it it does not touch? All but the life, as the Lord said to Satan, "Behold he is in thine hand, but save his life." (Job. ii. 6.) Believer, art thou thus exercised? Is this thy case? Remember thy life is secured in Christ. Paul says, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." Also it is declared, that "the path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto perfect day." God can enable thee to read the most cutting text without any particular condemnation, and to depart this life leaving the cares of thy children, of the church, and of the world, with himself. He said to John, "I am he that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death;" and he said to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die;" "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction; repentance shall be hid from mine eyes." (Hosea xiii. 14.) "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Cor. xv. 58.) "He will swallow up death in victory, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces, and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth, for the Lord hath spoken it." (Isaiah xxv. 8.)

From the whole observe, what is said of the Head stands good of the members, "because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation; there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling." (Ps. xci. 9, 10.) I shall conclude with the words of the Apostle John, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. Beloved, now are we the sons of God. It does not appear what we shall be, but this we know, that when He shall appear, we also shall be like

him, for we shall see him as he is." May God command his blessing.

We much revere and love the memory of Henry Fowler. He was not only a man firm in the truth of God, but much tried and tempted in his own soul. We shall never forget hearing him expound, nineteen years ago, Psalm lxx., and how sweetly and experimentally he entered into that verse, "Iniquities prevail against me; as for our transgressions thou shalt purge them away."
—ED.

A LETTER BY THE LATE MR. GEORGE PAYTON.

My dear Friends,—I thank you very kindly for your welcome letter. I was glad to hear of your safe arrival, and of your finding your home so comfortable. What a great mercy it is to have a comfortable habitation for our poor perishing bodies. These with all other comforts are free gifts bestowed upon us unworthy creatures. We have no claim upon him who bestows such favors. He is pleased indeed to bestow them upon many of his open enemies; and such are all by nature; but he is pleased to make some sinners become friends to him. This is done in such a way, that all agree to give the honor and praise to him who has wrought such a strange and wonderful work in them, and left so many strangers to that strange and wonderful work, which none can work but God only. Who can give a new spirit but God? Who can turn the course of sin in man but God? Who can break up the "fountains of the great deep" but God? Who can bring man to love an unseen object, above or more than himself, but God? Who can give a man to see invisible riches to be more than visible things but God? And who can give a man to taste unspeakable riches in invisible things but God? Who can give a man to taste of joys to come but God? Who can give a man a will to choose a cross, rather than be without it, but God? And who can bring a man to love the light, because it maketh manifest, when we all by nature love darkness rather than light, but God? Who can make a man love to be searched to the very bottom, and all the inward parts, that no hidden sin may remain, and that all may be brought to light, truly repented for, hated, and abhorred, but God? Who can bring a man to love another's righteousness, and to cast away his own, and count it as filthy rags, but God? All these, and many more such like blessings, make up the good work to make a friend of Jesus Christ. These things in a little time fit us to sit down with the Bridegroom, and such will be the bride. This will be a most blessed match. He will be admiring us, and we admiring him. He will be the "altogether lovely," and we without spot. Who could have thought of all this taking in rebellious sinners but God? His thoughts towards us were thoughts of peace, and ours towards him evil enough, and still are, to our great grief and daily sorrow; but there is one thing to comfort us, and that is, "flesh and blood shall not

inherit incorruption ;" that we shall leave behind us a thing hated : "The thing that I hate that do I." Since you left me, I have walked out a great deal, and find my strength rather increased ; but I have caught cold, and my cough is come on. Mrs. L. will be home, if God will, the last day of this month. My love and thanks to you both. I wish I could offer you something better, but I am so poor, for I assure you I am almost too poor to find thankfulness for anything either to God or man. Such is my poverty. I have nothing, and yet possess all things. Please give my thanks to the friends that I honor in the flesh. I hope they are all well. And now farewell.

Grace and peace be with you,
Prays your old Friend,

Edenbridge, Kent, August 30th, 1839

G. PAYTON.

A LETTER FROM THE LATE STEPHEN OFFER.

LETTER V.

My dear and much esteemed wife and partner in this vale of tears, through which we are travelling, and daily experiencing according to the word of the Lord, "This is not your rest"—Everything here is given to change, while the covenant of grace is ordered in all things and sure. The great and glorious covenant Head, the Lord Jesus, ever lives. All that were loved in him, chosen in him, and had grace given unto them in him, before the world was made, shall be partakers of covenant blessings in their time state. What are those blessings, but the work of the Spirit in and on our once dead and benighted souls, by whose mighty power we were turned from darkness to light, convinced of our lost state, and who is still convincing us what we are in our fallen nature, to make us partakers of divine love, suffering us not to live a life of sin and rebellion, to be satisfied with a form of godliness, or to be deluded with a false peace. As we thus differ from others of our poor deluded fellow-creatures, whom the god of this world has blinded, and is leading to hell by thousands, we may put the question to ourselves, What made us to differ? We can only say, "It is by the grace of God we are what we are." I hope that the Lord Jesus, who I trust, is your everlasting All, and your only Hope, is manifesting himself unto your soul as he does not unto the world. I can truly say that when he, the Author of faith, works the work of faith in my soul, he is precious. Then I am at home spiritually, let me be in whatever part of the world I may. I find by daily experience, that no longer than he, the life-giving Head, is communicating life unto my soul, by the Spirit, are there real soul-breathings going out after him. In this you will agree with me, that we need daily to cry, "O Lord quicken thou me!" and feeling our weakness to exclaim, "O Lord help me!" I hope the Lord is still keeping my dear daughter alive to a feeling sense

of her sin, and leading her as a poor wretched sinner unto the sinner's Friend, who shed his precious blood for the vilest wretch out of hell that feels his need of him, and will cast out none that come unto him, although their sins be as scarlet.

I was very poorly for two or three days after I left home, and worse on the Monday after I left Pewsey. It was the effect of a cold; but I am better, and almost as well as usual. All our times are in his hand, and in good hands, to be managed for our good, and his glory. I have had some very dark seasons since I left you; but the clouds have been scattered, and the light has again become precious to my soul in every way suiting so vile a wretch as I am. I had this scripture when I left home with power: "I will make my goodness pass before thee in the way." I have found the promise hitherto fulfilled. I hope we shall remember each other at the throne of grace, while we are absent from each other. I have to preach five nights this week, in these parts, and return to Wantage next Lord's Day to preach at Grove, if the Lord will it. May I be enabled to exalt the Lamb, the sin-atonement Lamb. I hope you will write to me as soon as you can, giving me an account of your health. I long to hear from you, and see you again.

May the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you, giving you that peace that comes through blood, which none but He can give or take away.

Your affectionate husband,

STEPHEN OFFER.

Wrestling adds strength to arms and body; praying, and praying again, strengthens faith; customary running lengthens the breath; by much praying faith is well breathed. Jacob is stronger in the morning, when he has prayed a whole night, than at bed-time: "The angel said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go till thou bless me." (Gen. xxxii. 26.) Then in the dawning he has prayed harder, and used his arms with greater violence than before. It is here, "eat and be hungry; pray, and desire more strongly to pray."—*Rutherford*.

Here I am in old age, and yet not altogether barren. The cruse of oil has not failed, nor the barrel of meal wasted. The unction, and the three measures of meal, to which the kingdom of God is compared, still continue, namely, righteousness, peace, and joy; and the blessed Spirit works in all these, as the new and hallowed leaven, which shall ultimately work out all the old leaven of malice and wickedness. Times innumerable have I concluded that my spring was become dry, my stock exhausted, and that all things new were done with; no more bringing forth out of the treasure things new and old. Then the devil would set before me some of his burning and shining lights, and tell me what a blaze they made, what legions they drew after them, and how they withered; and what was I when compared to them?—*Huntington*.

LIFT UP THE HANDS WHICH HANG DOWN.

My dear A.,—It had already been in my mind to write to you, and now you have sent me a note I will try to answer it, feeling most sensibly that the Lord must be my Teacher, or indeed I shall “darken counsel by words without wisdom.” You say that “my mouth is shut.” It seems to have been so with one of old, for he says, “Open thou my mouth, and my lips shall show forth thy praise;” “Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name;” “I am shut up; I cannot come forth.” Jesus says to his church that she was a spring shut up, a fountain sealed. So you see shutting up is old-fashioned work, even in the living family; therefore, though it be painful, you must not conclude it to be a black mark against you, but rather cry more earnestly to him who shuts up, and can open; but, blessed be his name, he also opens, and then none can shut. Do not restrain prayer before God. If you do, I am sure and certain your soul will suffer loss, and Satan gain advantage. Perhaps you will say, “My mouth is shut up in prayer too; I cannot pray.” Then that is just an errand for you to the Lord, and if you are in such a case, you have still more reason to be much in secret before him, who alone can help you. If a spirit of prayer is a blessing and privilege, it is worth seeking for; mark it, you will not seek in vain; and you know the Lord does not expect us to bring to him, but to receive from him. We come empty handed for supply; so just bring your prayerless heart, if it should be such, to him to put prayer into it. Tell him with all simplicity that you would pray but cannot, and beg him to do for you as Zech. xii. 10; and if you cannot utter words, rather stay and groan at his footstool than be driven away. I can say from experience it is good to do so, even if no present answer seem to come. I am sure it is not in vain. You say the Bible is shut; do not on this account cease to search it, for where else can you go to find so purely the words of eternal life? We are to watch daily at wisdom’s gates, and wait at the posts of her door. They are pronounced blessed who do so. The words “watch and wait” seem to imply that we cannot always obtain wisdom’s lessons. We must be exercised in patience as well as in knowledge. Well do I know what it is to be without dew and unction, when I seem to have lost all lessons, and obtained no new ones. Read straight forward, for you do not know which is the chapter or which the verse at which the seal will be broken. Jesus will do for you as Luke xxiv. 27, 45, and then you will not want my poor encouragement to search the scriptures.

Dear A.—, Prov. xiii. 4, is God’s own word, I have always proved it true, and so will you; therefore write I thus unto you. You say “I am as though forsaken.” Zion hath said, “God hath forsaken me; my God hath forgotten me;” but God contradicts her: “Parents may forget, yet will I not forget thee.” Seeming absence and distance prove our faith. It is a mercy if we are

helped to trust God in the dark: "But if we believe not, he abideth;" and he says, "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." You know what he says in Isaiah liv. 28. I trust ere long your drooping soul will say, "It is the voice of my Beloved. Behold he cometh." You say, "Why should he regard me?" This is a question that can only be resolved into his own holy sovereignty. No sinful child of Adam can see why God should love him. Each truly converted soul feels himself the very most unlikely to have been noticed, and each can only say, "Even so, Father."

The scriptures quite show us that the Lord's choice and love were, without desert or deserving of the creature, of his own will, for his own glory. We also plainly find he has not taken the most excellent things, but rather those which look weak and base to the eye of flesh; so here you will find no ground of exclusion. Look not into yourself for a cause to induce divine love; but look up to the mighty Jehovah, and admire his sovereign grace. Having looked over all your statements, I can find nothing contrary to the common exercises of the Lord's people, and quite believe you must prepare to "endure with hardness," if you are a soldier of Jesus Christ; for it is his will that they who reign with him shall also suffer with him, and that we shall have many varied exercises in the discipline of the wilderness. We must learn our own weakness as well as his strength, our own emptiness as well as his fulness; our own dryness as well as that he is like the dew unto Israel; our own ignorance, as well as his wisdom; and we must have times of shutting up, that we may give him the glory of opening, and be kept feelingly, saying, "All my springs are in thee."

Now, through a healthy state of soul, and so walking, we shall come to understand that the Lord does nothing in vain; but that all the humbling, emptying, proving, that we come into, are for our establishment in him and for his glory; in short, that all is for the lifting of Jesus on high in our souls. This is the constant work of the Holy Ghost bringing us to be experimentally nothing, and making Jesus precious and All in All to us, teaching us to live by faith upon him, which is blessed indeed.

Do not be discouraged because you are yet learning your nothingness; this is most really needful to make way for the rest. Do not seek to exercise yourself in things too high for you, or be comparing yourself with others and what they know and enjoy, for this will be only a stumblingblock to you. Be constantly begging the Holy Spirit to show you how the Lord may be glorified. May he bless you, and give you understanding. You know that I have been very ill, and you know also that I have enjoyed good health. Ah! truly I could tell you much of the love, power and preciousness of my Jesus. Though it might be more for your benefit to take you upon your own ground, and talk over your state rather than describe mine, this I must say, that I have proved there is a reality in vital godliness which will stand amidst the decay of all that is

of the flesh; I have proved that Jesus loveth at all times, and in the depths. He is solid rock to those who put their trust in him.

May the weakness of my words throw no confusion over your mind, but the wind of the Spirit cleave away the darkness. May you by his power have the application of precious blood, the imputation of perfect righteousness, and a close steady walk with God,

Affectionately desires your sincere friend,

GREETINGS FROM A DISTANT LAND.

My dear Friend,—After thinking much of writing to you, I have at last determined to do so. I hope to be able to say something that will stir up the remembrance of an old friend. What shall I say? "I should think you have plenty to write about," no doubt, is your reply. Yes, dear friend, and so I have; but, as you know a politician writing to his friend interested in those matters, would assuredly adopt politics as his topic, so I, adopting his plan, shall write about a subject nearest and dearest to us; for as we are laboring under the same Master, fighting under the same banner, wielding the same weapons, clothed in the same armor, and having the same great enemy to combat with, I do not see what should be so interesting to us as how we get on in this conflict with sin, flesh, and the devil. Well, dear friend, to speak for myself, I must say I feel it hard work at times, to get on at all. O how abominable do the desires and lusts of the natural man appear; for I find myself ever ready to murmur at God's providence, and exclaim with David, "Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain;" yes, ever ready to distrust the blessed Lord's faithfulness and word, and doubt his precious promises. The devil would even have me, at times, to believe the word of God and all connected with it to be a mere delusion. O how desperately wicked is the heart of man! What I have told you is but a faint specimen of the workings of my wicked heart. O how heartily I can join with the man of God, and say, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord!" In brief, I find the carnal mind just what it ever has, and ever will be, enmity against God.

I once thought this nature would have been made better, and that it and grace would have commingled; but, dear friend, this is natural religion; this is something like what my first teacher, man, informed me; but blessed be God, the Spirit has taught me better. Yes, he has taught me that nature and grace are divided against each other, and always will be; and I have been led to see, in some measure, what is nature, and what is grace. O what a blessing to be enabled to discriminate between nature and grace! May it be ours; for how often will nature put itself forward, under the lovely form of grace to deceive us into the acceptance of the one for the other. Well may the Apostle say, "Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure." That word election is thought by many professors to be a dangerous word; but it is not thought so by that

poor, tempest-tossed, tried child of God, who sees that even his best works would be sinful enough to sink his soul to hell, if not pardoned through a Saviour's blood. Such a one feels election to be a fountain of consolation to his troubled soul; for when darkness surrounds him on all sides, and the heavens seem as brass, how comforting is the word of God: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." This everlasting love is that electing love which will not let the soul go, or utterly fall, that has once been in possession of it. Hear what God says, "For I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee. Though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered them, yet will I not make a full end of thee; but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished." O how full of love and mercy are the Lord's dealings with his people; for he corrects his children only in measure, as they are able to bear it, not according to their deserts. No; he knows well their merits would be final perdition; but according to his eternal love and purposes does he continue to correct and bless his people.

The minister I hear is a Particular Baptist, one whom some uncharitable professors would term an Antinomian. If preaching the truth, or the doctrines of free and distinguishing grace, constitute an Antinomian, I must admit his title; but, blessed be God, the Spirit has led me to see and feel the wide difference between truth and Antinomianism. The Apostle says, "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" I believe there is no child of God who would not say so with him. God forbid that the doctrines of free and distinguishing grace should be those which make a child of God an idler. No; they animate him in the time of battle with his great enemy to lift up his hands, knowing that, as Christ has overcome, he will overcome also; and, relying on God's covenant promises to his elect, through Christ, he still holds on his way, seeing that God has made all things for himself or his glory, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil. And not only the wicked; for we read in Romans ix. 23, of his making known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy which he had prepared unto glory, even us, whom he hath called. O what a blessing to know, by his holy word, "that whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Here you see the soul led on from one degree to another in grace. Can we, dear friend, trace the Spirit working in our souls thus, or can we trace the beginning of the good work within us? If so, then the doctrines of electing grace are a mine rich and deep, which will supply us with many abundant feasts, and enable us to dig deep into the mystery of godliness, as revealed by the Holy Spirit. But as Hart says, in hymn 90, so it is with me:—

" Though God's election is a truth,
 Small comfort there I see,
 Till I am told by God's own mouth,
 That he has chosen me."

It is when these truths are applied by the Holy Spirit that we

are enabled to value them ; for instance, what comfort or consolation is it to me to hear of God choosing his people in Christ before the world was, and that no weapons that are found against them shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise up against them in judgment he will condemn ? Why, if I cannot trace out my title to those precious truths, through being made an heir of God, and a joint heir of Christ, then they are but a dry morsel indeed ; but when brought home by the Holy Spirit, and applied to our souls, then it is we feel them precious ; then it is that the eye of faith views the great triune Jehovah in all his glorious attributes. O how blessed to hear, to feel, to know by experience that God is an unchanging God ; that he does not love to-day and hate to-morrow, but “whom he loveth he loveth to the end,” and that none can alter his eternal purposes.

O dear friend, I have not to go far to trace out the unchangeableness of God, either in his love or purposes ; for when I look back to the time when the Holy Spirit visited me with the arrow of conviction, and feel what a rebel I was to his Majesty ; when I take a view of my past life, since my blindness was removed, and see what a rebellious hard-hearted, shipwrecked, and self-willed wretch I was,—I am led to believe, if there could be such a thing as extinguishing the love of God, or counteracting his purposes, I should have done it. It cannot be ; for I trust there is yet a good thing to be found in my heart towards the Lord God of Israel, and to whom I ascribe all praise.

That the Holy Spirit would lead and enable us to walk in all holiness before him, who hath redeemed us by his precious blood, and grant us the sweet consolation and assurance of our names being written in the Lamb's book of life, is the earnest prayer of

Your sincere friend in the holy ties of love,

Melbourne, May 27th, 1853.

E. R.

Play well on one string, the trials of the Lord's people ; you will soon shake off professors.—*W. T.*

The whole sum and substance of the Bible is comprised in one word, and that word is Christ. For in the spiritual apprehension and knowledge of him the redeemed and regenerated church of God have, in connexion with it, the spiritual knowledge of, and communion with “the Holy Three which bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost ; and these Three are One.”—*Hawker.*

I have often thought, and am still of the same mind, that all our crosses and trials are to accomplish a twofold work ; the one to bring us low, to hide pride from our eyes, and to set us down at the Lord's feet ; the other to empty us of self, and give us an appetite which prepares us to receive a better fulness. A high look, the Lord will not suffer, but he dwells with the humble. He blesses the poor and needy, but punishes those that are settled on their lees. Faith, hope, and love appear the plainer, and shine the brighter, when the dross and tin are removed ; and I have often wondered to see how fast this base metal collects again.—*Huntington.*

INQUIRIES.

Dear Sir,—If you consider it profitable, I should be glad (and I know one or two of your friends who also coincide with me) if you would offer your opinion, through the medium of the "Gospel Standard," on the scriptural means of administering the Lord's Supper. I know one or two ministers of truth, who consider the proper mode to be, that it should remain open for any of the church to stand up, engage in prayer, read a portion of God's word, give out a hymn, &c., as they feel led, and that the pastor ought not exclusively to take that or any part of the administration to himself, but take his seat only as one of the church.

MINIMUS.

ANSWER.

Order is desirable, not to say indispensable, in every part of the service of God, and certainly in no part more than in the administration of the Lord's Supper. "Joying and beholding your order," says the Apostle, (Col. ii. 5;) and again: "Let all things be done decently and in order." (1 Cor. xiv. 40.)

Now, as a general rule, order will not exist without a head. The Corinthian Church, as we lately showed, was the most disorderly church in the New Testament, mainly, we believe, for want of a pastor or ruling elders; and their disorderly conduct at the Lord's table drew down upon them the special and severe rebuke of the Apostle. (1 Cor. xi. 17-33.) A small church, consisting of a dozen members or so, and these much united together, as well as of recent formation, before divisions and jealousies have crept in, is very different from a large church and one of long standing. What, therefore, might very well suit the former would not do at all for the latter; and it by no means follows because breaking bread in a kind of primitive simplicity might be adapted for a small church, it would be equally suitable for a larger one, and where there are many minds and members of different ages and standing. There are many small churches scattered up and down the country destitute of a pastor. There is no reason why these should not have the Lord's Supper among themselves in the way most edifying and profitable; but they must not lay down a rule that their way is best for larger churches which have a pastor over them. Many rules will naturally suit a small family which would be quite out of place in a larger; and in business small establishments may have a degree of freedom allowed them which in more extensive ones would produce the greatest disorder and confusion. So in churches, the larger the church, the more necessary is order. We are as much opposed to priestcraft and ministerial lordship as any, but we are great friends to order, quietness, and edification; for "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints."

Confining ourselves, then, to churches which have a pastor or acceptable supplies, and have a fair proportion of members, our decided opinion is that the minister is the fittest person to admi-

nister the Lord's Supper; and lest any think we are naturally biassed in favor of the *cloth*, we give the following reasons for our opinion.

1. *It is most consistent with that order* of which we have just spoken. If when seated at the table, it were all uncertainty who was to give out the hymn, ask the blessing, break the bread, &c., there would, especially in a large church, be a degree of confusion and expectancy, very unfavourable to that prayerfulness, meditation, and desire to realise a sight and sense of the Saviour's sufferings which all but hardened professors wish then to feel alive in their hearts. Those who love the minister would feel grieved to see him displaced, and the voice of the member who gave out the hymn might be the last which others desired to hear. But when the pastor takes his place at the table, an instinctive sense of order seems to pervade the whole.

2. *The pastor's office* seems particularly to place him in a position to administer the ordinance. There are jealousies and divisions in churches, and some members, from various causes, are often not acceptable to the best of the people. These, however, are generally the most eager to speak, pray, read, give out hymns, and put themselves forward; and if the administering of the Lord's Supper were left open, these are the very men who would at once take the office up, not with a view of edifying the church, but exalting themselves.

3. The pastor in administering the ordinance is *exempt from an evil* which would scarcely be the case with a private member. He is or ought to be so generally acceptable to the church, that his administering of it will not jar upon the feelings of *any* of the members. It seems so much his place to do it, that no jealousy is caused thereby. There is something in us which cannot bear assumption, but at once yields to authority; and the pastor stands in that relationship to the church that what would appear assumption in others, seems but legitimate authority, as if his right and title, in him. If he go into the pulpit, it is his place; if he take the lead at a church meeting, it is his place; if he baptize a candidate, it is his place; if he visit the sick, it is his place. Another might do any or all of these things as well; but if God has graciously qualified him, and the church has chosen him to perform these offices, why displace him from breaking bread? It is most evident that after preaching at Troas, Paul broke bread to the disciples; (Acts'xx. 11;) and those who had just received the word from his lips were doubtless glad to receive the bread from his hands. Somebody must preside for order's sake, and to prevent wrong feelings arising at the season when we most desire the Lord's presence and blessing; and who more fit than he whom the church consider as their under-shepherd, whom all look up to, or should do so, as their minister, and some dearly love as their spiritual father.?

4. There is not the *same danger of self-exaltation* in his doing it as would be the case in a private member. He feels it to be as much a part of his office to break the bread, pour out the wine, and seek the Lord's blessing upon them, as to preach the word of life;

and we shrewdly suspect that the spirit which would displace the pastor from the table, is not very different from that which would thrust him out of the pulpit. Plymouth, we guess, is the quarter whence this wind blows as well as the other.

Sir,—Being grieved in spirit, I take the liberty of addressing to you an inquiry. A candidate for believer's baptism came, according to the rules of the church, to give a reason for the hope that was in him, and was received by minister, deacons, and members without objection. In a few days, however, some of the members, who did not say a word on the case at the church meeting, have since made their voices heard. They now assert they were not satisfied with the experience given by the candidate. If those members were not faithful enough to state their objections to the candidate before the ordinance was administered, should they not remain silent afterwards? The candidate's morals are good, and his bearing unexceptionable; and, if the church be deceived, the matter rests between God and them. Besides, such unfaithful conversation is not according to the spirit of the gospel. I know some minds have been pained, and others declare those members to be unfaithful not to have spoken their convictions at the proper time. If you will respond to this inquiry in the "Gospel Standard," you will oblige one that desires peace and union in the church.

A READER.

ANSWER.

A little honesty at first often saves a deal of trouble afterwards. We certainly think the members who were not satisfied with the experience of the candidate, should have expressed their opinion at the time. Their silence gave an implied assent that they were satisfied. They were at liberty to ask the candidate questions, or hold up their hand against him; as they did neither, it was taken for granted that they were as well satisfied as the rest. It is indispensable to all comfortable walking in a church, that when a member is once received he should be treated as a brother, as much as the most experienced member in the church. Let every precaution be adopted in receiving members. Here many churches err. We are not friendly to the rejection of candidates when once they come before the church, as it casts a stigma upon them before the congregation, may much wound and distress their minds, and cause strife and division among the members. To avoid these obvious evils, many churches are too lenient, and reject none who can give a little account of themselves, which they would hardly receive as individuals, thus filling the church with unsatisfactory members, gradually destroying the very salt of the body, and sowing a mingled seed in that field where there should be none but pure grain. To avoid this, great precaution is necessary in the first instance; and no candidate should be allowed to come forward who cannot show some clear marks of the work of God upon his soul. Assuming there should be *three* doors into the church,—the

minister, the visitors, and the church itself, let the *first* be the narrowest, and no one should pass that barrier who is not well commended to the minister's conscience.* But as *he* may be deceived, let the next gate be carefully guarded also, as it is far better for the candidate to be gently and kindly put back by being told to wait than be rejected by the church, or even admitted, if not abundantly satisfactory to the main body; but when once received, unless his walk and conversation be inconsistent with his profession, let the new member be treated in all points as a brother. He may be weak, and so is the little finger; but still it is a member of the body. Many have come into the church upon an experience of the least possible kind to give them admission at all; but they have grown, and some of these have been, from their quietness and consistency, ornaments of the church in life, and have made a good end. "Backbitings and whisperings," are among the things the Apostle disapproves of (2 Cor. xii. 20.) No church can thrive without love and union; and as these can only be maintained by much mutual forbearance, so nothing more tends to break them than such dishonest conduct as our correspondent mentions. We had better bear with ten hypocrites than break up the peace of the church, or distress or wound one child of God.

That in which carnal and ungodly men glory, that is, their freedom of will and independence of control, will be everlasting torture to them if they die rejecting Christ; because it will sting them through eternity, that by their own confession they were under no necessity of unbelief.

Although for wise and gracious purposes no alteration is made on the body, by the regeneration of the spirit during the present time-state of the church; for as Paul stated it many years after his being converted, he said "I know that in me" (that is in my flesh) "dwelleth no good thing;" (Rom. vii. 18;) yet, by the indwelling Spirit the body is made the medium of "offering up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."—*Hawker*.

While the idolatrous Roman empire was in its greatest glory and strength, the professed people of God exceedingly depressed, and real believers almost wholly invisible; while Satan and his works reigned everywhere triumphant, it pleased God for the manifestation of his infinite mercy, wisdom, power, and faithfulness, in this fulness of time, to send forth his only-begotten Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, made of a woman, made under the law; that, by fulfilling the law in both its precept and penalty, amidst the most wicked generation that had hitherto existed, and the very worst part of it, he might finish transgression, bring in an everlasting righteousness, and redeem men that were under the law.—*John Brown*.

* In some churches, we believe, the visitors see the candidate first. This is merely a matter of private arrangement, and does not at all interfere with our view of the case, which is, that the first gate should be the narrowest entrance—the earliest sieve should have the closest mesh.

THE EXPERIENCE AND DEATH OF THE LATE
MR. JAMES CHURCHER, OF BROMLEY, KENT.

(Concluded from page 320.)

My father having been blessed with so rich an experience, the Bible, Hart's Hymns, Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, and Huntington's works, became more and more sweet to him. A few persons in Bromley and its vicinity now began to accompany him to Deptford; and many of them felt sufficiently the power of the truth to avow it openly, and occasionally to open their houses for the Deptford ministers to preach in on week days. My father was useful in the church at Deptford as one of its living members, and succeeded in founding some good rules for regulating the mode of visiting the sick and distressed. His light shone where he dwelt. He would often allude to himself as one whom, like Abraham, "God called alone, and blessed and increased." He retained a filial regard for his earthly parents; for both before and after his father's death, he visited the parental roof, and administered to the necessities of his aged mother till her death, and taught his children to do the same. Perhaps it would not be out of place here to state that the reciprocal love of my parents outvies all I ever witnessed in the conjugal state. When my father found grace in the eyes of the Lord, my mother opposed not, but appeared always willing to read to him, to hear with him, or to bow the knee with him. Addressing me once upon the subject, he said, "They came together alike ignorant of God." He then quoted 1 Cor. vii. 16: "How knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?" explaining the passage thus: "That God might bless conversation, prayer, and spiritual wrestling to her conversion."

After this period his enjoyment of the best things much abated; and, to use his own words, he was ready to ask, how low a child of God might degenerate and yet remain one. His beloved pastor, Mr. Barret, died on his knees in family prayer, which was only discovered by his voice having ceased. My father's remark was, "One moment praying to God, the next praising him in a better world." The minister who succeeded Mr. Barret in the church at Deptford, Mr. Thomas Burgess, did not act in a way which my father could conscientiously countenance, and after a plain protest he resigned his membership. The parties are most, if not all, numbered with the departed, or I could say more, for wisdom is justified of her children. One of the friends who opened his house in Bromley died, leaving a sweet savor in his dying testimony. Others of his dear friends were also called away by death, while many emigrated to America. O how altered was the scene! I have heard my father say, "He would rather see his children partakers of grace, than wearing the crowns of kingdoms." It was while reading to him his much-loved Pilgrim's Progress that I discovered my undone state as a sinner, and he it was who first pointed out to me the only way of

escape—Christ Jesus. At this time, and for a few years afterwards, my father enjoyed the privilege of riding with his friend, Mr. Weller, farmer, to hear the word of life, wherever they could meet with it. Mr. Huntington died in 1813, and soon after Mr. Weller followed him to the grave. This event proved a severe loss to my father, who was much confined at home; yet he did “read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest” the truth in his own house. He called himself “A prisoner of hope.” One day described will afford a specimen of the whole. We rose early, and went to labor; God’s blessing was asked at every meal, prayers being offered to God twice a day; a portion of the bible was also read on two occasions during the day. We retired early to rest. On the Lord’s Day, the family devotion was the same, with the addition of a hymn or two sung, with much more reading. I reaped great benefit from his prayers (for which he had a more than common gift,) and also from his numberless remarks. The union I felt for him, words can never describe to the full, both in the flesh and in the spirit.

About this time several of the inhabitants of the parish and neighboring villages became subjects of deep soul-trouble, and came to my father for a word of counsel and encouragement; indeed, he said they were children after his own heart. Our testimonies may be seen in a pamphlet entitled, “Living Witnesses,” published in 1821, by Mr. W. Gathercole, late of Birmingham, who came to preach occasionally at Beckenham, in 1817, and in 1819 formed us into a little church. My father was unanimously chosen deacon, being in all respects a fit man, and continued in the office till his death. Well I remember his conversation on the road, as well as his salutary caution and advice. As age and infirmity increased, my father became unable to travel, and Providence so ordering it, he licensed a large room in his house for preaching. Some years after his death, the truth was first preached here by Mr. Crouch, and afterwards by Mr. Payton, and several other ministers. The Lord’s Supper was regularly administered. As is said of Paul “in his hired house,” so my father received all that came to him for advice and instruction, and he witnessed the blessing of God upon his efforts. In 1837, my eldest sister joined the church. She was unmarried, and had devoted most of her time to promote the comfort of her parents while they remained on earth, and was a very useful nurse to them. My father labored under a chronic asthma and a cancer in the left cheek, which medical and surgical aid had failed to cure; and my heart would often ache, fearing I should soon be deprived of so valuable a parent. In the close of the year 1837, he had a violent attack of erysipelas. I believe he never fully recovered from it. The year 1838 came in severely cold, which much affected his constitution, worn out as it was by labor and illness. Aware that his end was near, he daily contemplated the coming change; indeed he appeared like “a fine setting sun,” as Watts has it, or like Bunyan’s Christian in the Land of Beulah, “a shock of corn fully ripe.” When I in-

formed him of the death of Mr. Payton, and read to him his last letter, he rejoiced in the ripeness for glory of that dear man, and exclaimed, "I said that man would die in peace."

One of the last human works he derived much comfort from was one of Toplady's. It was from the words of Isaiah lv. 12. I think Toplady's words are,

"O for this love, let rocks and hills,
Their lasting silence break;
And every quick'ned sinner's tongue,
My Saviour's praises speak.

O with what rapture he told me of it! I often saw him reading the 14th, 16th and 17th chapters of John, and he called the 71st psalm his own. He sat down at the Lord's table for the last time on earth the second Lord's Day in January, 1838, when he told the church he was now quite ready whenever the Lord saw fit to call him. From that time he was confined to his bed. I will add, to the credit of the friends, they showed him the greatest kindness and attention. Prayers were made in all directions for him. The inhabitants of Bromley seemed heartily to show him respect; he had through grace outlived their persecutions, and even unconvicted sinners would acknowledge his praiseworthy life, and his prepared state to die. He was attended by our ablest medical men, one of whom was Dr. Scott. On one occasion he asked those present, among whom was my wife, to find the following hymns :

"A debtor to mercy alone,"

and

"How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord;"

adding, "There you may see my experience set forth better than I can describe it." Soon after, he said to me, "My pains are great; but the enemy cannot come near me, my soul is so sweetly wrapped up in the dear Saviour's robe, and I have had so many manifestations of his love." I may say all that feared God who visited him felt refreshed. I was as one travelling in pain for him, greatly desiring his days on earth to be prolonged, and yet wishing the consummation of his happiness in eternal glory. On one of my frequent visits to him, seeing him very ill, I said, "He shall enter into peace; they shall rest on their beds, each one walking in his uprightness." He replied, "I have had the earnest of it." I then prayed by him, and, taking my leave, said to him, "Now heart and flesh fail, may you find God the strength of your heart and your portion for ever." He spoke to his eldest son (whose love to his parent can never receive too high a commendation) with the greatest composure of his approaching dissolution, remarking upon the words in the funeral service "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust." At another time he said to me, "I can no more be thankful than I can be joyful without divine aid." Shortly after the enemy made a sore thrust at him, "to try," as he said, "to jostle him off from the Rock of his salvation." In great anguish of body he said to me, "It is a great thing to die." I repeated to him these two lines of Hart's :

"He'll never leave thee, doubt it not,
In pain, in sickness, or in death."

At a subsequent visit, I observed to him, "You have good ground to stand upon." He replied, "Sometimes I can feel no bottom." I remarked to him that Bunyan thus describes the Pilgrim, in the River of Death, as saying, "I sink in deep waters, where there is no standing, and when his brother exclaimed, 'I see angels waiting for us,' he replied, 'It is you, it is you they wait for.'" He desired me to give his love to some of his Deptford friends and others, even all he knew, who loved the Lord Jesus in sincerity, and "tell them I hope they will be kept there. I can scarcely breathe; but if I die now, I die in peace." At parting, I said, "The Lord be with you." He instantly replied, "I never wanted his supporting presence more." I then observed, "The Lord has done great things for you, whereof we all are glad." He rejoined, "And if there were anything more to be done, he would do it."

On Feb. 21st, a week before his death, he was so ill, to all appearance, as not to be able to speak one word, yet as his brother deacon, and Mr. Church, who are still living at Beckenham, were leaving the room, he revived, and commenced telling them what the Lord had done for his soul, in convincing him of sin, in chastening him out of the law, and revealing Christ to him, and, after his relapse into the pit of corruption, how he brought him out; and now, he said, "I have the full enjoyment of these things when my heart and my flesh fail." Mr. Wood then asked him if he had any charge to give relative to the meeting of the church for public worship; but he desired that they would follow the cloud of God's favor. This was the last interview they had with my dear father. Mr. Apleton, since departed, and his wife frequently visited him. On one of the last occasions, his remarks were so striking, that they made a memorandum of them. He ended his speech with these words, "Farewell all flesh; farewell all pain; welcome, eternal life. Hallelujah."

At my next visit, I did not intend to trouble him to speak, but he asked for me by name, inquiring after my family. On my telling him they were all well, he exclaimed, "What a mercy!" He then asked after the trade, and I told him we had plenty to do. He remarked, "None but God knew fully the trouble it had many times been to him lest he should fail in trade; but I have," he added, "been enabled to make it known to the Lord as well as I could, and he has made communications back to me; and if he bring us through, we shall have something to sing of." I answered, "Yes; he has done all things well." "Do what you can for your mother; there are many who would be glad to separate you, but for the Uniter; you may indeed say, what has the Lord done for your poor father."

The next day, Friday, Feb. 22nd, Mr. Scott had given him up, for he saw death had commenced his attack. This was not told my father, but he knew his departure was near. We were all

called into his room by our mother about noon. All eyes were suffused with tears. He said in a firm tone of voice, "Well might Paul say, 'Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ which is far better,' for pain and weakness make me long to go. The Lord has made me willing in the day of his power; he has made me rejoice in him, and fully satisfied me with his salvation; wherefore it is easy now to say, 'I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which God the righteous Judge shall give unto me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them that love his appearing.' Well might Moses say, 'Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord.' 'The Lord is my portion;' 'Yea, I have a goodly heritage;' 'O Israel, halt no longer between two opinions, neither turn back, nor dissemble;' 'Lord bless the church with faith.' What has been done wrong, may he cast over it a mantle of love, and what has not been brought forth, may it be produced under the influence of the Holy Ghost. Now I will pray for Bromley, poor Bromley, for God has raised our hope in Bromley, and he will raise up hope for Bromley. Though she be like Sodom among the nations, and her children are most ungodly, yet may the Lord make her like the chariots of Amminadib. I have done with the world; I want to be gone. Why am I kept in suspense?" After a short pause, he said, "Sufficiently, Lord, exiled to be delivered;" "Lord, I beseech thee, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers;" "I know that in my flesh dwelleth no good thing;" "Thou knowest I cannot leave thee; Lord Jesus, come quickly." I want thee to come. While many want to put thy coming off, I say, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

I then withdrew. Mr. and Mrs. Apleton entered the room, and stayed a considerable time. He was still enlarged in prayer, exhorting his grandchildren to attend to the preaching of the truth; he also desired his love to his eldest son, who at that time was absent. After this he took his leave of us all separately. I said, "We shall soon meet in a better world," to which he answered, "I hope so." His sufferings through the night were very great, and he had a most alarming fit, in which it was expected he would have gone off. The next day he had another, but recovering a little, he began again to speak. He said, "I am going the way of all the earth; whence I shall not return, but I hope God will return to build you up. I shall not last long; I can scarcely breathe." On the next day, he was still sinking; yet his mouth was open, declaring the enlargement of his soul. He said, "I am as sensible in my death as ever I was in my life." On Monday, he exclaimed, "'O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory!'" I sat up with him the two last nights of his life; he suffered much from spasms and inflammation, and the lower parts of his body were evidently dying first. He was able to say but little to us. On Tuesday morning, he said, "God bless you

all ;" when Mr. Apleton embraced the opportunity to say to him, "My dear friend, you are now going to enjoy the rest and happiness which remains for you and all the people of God." He had no power to reply ; but the emotion he expressed showed that he fully comprehended the meaning of the observation. After this a few short sentences escaped his lips, such as, "Depart in peace ;" "I hope to meet my poor wife in heaven ;" "Happy, but in much pain ;" "God bless you all ; good bye." When his speech was quite gone, he made signs to be raised up in his bed ; his daughter Hannah did so ; he put his arms round her neck, pressed her face to his face, and there held it for some minutes, as though expressing his dying gratitude for all her attention. At a quarter before 8 o'clock in the evening he breathed his last with a smile on his face, without a sigh or a groan, in the presence of my mother, sister, and a grand-daughter, whom he had brought up from childhood.

Thus died in the Lord, my dear, my much-loved father, professing a God-hope and a triumphant faith ; and truth declares, that "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." As a family we felt his death a great bereavement, yet the firm confidence we possessed that our loss was his gain, forbad us "to sorrow without hope, knowing that we shall go to him, but he shall not return to us."

His mortal remains were interred in Bromley churchyard. His widow, children, and 18 of his Christian friends following to show their respect. A sermon was preached from Daniel x. 11: "O Daniel, a man greatly beloved."

Bromley, Kent.

JAMES CHURCHER.

Peter also got ground by denying his Master ; thereby he came to see his own weakness, the need he had of Christ's support, and continual prayer for him ; and we hear no more of his carnal confidence after that. But what a clamor and outcry does he make against our adversary, the devil, (1 Pet. v. 8,) to warn others by his own example what danger they are in by a carnal confidence.—*Elisha Coles.*

The law threatens punishment to transgressors ; which if they feared not, there is no mischief which they would not commit ; and over those, whom the law so bridles it rules and reigns. Again, it did accuse us, terrify us, kill us, and condemn us spiritually and before God ; and this was the principal dominion that the law had over us. Therefore, like as an heir is subject unto his tutors, is beaten, and is compelled to obey their laws, and diligently to execute their commandments ; even so, men's consciences, before Christ comes, are oppressed with the sharp servitude of the law ; that is to say, they are accused, terrified, and condemned of the law. But this dominion, or rather, this tyranny of the law is not continual, but must only endure until the time of grace. Wherefore the office of the law, is to reprove and to increase sins, not to bring righteousness ; to kill, not to bring life.—*Luther.*

R E V I E W.

The History of an Idol, its Rise, Reign, and Progress. London: Simpkin and Marshall. 1849.

THE loss of our manuscript and of the book which accompanied it, in their transit through the Post Office, unavoidably compelled us to bring our last month's Review to a sudden close. Having, however, recovered the missing articles, we now present them to our readers, premising them with a few remarks which may serve to gather up the broken threads, and to recall the subject to their mind and memory.

"The History of an Idol" was the subject of our Review; and in introducing the little work which formed the basis of our article, we, as usual, prefaced it with some observations of our own. Every man has his idol; but it is not every man who sees it; few groan under it; and fewer still have such a spiritual insight into its workings as to be able to dissect and lay them bare for the profit of others. And yet spiritual anatomy, and especially unsparing self-anatomy, is not the least profitable of our religious reading.

Few writings are more interesting or edifying than the history of a man's own experience written by himself, when, in addition to unsparing self-dissection, certain features are stamped upon it. 1. It must be an *experience of grace*, and this will always have two sides belonging to it. To be saved before we are lost, delivered before we are in the prison-house, healed before we are wounded, and acquitted before we are condemned, will never do for God's living family.

2. It must be *clear, concise, and simple*. If a man cannot write with a tolerable degree of clearness, he will lose us as well as himself in a fog; if he be prosy and longwinded, we throw down his book with a yawn; if he be not simple in style, we doubt if he be simple in heart; and his fine language may create a suspicion that he has more light than heat, and aims rather to shine than warm.

3. It must be written *under the unction of the Blessed Spirit*, without which it will never commend itself to the conscience of, or edify the Lord's people.

4. It must be sufficiently *deep and varied* to make it worth reading. And

5. It must be so far *original* as to carry with it the stamp of genuineness. Let our readers recall to mind those published experiences which they have read with most feeling and profit, and they will find these characters stamped upon them. To help their memories, let us suggest three works which will live as long as God has a people here below—Bunyan's "Grace Abounding," Hart's "Experience," and Huntington's "Kingdom of Heaven taken by Prayer." These books stand by themselves on the top shelf; and to expect there can be many such writings, is to expect there will be many Bunyans, Harts, or Huntingtons. But there are books on the second shelf which are edifying and instructive. As amongst David's warriors there were valiant captains, who did not attain to

the first three that broke through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem that was by the gate, (1 Chron. xi. 18,) so there are gracious men of God who, like Cæsar, have not only fought their own battles, but written their own commentaries upon them. Nor did the Roman Cæsar wage a sterner or stouter war with our British ancestors and their idols than Christians wage with their idolatrous hearts. The taking of the Malakhoff, the storming of the Redan, with all their fearful incidents of suffering and death, heroic valour and unflinching self-sacrifice, have stirred the hearts and moistened the eyes of thousands; but there is an inward Malakhoff, a Redan in the heart, which offer a more stubborn resistance, and which if captured to-day are lost again to-morrow. Many a poor tempted child of God is in the trenches still, and the Malakhoff not yet taken. There it stands before his eyes; with the enemy's flag still waving over the battlements. Will the idol always reign? Shall the lust still prevail? Must the temptation ever continue? Will sin never cease to assail? Shall Satan still ply his cruel artillery, maiming and disabling faith, hope, and love, prayer and praise, watchfulness and patience, reading and meditation, and beating out of the hands every weapon raised against him. O fight on, fight on, thou soldier of Jesus Christ! Thy Captain is at hand; he will gain the victory for thee, a better victory than if thou hadst stood all covered with blood and glory on the ruins of Sebastopol with the bâton of a Field Marshal in thy hand.

But we will not delay any longer an introduction to the author, who, writing from soul experience, depicts so vividly and so well the rise and progress of his idol. The first setting up of it commenced almost in boyhood. Being articled to a colourman in London, he was brought into the opportunity of seeing paintings and conversing with artists. This applied the torch to the combustibles already laid in his natural temperament, as he thus describes:

"Located in the midst of men of genius, and surrounded by the studios of painters, to which from the associate nature of his calling, he had frequent and easy access, the exquisite beauties of the 'pictorial art,' soon ravished his eyes. Captivated by the charm of colors in the bright productions of the limner's skill, the smouldering embers of intellectual depravity were so stirred up within him, that fired with the fantastic hope of reputation, he at once caught the high spirit of a painter, and set up a study for himself. The rising flame was fanned by youthful ambition and pride; and so enchanted did the child become with the pleasing spectacles of artistic vanity which the easel produced, that he grew a confirmed enthusiast in that art which he thought was the glory of the world."

It will be seen that two mighty principles were here at work—the love of art and the lust of fame. These, like the two tubes in a hot-air furnace, alternately and unremittingly blew up the flame. How intensely it burnt the next extract will show:

"Thus inflamed by the fervor of youth for honor and distinction among men, there was such unwearied assiduity, close application, and constant practice, that no rest was given either to the mind or body. The midnight lamp was kept burning for the study of works of art; or on the leads of the house-top, the hours for sleep were employed in portraying the bright features of the silver shining moon. Unwearied through excess of courage, and the clothes not taken off all night, there was an anxious watching for the first

light tinge of the morning sun, which was painted again at mid-day, when the bright luminary was in its full meridian glory; and the act repeated at sunset to catch its last declining rays. Thus was the mind wholly absorbed in the contemplation of that which appeared to be most worthy the true dignity of his nature, and the best calculated to bring him happiness, rest, and peace."

At this time, and in the very midst of all this burning fever to achieve the highest honors of the pictorial art, it pleased God, as the writer believes, to quicken his soul, mainly through the instrumentality of a gracious person whom he met with on a visit to a friend's house in the country. Still the idol—only now discovered to be an idol—inflamed him under every green tree:

"The darling idol of the heart was held in higher estimation than ever, and even worshipped with a spoiling adoration unknown in the simpler days of youthful study. Passion became to him the perfection of his nature. Indeed, nothing else (save the sister arts, poetry and music) was a pleasurable pursuit, for there was an exquisiteness of enjoyment in the delectable art of painting, that was perfect enchantment to the writer; though now doomed to the toil of 16 and 18 hours a day in a business hated and despised; yet the palette was taken in hand after 10, and frequently after 12 o'clock at night, when all the inmates of the house were asleep—such was the vehement desire to excel. This was in a pent-up garret that looked out upon slates and tiles, and where time first showed it had given to the constant habit of night study power over the poor weak body. But so was he led astray by the luxury of enthusiastic sensations that, that which in the week he was legitimately deprived of, namely, time and opportunity to pursue his favorite study, the *Sunday* was taken to supply. Yes, this day, holy, through its being sanctified or set apart for holy purposes, and sacred for the services held in the name of Jesus, to sound his honors and spread abroad his fame; was, by the idolater, sacrificed at the shrine of his perverted intellect and earthly mind, to gratify the rage of passion, and give full power to the lust of ambitious pride. The annoying cares of a week of busy degradation at an end, he would shake off the fetters that bound him to the counter; when through the sinful impetuosity of enraged enthusiasm, he would sally out of town with the liberated joy of a released slave, from smoke and shopkeepers, to where

'Great Nature dwells, and lavish in her beauty,

The directing hand—of art demanded.'

"Here the canvass and colors were carried out into the fields, to paint the full orb'd ruler of the skies, with all the bright effects flowing from its effulgence (throwing a thousand visionary delights into the aerial expanse,) on nature's lovely carpet of green, under the fair free canopy of heaven.

'Or, calmly seated in some village bower,

He gave to themes of art the studious hour."

During this period of idolatrous madness, the writer believes that the Spirit of God was at work upon his soul. Knowing well the desperate struggles of besetting sins, and the power which an idol-lust has to dim the eye, and deaden sensitiveness of conscience, we will not say it was not so; but certainly thus to desecrate the Lord's Day is not in accordance with the usual experience of an awakened sinner. *Literature* has been perhaps to us as powerful, if not so maddening an idol as painting to the writer; but the first convictions beat all books but religious books out of the hand for the Lord's Day. Still the people of God are sometimes brought to this point, "If I have grace *now*, it must have had a beginning. *When* was that beginning? If not at such or such a time, it was not at all; for I am sure I then for the first time felt those things in my soul which I have since believed to be the effect of grace."

However this time, then, may seem obscured by sins and circumstances of that or any following period, we seem compelled to hold to that season, for if we relinquish *that*, there remains no other beginning to look to; and if our religion had no beginning, we have none at all. One of the most trying things in experience is, to have to look back through a mass of dark clouds to that one bright spot where the soul was quickened and awakened from its sleep in sin and death. That sin then stunned should revive again with apparently greater power than ever, that the heart which promised so well should turn out so deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, that the beginning, so full of life and feeling, tears and prayers, should, like an autumn morn, be so soon overcast with the mists and clouds of backslidings and inconsistencies—it is *this* which sometimes, when pondered over, hurls the soul well nigh to the very borders of despair. Doubts and fears of various kinds beset most of the living family of God; but Hart, in one line, has well pointed out their main source:

“And sin engenders doubt.”

If then no subsequent dealings of God with the soul cleared up the point, we must almost come to the conclusion to which despair would drive us, that this first awakening was but such a season of natural convictions and fleshly repentance as a Saul or a Herod might experience. Many of the children of God are here till delivered by some clear manifestation of the love of God to their soul, though perhaps few have been exactly in the position of the writer of the work before us, or been so carried away by an idol not positively in itself sinful.

We have dwelt on this point for two reasons, 1. On *general* grounds, as hoping thereby to cast a little light on a very trying place in experience; and, 2. On the *particular* ground of the work before us, for we candidly confess that we could not receive it as the beginning of a work of grace on the writer's soul, unless there were a clearer account of the dealings of God with him afterwards.

The Lord, therefore, did not allow him to follow the idol to his ruin. By terrible things in righteousness he threw it from its pedestal. He laid his hand first on his body, “ripe,” as he says, “through intemperate study, for disease, and struck it with a malignant distemper:”

“Removed from the scene of his enthusiastic struggles, he passed the Christmas of 1837 at his father's house with a high fever of the brain, suffering the torments of hell. The Royal Exchange of London was burning at the time, but his soul was in a hotter fire than that for the fire of divine wrath, the fury of divine vengeance, and the fierceness of God's anger against sin, were poured out upon him. And so was he tortured with anguish at the sight of his lost and ruined condition, that he was driven to the verge of madness through despair of pardon; and he underwent a torment of soul affliction, until he knew that his sins were forgiven. Indeed, such was the intensity of his sufferings in the ‘fiery trial’ that it seemed as if heaven and hell, or God and the devil were striving for the mastery of his soul; but he was mercifully preserved in the midst of the flames, sent only to consume the chaff and stubble he had gathered. (Isa. v. 24,) for he saw a form like unto the Son of God himself, (ah, it was the Son of God himself,) (Dan. iii. 25,) beheld

through a mysterious and incomprehensible vision; who, whilst he gave commandment to the fire to burn up that which was at enmity to himself, restrained its power to hurt the soul—this was to be purified and purged, not burnt up and destroyed.

“O wondrous day of grace, when, by the ‘Spirit of judgment’ and the ‘Spirit of burning,’ as fire and brimstone from the Lord out of heaven, the soul was burnt out of a satanic world of science as was Lot out of sensual Sodom, whilst many a monument as useless as the pillar of mineral salt was beheld, left standing on the road; when the Lord, merciful unto him, brought him forth and set him without the city of destruction, and led him by a right way to Zion, the city of solemnities.”

With every desire to view it favorably, there is, we confess, something in the above extract which does not exactly commend itself to our conscience. It may partly arise from the style of the writer, which rather lacks simplicity; but, taking into consideration the peculiar nature of his illness, were it not for the effects as described in our next extract, we should be inclined to say there was something too visionary in the deliverance spoken of. He says that “he saw a form like unto the Son of God himself (O it was the Son of God himself) beheld through a mysterious, incomprehensible vision.” He probably means “seen by the eye of faith,” for that is the only way the Son of God is now seen: “Whom not having seen ye love;” “endured, seeing him who is invisible.” But what makes us hope it was a real deliverance is based onw to things:

1. His “anguish at the sight of his lost and ruined condition, so as be driven to the verge of madness through despair of pardon.
- And, 2. The effects produced which abode with him upon recovery, thus described:

“The will of God being now thus far accomplished, he took the crucible from of the fire and though life had been despaired of, it not being his ‘time to die’ he recovered. Ah, happy season of returning health, which brought with it the joys of God’s salvation. When the Bible and poor John Bunyan’s ‘Holy War,’ took the place of Du Fresnoy and Sir Joshua Reynolds; when the proud honor of earthly fame was trampled in the dust; and another way was found of exercising his talents other than copying the mere works of nature; and that in celebrating the praises of the God of grace. Indeed, so was he absorbed in the contemplation of divine realities, and enamored with the rare beauties that presented themselves to his astonished and admiring view, that he felt quite loosened from all earthly things and severed from his sensual loves. The ‘high places’ had been removed and the idols cast down by this Jesus King upon the throne of the heart. When all the tinsel ornaments of his profession were so lightly esteemed that they were cast aside as nothing worth, to be destroyed.”*

We cannot expect many of our readers to enter into the things described in this book. The absorbing nature of the love of art can only be felt and understood by an artist in the true sense of the word, that is, one naturally gifted with that exquisite taste and refined sense of beauty which makes its pursuit the one great object and consuming passion of his life. Living in our common world of drudgery and business, knowing no nobler pursuit than the shop or farm, their highest literature the day-book and ledger, and deepest study the “Mark Lane Express,”

* “The servant was ordered to tear up his canvas pictures into ribbons, to light her fire with the ‘water colour drawings,’ and to burn the wooden frames.”

the finest prospect a field of good turnips, and the most beautiful perspective an unceasing crowd of customers, what know most of that inner world of taste and imagination in which the artist lives? To despise it is easy. The Turks used to shoot at those beautiful statues which, under the name of the Elgin Marbles, are reckoned the choicest treasures of art. And so you whose heart is in the till, or who are watching with exultation those rising markets which bring want to thousands, may shoot at such an idol as the love of painting. A new sign-post would probably be a finer painting to you than a damaged Claude; and a staring likeness of your wife by a travelling portrait painter a nobler production than a Vandyke or a Titian. To you this little book will be a mystery, and you will wonder how the man could be such a simpleton as to sit up half the night painting the moon. To us, however, its chief value is its originality; that it takes us not only into the artist's studio, but into his very heart, his inmost being, and shows us the intense flame which daily consumes him, and into which he unhesitatingly throws by a kind of self-sacrifice, health, strength, worldly prospects, every other occupation and every other pleasure, nay, often life itself. The road to that excellence, without which neither fame nor even a competency can be attained, is strewn with victims. Brain fever, consumption, madness, suicide, like so many bloodhounds, pull down many who started full of energy and hope; poverty, disappointment, and that gnawing sense of neglected merit which eats into the very vitals of the unnoticed artist, are the lot of others; few attain any such eminence as drives the wolf from the door, or gives them a name amongst men. We are almost tempted to cry, "God keep our children from being artists. They had better sell candles behind a counter, or spend all their days amidst sheep and bullocks, their morning breath the perfume of the dung-cart, and their afternoon walk the clods of the valley, than handle the painter's brush or the sculptor's chisel, if with success to be ruined by applause, if with ill-success to be crushed by disappointment. Happier far would have been our painter if he had ground colours instead of using them, made brushes instead of spoiling them, and woven canvas instead of covering it. For where amongst the band of artists and sculptors do we find any manifested children of God? The writer declares in his Preface that he never knew an instance of a person converted to God "from the regions of art or science" but himself. It is indeed most rare; but Dr. Gordon, whose dying experience was reviewed in Vol. XVIII. p. 308 of our periodical, is an example of one called out of "the regions of science;" and we know no reason why the snares of art should be stronger than those of philosophy.*

* The sculptor Bacon was certainly a professor of religion, for he was buried in Whitefield's chapel Tottenham Court Road, and the following inscription, written by himself, was placed over his grave: "What I was as an artist seemed to me of some importance while I lived; but what I really was as a believer in Jesus Christ is the only thing of importance to me now."

But we must not let our pen run on. We have said sufficient to show the interest we have taken in the book, which we accept as a most vivid and truthful description of the writer's experience, though it may not meet our views at every point; nor do we think many of our readers will feel towards it exactly as we do.

The remainder of the book, which is equally interesting and experimental, goes on to narrate the resetting up of the idol, the guilt and death produced thereby, and the distress and bondage caused by the way in which the Lord finally and fully broke it to pieces. We have only room for one or two more extracts, which will abundantly speak for themselves:

"Indeed so familiar did the sinful fondling grow, that like as Solomon's libidinous love, he could not give it up. It became as part of his nature; it clung to him as ivy to the oak; intruded itself into every thought, and stunted the growth of every spiritual desire. Not a cloud was seen ever in the common look of carelessness, but the mind attracted by the magnetic powers of that which is beautiful and grand in nature, at once studiously entered into a bewitching analysis of its peculiar form and varied tint; not a tree was passed in the simple walks of daily life but it must be viewed in its several bearings for pictorial use; the herd of cows, the flock of sheep, the group of men, were all made to serve the purposes of art; whilst light and shade; form and order; tone and colour; were taken into the account at every sight of nature whenever or wherever presented to view. Indeed, it became as natural to associate things seen with their representation on canvass, as it did to breathe. What a lamentable fulfilment of scripture prediction is here, which says, 'The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways.'"

The following extract much struck us at the time we read it. What chiefly arrested our mind was, his description of the way in which the idol pursued him into the very house of prayer. What strength must that idol-love of painting have had, that in the very service of the sanctuary he was gathering up materials for a painting, and was in idea sketching the minister whilst listening to him: But be not too hard upon him, brother idolator. Perhaps thy farm or thy shop has followed thee too into the house of prayer, especially if the hay were in the field and the day wet, or you were expecting the traveller's call for payment of a heavy amount to be made to-morrow.

"Pollution was his portion. Though in the very house of God, and engaged in the solemn services of the sanctuary, the mind would arrange a picture from the minister and people, or glean ideas of 'grouping' from the gathering multitude; or exercise its functions in the interior varieties of the place—anon, a bit of a cloud seen through a skylight, or the rays of the sun darting through a window, would revive all former feelings of delight; when the apt imagination would soon picture to the mind a fitly composed subject for their happy representation. Then the canvass and colors were thought of—the time when, and the way and manner how, the contemplated desire was to be carried out—the master that painted in that particular style; the many advantages obtained by a mature consideration of the subject, and so on, till he was worked up into the frenzy of enthusiasm, and carried away by the fit of fleshly excitement, into the delectable but delusive regions of art and science; forgetting where he was, who he was, and what he was."

His deliverance was mainly through the illness, nigh unto death, of a darling child, his last sketch being of his apparently dying infant (for the child was restored) as he lay on his mother's breast; but

it was the *word* of the Lord which eventually rescued his soul from the idol altogether :

“At length it pleased him whose ‘mercy endureth for ever,’ and who had said, ‘I have surely seen the affliction of my servant and heard his cry by reason of bondage; I have seen the oppression wherewith the enemy oppresses him, and heard his groanings;’ now that I have slain his hopes set upon idols, I will quicken his expectation from me; having wounded his heart by affliction, I will heal it in love. Return, O backsliding Israel unto the Lord, for I am married unto thee; and walk no more after the imagination of thine own evil heart, but after the ways of mine. and thou shalt no longer be termed desolate and forsaken, but become the delight of the Lord. (Isa. lxxii. 4.)

“Then God spake these words with power into the soul, in explanation of his reasons for afflicting it, and to show the end and design he had in view of accomplishing by it. ‘The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether; more to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned.’ (Ps. xix. 9–11.)”

If we have any apology to make for the length of our Review, it must be for our portion of it. The extracts, we think, will not be deemed too long, and will probably lead some of our readers to desire to procure for themselves the whole of the work. We could have wished the style a little more simple; but every writer has his style, which he can no more materially alter than the height of his stature or the colour of his hair. With this deduction, and its almost invariable accompaniment, occasional obscurity, we commend it to the notice of our readers.

I have often compared the travels of God’s children to a miser travelling a very dark, rugged road, complaining of the roughness of the way, till at length he finds a bag of gold: “O,” says he, “it was the right way!”—*W. T.*

Even an earthly parent is particularly careful and tender of a dying child; and surely, when God’s children are in that situation, he will, speaking after the manner of men, be doubly gracious to his helpless offspring, who are his by election, by adoption, by covenant, by redemption, by regeneration, and by a thousand other indissoluble ties.—*T'op lady.*

Think how many honest and industrious, perhaps too I might add good people, are making very hard shifts to struggle through life. Think what a comfort that would be to *them* which you might without any inconvenience spare from that abundance which God has given *you*.—*Doddridge.*

We learn divine lessons very slowly, and, like dull scholars, have need of the same lesson again and again. We are often unguarded, both in our comfortable as well as trying seasons; either “our mountain stands strong, and we shall never be moved;” or, “his mercy is clean gone, and his promise fails for evermore.” This has been the old complaint of Zion’s travellers. But the tossing of the vessel shall teach the young sailor in the end; if he enter on board ignorant, he shall be wiser before he reaches the desired haven. How much more did Jacob know of God when he could say, “The angel that redeemed me from all evil.”—*Timothy Priestley.*

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SEEKING THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

“Take no thought for the morrow.”—Matt. iv. 34.

This is a part of our blessed Lord's sermon to his disciples on the mount. It was not preached to all the multitude, for they had no part or lot in the gracious words which fell from his mouth. He spoke to the multitude in parables, that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand; but to his disciples he spoke plainly and familiarly, and opened their understanding to receive it as he opened his mouth to speak it. We read that he, “seeing the multitudes, went up into a mountain” away from them; “and when he was set down, his disciples came to him, and he opened his mouth and taught them, saying,” &c. It is, therefore, plain that what he said was to them, and for them; and all the drift of the sermon goes to prove the same thing, for many things are said which cannot apply to the multitude* at large, but especially belong to his following disciples.

After giving a great amount of wholesome advice and instruction, he goes on to prove the utter impossibility of any one attempting to serve God and mammon, and shows that either the one must be hated and the other loved, or the one loved and the other hated. Many have tried this experiment and have signally failed. One or the other must be dropped. We have a striking instance of this in Ruth and Orpah. They both started out for the land of Israel; they both made a profession of their mother's Lord; but, with a little natural persuasion and worldly representation, Orpah turns back again, goes into the world and mixes for life among her own people; but Ruth stands firm. The same persuasions were offered, the same representations made, but Ruth's heart was touched with some good thing towards the God of Israel. She would not turn back, nor could all the temptations of her own people or their gods break the tie that had been knitted by the Holy Ghost; and she exclaimed out, “Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.” Thus, you see, neither of them could

* Dr. Gill's view is that the sermon on the Mount was addressed not to the disciples only, but to the whole multitude, who heard him with astonishment (See vii. 28, 29). “Some things,” he says, “are directed to the disciples in particular and others regard the multitude in general.”

halt between two opinions. Both were soon manifested what they were; for Orpah kissed her mother-in-law and departed unto the world again, but Ruth clave to her and to the God of Israel.

After the Lord had made this representation, he goes on to exhort his disciples to a life of faith upon him, showing them the Lord's great care of them by comparing his works in nature. He says, "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat? and the body more than raiment?" God continually supplies you with natural life, and surely he will feed it. He supports and maintains your body in health and strength; surely he will give you clothes sufficient to cover it. If he gives you the greater, a body and life, surely he will give you the lesser, food and raiment; therefore, while he continually supplies the one, why should you live in continual suspense about the other, taking a burden upon yourself which the Lord has guaranteed to bear for you, robbing him of his prerogative to take your concerns and manage them for you. "Behold the fowls of the air," he goes on to say, "for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" They do not leave to-morrow's stock in hand; they gather not into the barn; they gather their homer for the day, and your heavenly Father always provides them with their day's homer; and if he provides them with their daily necessities, do you think he will not provide for you? Are ye not much better than they in his estimation? and will he therefore surely not provide for you? Will he provide for fowls, and leave his people, who are "much better" in his sight, unprovided for? And suppose he does not provide for you, what can you do towards it? what can your "taking thought" do? what will that accomplish? "Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?" And why, says he, "why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these, Wherefore if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" We are always toiling and spinning for the things of this life; if not with our hands we are with our minds; instead of resting in a quiet confidence upon the Lord's providing for us. He beautifies the lilies, and clothes the grass which lasts but for a day, and he will "much more," says the Lord, "clothe his people." And therefore the folly of all their concern, their "taking thought," their careful suspense,* as the margin reads, for

* This is the better rendering; for the words, "Take no thought," do not mean "never think about the morrow," which would exclude all industry, and forbid the farmer to sow his corn and the weaver to ply his shuttle, leaving us without food and raiment, except by express miracle; but the exhortation means, "Be not racked and torn asunder (as the word literally signifies) by over anxious care; do not be so swallowed up and buried in painful solicitude for to-morrow's provision, as if there were no God at hand to give it you."

their necessary provision; whereas, if we were but led aright to confide in him, our "peace would be as a river," rolling on in one successive and uninterrupted stream of quietude and rest. "O that thou hadst hearkened to my word," says the Lord, "then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea;" and he is said to be kept in peace, peace, one continual flow of peace, whose mind is stayed upon the Lord. Hence all the schemes, stratagems, and plans of Satan, in which he is generally successful, to get our minds from staying upon the Lord, because he very well knows that all the while a child of God has his mind fixed upon him, looking to him for every needed blessing, all the outer court matters cannot molest him. If circumstances get crooked, faith says God will straighten them. If foes arise, faith says God can conquer them. If food be needed, faith says God can supply it; and if raiment be wanted, faith says God can provide it. If troubles arise, faith says God can quell them; and, if darkness come, faith says God can enlighten it. And let whatever circumstances arise that may, faith says God can control them for my good. And in all these things, faith says more too; it says God will do it all. For as the poet sings,

"His love is as great as his power,
And knows neither limit nor end."

So that as no circumstance can occur but what God can manage, faith sees and appreciates it, and quietly waits for him to do it; and so peace and rest reign in the soul. For all that God is in covenant engagement, faith says he is to me; and all that he has, he has for me.

This seems to be the drift of the Lord's address to his disciples. He rebukes them with, "O ye of little faith;" implying, I humbly conceive, that if their faith were more firmly fixed in the Lord to provide for them, they would be more free from that suspense and concern to which they were so liable. God has promised these things; and nothing honors him more than for his people to rest upon his promise, with confidence that he will be faithful to it; as nothing dishonors him more than for them to "make him a liar," by practically disbelieving his word, in trying to manage that which he has engaged to manage for them, and to provide that which he has engaged to supply. O that wretched evil of human freewill and creature ability! It lies at the root of most of our evils, and works in the human mind to raise up treason against our most rightful Sovereign and his prerogatives. O that he would come "leaping upon the mountains and skipping upon the hills" of our freewill and self-sufficiency, and would take his whip of small cords and drive out these money changers, upsetting the tables of all them that buy and sell in this temple; and once more, with his all-prevailing voice, exclaim, "My house shall be called the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves." Thieves of the worst cast indeed are they who would rob God of his glory, Christ of his grace, and the Spirit of his work; and such

thieves indeed are those monsters of creature abilities, which molest and invade the people of God.

Spiritual confidence cannot thrive but in a soul emptied of self-sufficiency and creature might. Creature strength will be sure to want to provide for and help itself; but not so with a soul thoroughly emptied. He will be glad to find the Lord has engaged to do all for him, and will rejoice in the glorious truth that Christ is full of grace for needy souls. And as he receives supplies of that grace, his soul will exult to know that the supply can never fail or give out, because it is an unceasing fulness, a shoreless ocean, without bank, bound, or bottom; and here he will be glad to receive strength on strength, and grace for grace.

This looking to the Lord, therefore, for all we need, in soul and body, cannot be until we come to have "no confidence in the flesh," consequent upon our finding out that in our flesh dwelleth no good thing. Peter thought he had some power to keep himself from cursing and swearing, and thought he had no need to let Jesus wash his feet; but he was glad to come to the terms afterwards, and that with tears too, to be nothing and let the Lord be all; and methinks this was beautifully set forth in Martha and Mary. Martha, you see, wanted to wait upon the Lord. She was "cumbered about much serving," but he did not approve of it. She wanted to show her affections for the Lord in a way which was not right. She wanted to do something for him; but no; he would not have it. Mary chose the "good part;" and what was that? Why, she let him serve her. She sat down at his feet, the true posture of a heaven-taught soul. O yes. She heard, received, swallowed, and digested his words. This is a true evidence of saintship, and one of very ancient date too. It runs thus: "All thy saints are in thy hand; they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words." (Deut. xxxiii. 3.) And when his words are thus received, they are gracious words, as we read, and, consequently, administer grace to the hearer of them. (See 2 Cor. viii. 19.) And this absorbs the soul into a feelingly gracious state; so that all the much serving of him is swallowed up in his much serving of us, for "he is among us as one that serveth." Here then we must come, and here receive, and then we shall, as Erskine beautifully speaks of faith,

"Employ Jesus to do all,
That can within the compass of salvation fall."

Now, after giving us the negative to a very great extent, the Lord goes on to show us what we are to seek. We are not to be concerned about food; we are not to be careful about raiment; for our heavenly Father knoweth we have need of these things, and will consequently supply all our needs according to his riches in glory by Jesus Christ. But one thing we are to seek after, and have our mind upon; one thing is to engross our affections, take our entire attention, and occupy our mind. And what is that? It is as follows: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

Without stopping to remark upon the various significations which may be meant by "the kingdom of God," it may suffice to say that they all point to one thing, and in many cases are but means to and emblems of that one which is in the kingdom of God being in us, and not consisting in meat and drink, but in "righteousness, joy, and peace in the Holy Ghost." The kingdom of God in a sinner's soul, you see, is here said to be by the Holy Ghost; and these very things are described as the fruit of the Spirit in other parts of scripture. The Spirit, therefore, being the first cause, and the only preserving cause of this kingdom in the soul, as he is sent especially to testify of Christ, and as his office is emphatically to take of the things of Christ and show them unto us, these graces become the channel by which Christ is manifested, through which he is apprehended and known; for we receive no grace apart from him, nor for any other object than to lead to him. It is by virtue of union to him that we receive it, and to make him manifest and known is the object of it. Hence, in seeking Christ we are seeking his kingdom; and in seeking his kingdom aright we are seeking him.

I therefore conclude that seeking Christ with an empty heart for his great salvation, and seeking his righteousness with a naked back for our entire apparel, is what is really meant in the text; and this is to be the first object of the soul, the main-spring of the affections, the chief aim of the mind. Seek first, mainly, uppermost, Christ and him crucified, Christ and his righteousness, leaving all the passing trifles of the day to a covenant Father's management, who knows what you have need of; and thus let your affections be set on Jesus, as the chiefest among ten thousand and the altogether lovely.

Who lives up to this mark? who grows on this soil? who treads in these steps? I answer, all the children of God do, just in the measure that the sovereign grace of the Holy Ghost leads them unto it, and no farther. I am bold to say, a divine power alone can do it, and that that agency does it too, in all the people of God, to some extent and measure, or to me there seems but little proof of any one's manifested heirship.

Hastings, 1854.

O.

What! an unconverted man, and laugh! Shouldst thou see one singing merry songs, that is riding up Holborn to Tyburn; to be hanged for felony, would you not count him beside himself, if not worse? And yet thus it is with him that is for mirth, while he stands condemned by the book of God for his trespass.—*Bunyan*.

Why should not Jesus Christ show Herod a miracle? Because, in all probability, it was only to satisfy his curiosity that he desired to see one. What may we learn from Herod's never having seen Christ before? That Christ was no friend to courts; that pomp and greatness keep thousands from Jesus Christ; and that we ought therefore rather to thank God for our being in a lower estate.—*Whitefield*.

COMMUNINGS OF A PILGRIM WITH AN AGED BROTHER IN THE LORD.

My dear aged Brother in Christ,—The tender mercies of our ever-loving, gracious, covenant God be thy comfort, and his life-giving presence thy everlasting portion.

Beloved, out of the abundance of my heart, contracted as I feel it to be, I desire again to address you; and as our redemption is every day and hour drawing nearer and nearer, a desire, which I could not resist, sprang up in my breast this morning to write to you to know how it is with you, and to tell you a little how it is with me. It is meet, my dear brother, to be often stirring each other up by way of remembrance, as we are so prone to forget those things we should remember, and to keep in remembrance those things we should forget. There is nothing on this side endless misery that can equal the deceitfulness, or go beyond the depths of sin, which I feel in my heart; but the reigning power of divine grace is within, which keeps it under. And I dare speak for you, that your heart is quite as bad; worse it cannot be; for every heart knows its own bitterness, and a stranger intermeddles not with its joys. We each know our own heart's bitterness, and are not strangers to those joys prepared for suffering saints. Blessed be God for that. The bitterness of heart which I feel is because I cannot cease from sin, and because my sins so often separate between me and my dear Lord Jesus. O my dear brother, I do feel it a most heart-rending thing to be thrust at a distance from him whom my soul loves, whose glories I have seen by faith, whose blood I have felt in my conscience, and with whom we both hold divine communion below. I have been blessed with it, and do esteem it a million times more sweet than life itself. A stranger to the new birth knows nothing of this bitterness, nor of these joys. "Ye must be born again;" but who can tell what it is? Only they who have felt how hard it is to be held up in life, as though by the hair of their heads, in the midst of Zion's furnace, as dying every moment, and, behold, they live! Let the quickened family of God answer me if they can. Would I know what sin has done, I must behold a suffering Jesus, bearing the curse in his people's room and stead. Would I feel comfort in thus looking on him, whom my sins have pierced, I must know, by God's own witness felt within, that he died for me. Would I have a sure word of prophecy to depend upon, to take heed unto, and be sealed by to the day of redemption, I must feel God the Spirit bringing home his own word with power into my heart, and leaving the sweet impression of everlasting love and atoning blood therein. Would I reign with Christ above, I must have grace given me to love, serve, obey, and glorify him while here below, or my hopes will be in vain. And, lastly, would I not be deceived in these things, I must be quickened, brought low, condemned, sin condemned and self condemned, and feel myself a sinner at the feet of Christ, praying for salvation, be made willing to accept it on his own terms, as all of grace, and not of works, be favored to receive his salva-

tion with gladness and joy into my heart, and give all diligence to make my calling and election sure.

This is God's standard for his saints to try the spirits by his own word in the hands of the Spirit. By this standard God has tried me. By this standard I have tried myself, and the effect thereof is this. My soul, with sorrow and joy of heart, now appeals to God, and cries out with dear Peter of old, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee, and would live and die in thy cause, a witness for thee, to thine endless honor, to the wonder of men and angels, and to my soul's comfort and joy for ever." This is the climax of my desires. God, who will search Jerusalem with candles, and ere long will arise to purge his floor, knows that I lie not. Yet I am made to see and feel how short I come of God's revealed will. Still my soul can truly say with David, "How I love thy precepts; thy commands are my delight; I meditate on thy words; they are a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path;" and when opened up, unsealed, unfolded, and revealed to me by God the Holy Ghost, they yield me comforts divine within, the consolations of the Spirit, life and light, peace and joy; and then my soul re-echoes his worthy praise, and cries, "The law of thy mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver," yea, nothing under heaven can once be compared thereunto. What joy to look within my heart, and prove that my feelings so far accord with God's word and will, and the certain gospel sound therein, as briefly named hereafter, as to give me encouragement still to hope in his mercy, and to rest assured that he will carry on his own work in my soul, and consummate it in glory at last. These thoughts often lay me weeping in the dust at Jesus' feet, and make me willing to be anything God pleases, or nothing, so that a precious Christ may be glorified thereby, and I be favored while here, and above be where Jesus is, to behold his glory, to commune with him, and to praise and bless his dear worthy name for ever and ever. It is written, "Ye must be born again." Feeling, tasting, and hearing, are true signs of life within. And my soul cannot rest without tasting, hearing, and feeling the good word of life; therefore do I hope I am born again—born of the Spirit.

1. "He shall convince of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." My conscience is convinced of the same with a witness. "Sin" I feel at work in my members, bringing me into captivity to the law of sin and death, so that with Paul I often have to cry out in the bitterness of my soul and anguish of my spirit, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" The "righteousness" of God in punishing Christ for sin, in the behalf, room, and stead of, and for the sins of his elect, his chosen, his beloved bride, and punishing the non-elect, here and for ever, in their own persons, as they stand in their natural head, Adam, according to their works; the "righteousness" of Christ, that it is really imputed to me, because I feel justified therein by faith, and enjoy the peace of God, the sure and blessed effects thereof within my soul; and of "judgment"—God's judgment, his judging me in time past, bringing

me in guilty at his bar, condemning, pardoning and acquitting me and giving me his divine mark of sonship withal. O what an unmerited, distinguishing favor! My soul weeps for the mercy I have found, and I am now waiting to be openly acknowledged by him, before men and angels, at the last great tribunal day. "The judgment" will come, when Christ shall descend with a shout and the trump of God. His elect saints shall rise first, and angels with him, to judge the non-elect, at the judgment of the great day, which is the judgment to come, which I am convinced will take place.

2. It is also written, "There is none other name given among men, whereby we can or must be saved," only Christ crucified. My soul does bless the Lord indeed that there is not, for I feel so well satisfied to be saved by him alone, that I am sure that I do not want any other :

So satisfied with Christ to save,
With him I'll death itself outbrave;
And rest my all on his dear blood,
Nor fear e'en hell, nor Jordan's flood.

My soul rejoices at the sound,
And hopes in Jesus to be found;
My heart now melts with joy and love,
And longs to reign with him above.

Dear name, the name I love to plead;
I've proved my Christ a friend indeed;
And crave for power and grace to show,
The debt of love to him I owe.

3. It is recorded, "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in me (Christ) peace." The peace of God enjoyed in the soul fits the back for every burden, and is the only thing that can effectually and sweetly make a proud, self-righteous, haughty sinner bend to God's will, submit and resign himself to divine sovereignty. When the influence of divine grace is withdrawn but for a moment, my flesh dislikes the sound "tribulation," and shrinks, and frets, and rebels, and murmurs beneath the rod, and cannot submit to the solemn word; but as soon as Jesus again appears, and whispers in my breast, "It is I, be not afraid; thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven," then all is right, and all my flesh, and body, and soul, and powers are so completely overcome, that I feel as if I could weep, and submit to anything that is God's will, and sing myself away to everlasting bliss.

4. Again, I am assured that it is, "Through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom." In vain my flesh seeks for a smother path, for no smother path can be found; but the words "must enter the kingdom," being engraved deep on my heart by the fingers of immutable love, sweeten all, bend my will to God's will, and make me, with sweet resignation, press forward still more and more, desiring to lay aside every weight, which are many, and the sin which does so easily beset me, which is unbelief, with dear Paul, "if so be I, by any means, may attain." Then methinks, when once I have got safe beyond the gun-shot of sin and Satan,

I shall soon be more than a million times repaid for every groan I have heaved, every pain I have felt, and every trouble and sorrow I have endured in the wilderness, and I shall be right well satisfied in the unveiled presence of my Lord for ever.

5. And, lastly, to add no more, "If ye love me, (Christ,) keep my commandments." This is the mark whereby it is known to others that we love the Lord Jesus. But all who keep his commandments before men do not love him. The love of God and Christ enjoyed, known, and felt within, is a secret only known to a very few, and is the "more excellent way" that Paul speaks of as the mainspring of action in every quickened soul, and the turning point between a believer and an unbeliever. There is not a single work or action that can be acceptable to God, but what springs therefrom. Let not this wound one of the Lord's dear weaklings. Every groan they feel, because of the workings of sin within, proves there is a holy opposition principle of grace in their hearts, which God himself has implanted there, which hates sin, and directs their mournful souls to Jesus and his blood for help, salvation, and cure, and makes their groanings and sighings and cryings arise with acceptance and well-pleasing to God. Every desire they feel to be found in Christ, and to live to his honor and glory while here, in the enjoyment of his presence and great salvation, below and above, proves this great mainspring, the love of Christ, is in their hearts. Although they dare not say they love him, they can say they desire to love him, to be with him, and to be free from sin; and this desire springs from love to Jesus, yea, is love itself; and as sure as God is in heaven, and I have felt any love for his dear name, the time will come when such desires shall be granted; therefore let not any true mourning souls be discouraged, but watch, and wait, and pray, for it is good that such should do so, and wait for the salvation of God:

For they who long his great salvation here to see,
And pray, and wait, soon each shall say, "Christ died for me."

The commandments of God in the law are to those under the law; but to them the law only commands, and curses for every disobedience. Not so the commandments of God in the gospel; they are to those who are delivered from Sinai's yoke, the bondage of the law, and brought under the sweet ruling, constraining power of the gospel. To them Christ says, (to try their faith, and love, and sincerity,) "If ye love me, keep my commandments." When he lets a little of his love into their hearts, with power to obey, then off they go, and cry, "We love him because he first loved us." O my brother, how blessed it is to be thus brought from under the terrors of the law, to live and die, and be thus constrained to obey beneath Christ's yoke, the gospel yoke. "It is good that a man should bear the yoke in his youth;" yea, when he is old also. My dear friend, in the midst of our declining years, we both begin to feel the untold blessedness thereof. What should I do now, that I begin to look downwards to the tomb, were I in such a careless, hardened, wretched state as I was. If I were in that condition,

I could not extricate myself. But God, in the midst of deserved judgment, has remembered me in mercy, and had mercy upon me, that I might not be utterly expelled from him :

“ O for this love, let rocks and hills,
Their lasting silence break ;
And every quicken'd sinner's tongue,
My Saviour's praises speak.”

The fears of death do not disturb my mind. Atoning blood has removed the monster's sting from my conscience. My grief is now, as I named before, because I cannot cease from sin, because my sins interpose between me and my God, and because I cannot live, and love, and serve, and glorify him as my soul desires. Vanity I see inscribed on all things. The Lord is very kind to me, and sweetens my morsel with his love, and my soul blesses his dear name for his mercies. I feel such a solemn, sacred sweetness mingling with my mournings, that rather makes my groanings an inward pleasure to me than otherwise. As it is written, “ Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted ;” therefore, to mourn over my sins and after Jesus suits me best ; for at my time, when my heart begins to grow careless and easy, so that I cannot mourn before the Lord with true contrition, compunction, and brokenness of heart, I feel myself so restless and dissatisfied, that I cannot live till I am brought into a broken, humbled, mourning state again. For this cause my soul covets quiet and solitude, that I may groan out my life and my desires, unheard and unnoticed by mortals, to God, who hears in secret and well rewards his wrestling Jacobs openly.

Now, my dear brother, if these simple effusions of a worthless sinner's broken heart should be attended with divine savor to your soul, it will be well, and you will know thereby that I have learned them, not by the wisdom that man teacheth, but by the teachings of the Holy Ghost ; and if they are made subservient to stir us up to greater searchings of heart, and provoke us to an enlarged zeal in these our latter days, for the honor of the Lord of Hosts, and to the real comfort of our sorrowful hearts, my desires in thus writing you will be accomplished. The God of all grace, love, and mercy go before us, and be around us, as a pillar of a cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night, teaching us his whole will in Christ Jesus, and giving us grace to do it, inspired by love divine, and be with us to bless us, and comfort us, and help us, till he has taken us safe over Jordan's river into his heavenly kingdom and glory, to see his face, and sing his praise, and sin no more, even as it is meet for me to think and believe this of him, and of you, my brother, and of myself also—that he will do so indeed, as sure as the earnest has been given us.

Myself and partner salute you and yours in the Lord, and hope that you are well. Our kind love to you and friends in Christ Jesus. The God of Israel be with you.

Yours affectionately in the Lord,

Bedworth, May 10th, 1848.

G. T. C.

FAREWELL LETTERS WRITTEN BY A TREMBLING HAND.

My ever-dear Children,—It is with much weakness I attempt this, but feel anxious to write once more to those I love so dear. I am, through the love and kindness of God, in a comfortable frame of mind; no doubt, no fear. "I know that my Redeemer liveth." I must, my dears, leave you all. It grieves me to grieve you all, for indeed I know you will feel it much; and could I kiss the tears away I would. May you all feel more and more of the reality and life-giving power of the glorious gospel of the ever blessed God. My breathing is so bad I think every night will be my last. How highly favored I am with the presence of the Lord. O how he permits me to praise him, and adore him. What a glorious person he is, and what a great redemption! This fills my soul.

And now, my dears, I must leave you, and the dear, dear children. That the Lord may bring us to the enjoyment of all these realities, has been the daily prayer of your ever-loving anxious Mother.

Belgrave Lodge, November 5th, 1852.

My ever dear Daughters,—I hope you will bear one another's burdens, and be helpers one of another of the grace of God. I hope E. is better. I know you make yourself worse by grieving about me. Don't grieve, my dear children.

I am fenced in with the peace of God. I am still the same. O how truly blessed is this peace of God which passeth all understanding. It keeps my heart and mind through Jesus Christ. How shall I praise my gracious God for such love as this? My poor body is very painful. I feel longing to drop it. I commend you and all yours to Jesus; he will in no case cast out. My ever-dear children, praise the Lord for me, and may we all meet and praise him in nobler strains above.

Belgrave Lodge, November 15th.

MERCY MANIFESTED.

Dear Friend,—No doubt you have been expecting to hear from me before this, but I really felt so wretched that I could not write; but now blessed be the Lord I do feel better. I received your very kind letter, and felt a little encouragement from it; for I thought that others had felt as I did, and had been saved. It did give me a little hope, and I inwardly said, who can tell? He has saved guilty, vile, ruined sinners; peradventure he may save me. And now, my friend, I will endeavor to give you a little account of the way in which I have gone on since I left you, as far as I can recollect it, and if you can see anything of the hand of the Lord in it, give him all the praise, for he is worthy to receive all the praise and glory for ever and ever. "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name be all the praise."

If ever thou hast had mercy upon me, it is all free and undeserved, for surely I deserve nothing but hell. Thou art indeed merciful.

When I look back and think of my ways, I often stand and wonder that the Lord has not cut me down as a cumberer of the ground; but his mercy endureth for ever. Yes, my friend, I can plainly see through my supposed righteousness, and that when I was with you I knew no more about religion than a stone. I used to think that all was right, though I must confess I felt sometimes I wanted something, but still thought I could be saved if I liked, that I could be good, and that my works would save me. But O, blessed be the Lord! He has opened my blind eyes to see it is all of grace, and he shall have all the praise; for what was it but mercy that he did not cut me down, or leave me as I was until I lifted up my eyes in torment?

Now I will proceed. After I left B——, I went on, as I thought, very well for a little time; but soon it seemed as if all my supposed religion left me, and I went about on the Lord's Day to find my own pleasure, if it can be called pleasure. Sometimes I have gone to chapel in the morning, but another, to my shame I speak it, I have gone in company with another young man to the ale-house, and then in the evening gone to the chapel again. O bitter mockery! What a mercy the Lord did not cut me down then. Who can say I did not deserve it? O yes, O yes; the Lord would have been just in banishing me to the nethermost hell, there to have received my just reward. But O, bless his holy name! his mercy endureth for ever. Well, I went on like this for some time, and often went in an evening to a public-house to play at skittles, &c., and ran in all the ways of Satan; and, shame upon me, delighted in it too. And yet the world used to call me a nice steady young man. I was getting worse and worse, when, on one Lord's Day, my fellow servant H—— saw me reading a book not at all suited to the day, nor hardly to any other time. She took it away from me and put Mr. Huntington's Bank of Faith into my hand, desiring me to read that. I shall always love her for it, for the other was not fit for me to read. Many were the prayers she put up for me, and the tears she shed to see me going on in this way. I could not leave Mr. H.'s book till I had read it through, and I felt that I liked the author of it and the book too; and seeing others of his advertised I got them; but still I seemed as if I could not leave my old way, but went on getting worse and worse and even consented to become a member of a "free and easy society." This was the time the Lord sent his blessed truth here. Well, the day before my name was to be put down to go every Monday evening to drink and sing, being Lord's Day I went to chapel, and the good minister did expose me to myself. He said, "You who go to the public-house, and enjoy your mug and sing songs to the devil, you have no part in this. O you are in an awful state; you know nothing of these things." I do not know what his text was, neither do I recollect anything else he said. This was enough for me; I felt that I had done with the public-

house. I sent word for my name not to be put down till I went, and I never intended to go.

A week after this my poor mother was taken away. This seemed a judgment upon me, but I felt my heart as hard as a stone; and yet I hoped God would soften it and make me feel something; and he gradually led me to see what a guilty sinner I was and how far I had fallen. O how I expected to go to hell, and was often afraid to go to bed for fear I should awake up there. I knew that was just what I deserved and could not expect any other; and I often wondered that I was still alive and out of hell. My language was, Do not send me to hell. Do spare me a little longer. I seemed afraid to cry for mercy. I was in this dreadful state for some time. At length I felt I might cry for mercy in and through what Jesus had done for guilty man; but I could not think he died for me. I thought that he was able and willing to save some, but he would not save me. Before my eyes began to be opened to see what a guilty wretch I was, H—— told me that God had chosen "a certain number of persons to be saved." But I replied I would not believe it, if all the world told me so. I urged all the arguments of a carnal mind, and said God would be unjust in so doing. But when I saw what a state I was in, I could plainly see that it was only by an act of free and sovereign mercy that any poor sinner was saved, and that God would be just in damning all the sons and daughters of Adam. I also at that time read Mr. Barry's work on Particular Election Before Time, and was firmly established in that doctrine. And when I heard, as I sometimes did, ministers in the pulpit speak of knowing their election of God, I thought them the happiest people on earth, and thought, what would I give to know my name was written in the book of life? All this time I was in a dreadful state. I saw the uncertainty of life and that I might be taken away in a moment; and I knew if I died in that state I must be sent to hell. At length I saw, or thought I saw, a little hope, and that hope kept getting stronger, when I heard the ministers say they had felt the same; and I kept longing for every Lord's Day that I might hear more of it. My hopes brightened, and I saw that salvation was free to every one that believeth, but I could not believe. And I saw that Jesus would have all the glory, for man could do nothing; and I began to hope that the Lord would have mercy upon me for Jesus's sake; and I was enabled to cry for mercy, not for what I could do, but in Jesus's name. I could see that none were ever sent away who cried after him for mercy, when he was upon earth, without obtaining it; and I thought if he was upon earth now I would not go away without it, but would follow him wherever he went until he did have mercy upon me and forgive me. But, blessed be his precious name! "He is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever;" "Mighty to save;" "Able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him." Last Lord's Day and Monday, I felt I was just the character to be saved, and that Jesus was just the Saviour

I wanted, and I thought he would save me. On Tuesday I had such a feeling sense of his love and mercy, that I thought I should never doubt any more; but that soon went off, and 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12 was powerfully on my mind, and I thought I should be deceived and damned at last; but again I thought if I had some passage of scripture given me I should believe; and, bless his dear name, he did satisfy my soul. On Wednesday morning I was at work, thinking upon my state, when these words came: "Whosoever cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out;" but I thought I was so vile, and filthy, and guilty." Then came the following words: "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." I stood and wondered, I cannot tell what I did, but when I came to look for my sins and terrors, O wonderful to say, they were all gone, all fled. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. And then came these blessed words: "As far as the east is from the west, so far have I removed thy transgressions from thee." O this was enough. I did not want any more; my joy was complete. I felt as if I did not care for all the world. None but those who have felt this can know what it is. I think I could not have borne it long. You, my friend, can judge of what I felt, for you have felt the same. I could not keep it to myself, but was obliged to go and tell it to a good woman who lives near here, and we rejoiced together. O it is happiness indeed; but "not unto us, but unto thy holy name be all the praise and glory, O Lord, for ever and ever. Amen."

Now, dear friend, I cannot write any more at present. Do let me hear from you soon. Give my kind love to all, and accept the same yourself and believe me to be your affectionate friend,

Whitwell, March 9th, 1855.

W. G.

Whatever thoughts we may have of God and his providence, while we are in a trial, he knows he shall have our eternal approbation in the end. No doubt Jacob had many strange thoughts when all things seemed against him, but at the conclusion of life he declares to a rising generation, the Angel had blessed him all his life long, and he knew he was going to be blessed for evermore.—*Timothy Priestley.*

Although then the law, sin, and the devil cry out against us never so much, with great and terrible roarings, which seem to fill heaven and earth, and far to exceed this groaning of our heart, yet can they not hurt us. For the more fiercely they assail us, accuse and torment us with their cryings, so much the more do we groan; and in groaning lay hold upon Christ, call upon him with heart and mouth, cleave unto him and believe that he was made under the law, that he might deliver us from the curse of the law, and destroy both sin and death. And thus, when we have taken hold of Christ by faith, we cry through him, "Abba, Father." (Gal. iv. 6.) And this our cry does far surmount the roaring of the law, sin, the devil, &c.—*Luther.*

CLEAN WATER; OR, THE PURE AND PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST, FOR THE CLEANSING OF POLLUTED SINNERS.

BY RALPH ERSKINE.

“Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.”—Ezekiel xxxvi. 25.

This text is a precious promise uttered by the mouth of God, and it has a reference to a certain time, even to a sad and sinful time, when his great name was polluted and profaned. His people, to whom he speaks, had been polluting his name, had polluted themselves, and were overrun with all abominations; and yet, even then, instead of drawing his sword of wrath, he, in sovereignty, utters a word of grace to them, and opens a door of hope. Let men and angels wonder at it: “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean,” &c.

In this and the following context you may observe these six things: 1. What God will *do* to them: “I will sprinkle you,” &c. 2. What he will *give* them: “A new heart will I give you,” &c. 3. What he will *take* out of them: “I will take away the heart of stone.” 4. What he will *put* in them: “I will put my Spirit within you.” 5. What he will *cause* them to do: “I will cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.” 6. What he will *be* unto them: “I will be your God, and ye shall be my people.” Every one of these promises are uttered out of the mouth of God; the Undertaker for them. They are ascertained unto our faith as declarations of the decrees of heaven and acts of his sovereign will; by which will we are sanctified and saved, and which will our glorious Redeemer came to execute, with infinite pleasure in his heart, saying, “I delight to do thy will, O my God!” *q. d.* “It is thy will that I feel all these promises with my blood; then, ‘Lo, I come!’ Let heaven and earth, men and angels, witness that, ‘Lo, I come,’ with infinite delight in this work, for thy will is my will; therefore, ‘Lo, I come’ to subscribe thy will with my blood; and let this blood of mine run like clean water amongst a company of unclean sinners, for purging and cleansing them.” Why, then may the Father say, “I am pleased with what thou hast done; and, in testimony thereof, I take this clean water in my own hand, and turn my speech to these polluted sinners, with this gracious proclamation: Hear and believe, O sinner, what my will is, ‘I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.’”

Here we may inquire,

I. How the blood of Christ is compared to *water*.

II. In what respect it is *clean* water.

III. What way it is *applied* or *sprinkled* upon the unclean, for cleaning and cleansing them.

IV. Speak concerning that *cleanness*, or *cleansing*, that is the effect of this sprinkling of clean water.

I. The blood of Christ may be compared to *water* in several respects. In general, as water rises from the ocean, so does the blood of Christ from the ocean of the love of God in Christ, "who loved us, and gave himself for us," to be a bloody sacrifice for our sins. More particularly,

1. Water, being *liquid*, when poured out it *runs abroad and spreads*. Even so the blood of Christ, that was poured out upon the cross at Jerusalem, it spread about and spread abroad; as it is said, "And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them to the hinder sea." (Zech. xiv. 8.) This blood spreads abroad as far as the gospel dispensation does, of which Christ says, "Go, preach the gospel to every creature; publish remission of sin in my blood."

2. Water is *penetrating*. When poured out it runs into all the secret caverns and pores of things it meets with; it sinks and sweeps through all the open gaps and chinks of the dry ground on which it falls. Even so does the blood of Christ run in through all the open gaps of a guilty conscience; it "cleanses from all sin."

3. Water is *soft and penetrable*. Men may easily dip their whole body into it; even so, whosoever comes to this fountain, may find it as easy to put in their whole man as to put in only a finger of the old man, a single member of the body of sin. Nay, as it is easier and better for a man that would be wholly washed to cast in his whole body into the water all at once than to step down and put in his hand or his head, or even to wade in by the side of the water with his feet, so, when faith is acted on the blood of Christ, it is acted best when it plunges wholly into this "fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness." Besides particular acts of faith, in improving the blood of Christ for removing this and that particular sin, there is warrant in the text for a general plunge into this great depth, for washing all sin away: "From *all* your filthiness, and from *all* your idols, will I cleanse you."

4. Water is *useful* in many respects. It is a bath to nature that the God of nature has appointed for purifying things that are polluted. Clothes, and other things that are polluted, are usually washed in water; thus the blood of Christ is for washing and cleansing from all soul-filthiness here. Water quenches fire; so does the blood of Christ quench the fire of God's vindictive wrath. Water quenches thirst; God's justice thirsted for satisfaction, and was fully satisfied with this blood; and the awakened conscience cannot be satisfied anywhere else, but with a drink of this warm blood of the sacrificed Lamb of God, this water that gushed out of the smitten rock. Water softens the earth; it is said to be made soft with showers. O nothing softens a hard heart like the water of the blood of Christ! "They shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn." Water heals wounds in the body. O the blood of Christ is the healing water: "By his stripes we are healed." Water makes the earth green, flourishing, and fruitful; even so the blood of Christ, applied by the Spirit, makes all the "trees of righteousness bring forth their fruit in their season."

5. Water is a *means of life*. We cannot live without it ; many perish for want of it. Even so the blood of Christ is the means of spiritual and eternal life ; we cannot live without it. .

II. The second thing proposed was, To show in what respect it is *clean water*. This question is of the more moment and concern to us, in regard that, if the blood of Christ had not been clean water, it could never have removed our uncleanness, or made us clean ; but God here says, "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean." To make us have clean souls, clean hearts, clean consciences, it behoved to be clean water ; for foul and muddy water would never have done it. Now, the blood of Christ is clean, pure, and holy water, in the following respects :

1. The blood of Christ is clean water in respect of the *contrivance* of it, and the Fountain-head from which this water issued, namely, the council of peace from all eternity betwixt Jehovah and Christ ; wherein it was decreed that our Surety should have blood to shed, and for this end a body should be given him : "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me ;" (Heb. x. 5 ;) that is, a human nature to be a sacrifice for sin.

2. The blood of Christ is clean water in respect of the *conveyance* of it ; for he was "conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin ;" therefore it was said, "That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." That holy thing contracted no filth by coming of the first Adam ; no contamination by being born of a sinner, as will further appear by what follows.

3. The blood of Christ is clean water in respect of the *subject* of it, or the Person in whose veins it runs, and from whose "pierced side came blood and water." In his person there was a perfect cleanness, both in respect of his divine and human nature united in one person. He was naturally clean as man, and infinitely clean as God.

4. The blood of Christ is clean water in respect of the *effusion* of it. This water was drawn out of that clean vessel with the Father's clean finger ; for "it pleased the Lord to bruise him." (Isa. liii. 10.) It is true the Jews shed his blood with defiled hands : "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." (Acts ii. 23.) Godly men could not have been employed in such an action as that of "crucifying the Lord of glory." An artificer uses a crooked tool to do that which he cannot do with a straight one ; but this does not justify their wickedness any more than a fair and perfect child born justifies the adultery in which it was begotten. God may bring about his holy purpose by wicked instruments ; and indeed the "awakening of the sword of justice against the man that was God's fellow" was one of the most holy actions of God, as well as a most glorious work of grace and love. And when God put out his holy hand to draw this clean water, and smote the rock that the water might run out, Christ himself, the living Rock, poured out the water voluntarily ; and therefore it is said, that "when his soul was

made an offering for sin," that in his passion he was active; for "he poured out his soul unto death." (Isa. lv. 10.) Hence it is clean water in the effusion of it.

5. The blood of Christ is clean water in respect of the *channel* in which it runs; I mean the gospel dispensation. This water runs purely and powerfully here; "for it is the power of God unto salvation; for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith." (Rom. i. 16, 17.) Gospel promises and gospel doctrines are both pure and clean basins, or conduits, wherein this clean water is brought to our hands. (Ps. xix. 8, 9.) It is true the gospel dispensation outwardly may be puddled with foul feet or perverted with foul mouths, (Gal. i. 7.) but the water will not incorporate with the mud. Hence it is not muddy error but cleanly truth that is the vessel wherein this clean water is conveyed unto us. It runs in the channel of the divine declaration here: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you."

6. The blood of Christ is clean water in respect of the *application* of it; not only the clean heart from which it is poured, but also the clean hand by which it is applied. Such was the cleanness of his heart that was pierced and broached to let out this blood, that he could say, "I delight to do thy will; thy law is within my heart." This water was his heart's blood, and the blood of a holy heart that never had a vain, sinful thought; that never had anything written in it but the law of God, nor engraven upon it but "Holiness to the Lord." Such is the clean hand that applies it, that it is no other than the Holy Spirit of God, to whom, as the Efficient, the sprinkling of the blood of Christ is appropriate. (1 Pet. i. 2.) And here the Spirit of God, speaking in his word, puts his infinitely clean hand in this clean water, and says, "I will sprinkle it upon you." And again,

7. The blood of Christ is clean water in respect of the *designation* and *institution* of it. It is sanctified of God for the purpose of our purification. Hence their sin is said to be dreadful and their guilt egregious, "who tread under foot the Son of God, and account the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified; an unholy thing." (Heb. x. 29.) It is a holy ordinance of God, who appoints no other blood but this to purge away sin and satisfy justice; nor could any other do it.

8. The blood of Christ is clean water in respect of the *intrinsic value* and *cleansing virtue* and *efficacy* of it. O how infinite is the value of this water, this blood of Christ, as it is the blood of God! not the blood of the Godhead, but of that person who was God. Hence it is called the blood of the Son of God; (1 John i. 7;) and that it was God who laid down his life: "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us" (1 John iii. 16; see also Acts xx. 28.) The blood of God must be valuable blood; it was not the blood of a man only, but of him who, from all eternity, was constituted Surety; and who for four thousand years was our Surety as the Son of God, before he was our Surety as the Son of Man. O what a word is this, the blood of God! Can men or

angels speak forth the dignity of it? Or can men or angels declare the virtue and efficacy of it? O poor guilty sinner, trembling to think of the greatness of your guilt and defilement, though you had the whole guilt of all the men on earth, and all the guilt that finite creatures are capable of contracting, yet it cannot stand before the infinite value, virtue, and efficacy of this blood, which is the blood of God!

III. The third general head proposed is, To show what way it is *applied* and *sprinkled* upon the unclean for their being cleaned and cleansed. Now what way this sprinkling is effectuated may be found out in the text.

1. It is by a gracious God, as the *efficient* cause: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you." I *will* do it. It is God himself that undertakes this work by the immediate efficiency of the Holy Spirit, who is the great Applier of the blood of Christ, and redemption purchased by him. (Tit. iii. 5, 6.)

2. It is by a gracious *word*, as the *instrumental* cause, that the application is made. The Spirit takes the clean water of the blood of Christ in his hand, as it were, and applies it by a word of power to the conscience: "Awake, O north wind, come, thou south; blow upon our garden." By the north wind breeze may he convince of our defilements; by the south wind gale may he apply the clean water and breathe upon the joyful sound of this word, so as faith may come by hearing it, and then joy and peace in believing.

3. It is by a gracious *will*, as the *moving* cause, that this application is made: "I *will* sprinkle clean water upon you;" "Of his own *will* begat he us;" "By this *will* we are sanctified;" "By this *will* we are saved." It is my will to sprinkle this clean water upon you.

4. It is by a gracious *act* of this gracious will, namely, the *sprinkling* itself, which is the *formal* cause of the application, and so of justification in the blood of Christ; a just God not imputing your sin to you, but imputing the blood and righteousness of Christ to you, or sprinkling the clean water upon you. And this application being expressed by sprinkling, seems to point out, First. A *real* and *actual* application or imputation of the blood of Christ for cleansing the soul and purging the conscience, as water is applied for cleansing the body. Second. A *close* application to meet with the defilement, in order to the removing thereof. Third. A *full* application, spreading the clean water over all the spots to cleanse from all our filthinesses. Fourth. A *liberal* application, for sprinkling imports many drops; and though one drop of the blood of Christ is sufficient, yet abundant application is made by this sprinkling. Fifth. It points out a *kindly*, *careful*, and *tender* application, such as you are best able to bear. Sixth. A *skilful* and *gradually-repeated* application; and hence mention is made here of sprinkling, then of cleaning, and then of cleansing. Seventh. Here is pointed out a *personal* and *particular* application: "I will sprinkle *you* with clean water." The pronoun *you* occurs five times in the text: "I will sprinkle *you* with

clean water, and *ye* shall be clean; from all *your* filthiness, and from all *your* idols, will I cleanse *you*." Eighth. Here is pointed out a *divine* and an *effectual* application, for it shall gain its end: "Ye shall be clean, and I will cleanse you." And it is remarkable that in this cleaning and cleansing business, that respects remission and justification from the guilt of sin, it is expressed passively with respect to us, but actively with respect to God: "I will take the whole business in hand; only stand still and see the salvation of of God." Why? "Herein you shall be passive and I will be active. When I sprinkle this clean water upon you, ye shall be passive; for, 'Ye shall be clean;' but I will be active, 'I will cleanse you.' You will have little to do here; yea, nothing to do; for I will do all." Why? are we not called to act faith? Yea, but yet in the matter of justification faith is not so much an actor as an on-looker. It is not here an agent but an instrument. Faith here stands in opposition to works; it has nothing to do, but all to believe; nothing to give, but all to receive. Faith is not here a builder, but a beholder. God undertakes all the business here: "I will sprinkle, and I will cleanse you."

Now, the Spirit of God in sprinkling this clean water, or applying this precious blood for cleansing a sinner, does four things. First. He *convincés* of the *pollution and guilt of sin*, and of our spiritual defilement; for the uncleanness here treated of is not physical or corporal, but moral and spiritual only; and it is the work of the Holy Ghost (John xvi. 8) to give that conviction of sin that makes the soul ashamed before a holy God and afraid before a just God. Second. He *discovers* the clean water and cleansing virtue of the blood of Christ as the *only remedy*, the only mean of purification. Third. He works *faith*, wherewith we receive Christ himself and his benefits as published in the gospel; and particularly acts upon the blood of Christ for cleansing the heart and conscience. This faith of the operation of God comes to "the fountain for sin and for uncleanness," and addresses God with that prayer, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean." (Ps. li. 7.) It is spoken in allusion to that general institution for the purification of all legal uncleanness, by the water of separation made by the ashes of the red heifer, (Numb. xix. 4—6,) and which the apostle refers to in Heb. ix. 14; pointing out that application made to the blood of Christ by which "alone we can be justified from all things, from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses." And till this believing application of this blood, or washing in this clean water, we cannot be freed from a conscience of sin spoken of in Heb. x. 2; that is, a conscience condemning us for sin and filling us with shame and fear. Fourth. The Spirit in this sprinkling actually *communicates* the cleansing virtue of the blood of Christ to our souls and consciences, whereby we are freed both from damping shame and discouraging fear; and from guilt, filth, and shame; guilt that makes us obnoxious to justice; filthiness that makes us loathsome to God, and shame in us.

The purifying virtue of the blood of Christ takes away guilt and

obnoxiousness to wrath, as it is applied and imputed. The imputation of that blood and righteousness fences from the stroke of offended justice; for, "Being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." (Rom. v. 9.) It takes away all loathsomeness in the sight of God, not from sin in the abstract, but from the sinner, so that he is as one absolutely washed and purified before him, and so pronounced clean and fair: "Thou art all fair, my love." It takes away shame out of the conscience, and gives the soul boldness in the presence of God. (Heb. x. 19.) This is effectuated by that operation here mentioned: "From all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you."

IV. Concerning that *cleanness*, or *cleansing*, that is the effect of this sprinkling of clean water or imputation and application of the precious blood of Christ. Here I may touch at the *properties* of it in the text.

1. It is a *perfect* cleanness. If the sprinkled sinner were not perfectly cleansed it would detract from the value and cleanness of the water. All cleansing is the fruit of this blood; the perfect cleansing from guilt is wrought immediately by it; the gradual purging from filth is mediate by his Spirit; but it was the purchase of his blood. This clean water of the blood of Christ does not clean perfectly in time from sin, in respect of the sense of it. Some sparks of the fiery law will sometimes flash in the conscience even of a sprinkled believer, and the peace of the gospel may be under a veil; evidences may be blurred, guilt revived, and the clean water appear as if it ran low; perfect peace, rest, and sense of divine love remain for the people of God in the higher house. Nor does the blood of Christ perfectly cleanse from sin here, in respect of the stirrings of it. The old serpent will be sometimes stinging us and sometimes foiling us; the most righteous man will be vexed with corruption within him as well as the abominations of others without him, the Canaanites in the land; and therefore the virtue of the blood is more expressed here in our wrestling with principalities and powers, than in the glory of a triumph as yet. It is in heaven the saints shall be presented "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." But the blood of Christ perfectly cleanses from sin even here, in respect of condemnation and punishment. Though the nature of sin does not cease to be sinful, yet the power of sin ceases to be condemning; for the sentence of the law is revoked, a right to condemn is removed, and sin is not imputed to them. (1 Cor. v. 19.) Where the crime is not imputed the punishment is not to be inflicted. It is inconsistent with the being of God to be an appeased and yet a revenging Judge; for justice has accepted of a satisfaction made by Christ. The man is legally discharged, and put in the state of an innocent person, by the imputation of the blood and righteousness of Christ; hence "there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." (Rom. viii. 1.)

2. As it is a perfect, so it is a *universal* cleanness: "From all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you;" "The

blood of Christ cleanseth from *all* sin." This clean water washes from all guilt; for, since it is the blood of the Son of God, it is as powerful to cleanse from the greatest as from the least sin. The particle *all* is but a necessary consequent upon the mentioning of such a rich treasure of blood: "Christ was delivered for our offences;" not for some few, but for *all*; and as he was delivered for them, (Rom. iv. 25,) so he was accepted for them, "as a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savor." (Eph. v. 2.) So that "suppose a man," as one says, "were able to pull heaven and earth to pieces, to murder all the rest of mankind, and destroy the angels, these superlative parts of the creation, he would not contract so monstrous a guilt as these did in crucifying the Son of God, whose person was infinitely superior to the whole creation." God then gave her an experiment of the inestimable value of Christ's blood and the inestimable virtue of it. It cleanses the guilt of all sin, so as "it shall not be found." (Jer. l. 20.) By this blood and righteousness of Christ we stand before God, not only as innocent persons, but as those who have fulfilled the law, both as to precept and penalty. (Rom. viii. 4.)

Now, this perfect and universal cleanness, or cleansing, is grounded upon the cleanness of the water sprinkled on us in the day of believing. Infinite cleanness is necessary for the removing of infinite filthiness; infinite goodness necessary to the satisfaction of an infinite wrong. The infinite value and purity of his blood flows from his Deity. It was the same person who was "the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of his person;" and "who upholds all things by the word of his power;" who did by himself, in that person, "purge our sins." (Heb. xiii. 12.) This divine person wrestled with the flames of wrath, and took hold of the tribunal of justice; and, by the value of his sufferings, smoothed the face of a frowning God, assuaged the tempest of provoked justice, and placed before the tribunal of judgment a strong and everlasting righteousness of his own composure, as a veil between the piercing eye of divine holiness, and the guilty and filthy state of the sinner. So great a person, one equal with God, was necessary for restoring his honor and sanctifying his name. So great a person's blood was necessary for the purging of the fallen creature from his guilt and filth.

In short, the reason of this perfect and universal cleanness of the sprinkled soul is the perfect and universal cleanness of the water wherewith it is sprinkled. It is perfectly clean, and wants nothing of infinite perfection; it is universally clean; it never had a foul spot in it; it is the spotless blood of the spotless Lamb of God. Hence the text makes the cleanness of the washed soul to agree and correspond with the cleanness of the water: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean."

You boast of being thankful for God's mercies! Why if you were to lose your eyesight for one month, and then had it restored, you would thank God more for its restoration than you had for thirty years for having it before it was taken away.—*W. T.*

I WILL NOT LEAVE YOU COMFORTLESS.

Dear Christian Friend,—I have long had a desire to write a few lines upon the above words, but with no other motive than to show the faithfulness of God in the fulfilment of all his promises, to one so unworthy of the least of his mercies; but I have feared it might be presumption in me, a poor unworthy handmaid, to attempt to speak or set forth in the least way the mercies of Jehovah. Yet I trust it will not be considered so by those who, like myself, are weak in the faith, though able, by the grace of God, to lay hold on the hope set before us with all meekness and patience. The above words came powerfully to me one day in a time of great trial, both in body and in temporal concerns, near four years since, during which period I have been deprived of attending God's earthly courts. But what a blessing I have now in experiencing that the dear Lord is not confined to time or place. Although I have had many sweet seasons and many blessed portions, I believe from the Lord, for I well know that they did not come from my own depraved heart, so opposed as that is to the Lord's dealings with me, yet I have had many dark seasons, and many doubts and fears, and many pleadings with the Lord for a full manifestation of that promise that he would not leave me comfortless, but come again and cause the light of his countenance to smile upon me. O my dear friend, I must have sunk long since with bodily weakness and trials in the flesh, had I not felt that the everlasting arms were supporting me. The greatest trial to me now is to be so thankless as to doubt the Lord's goodness to my soul, after being so mercifully provided for, in such mysterious ways.

“ Often I feel my sinful heart,
Prone from my Jesus to depart;
But though I have him oft forgot,
His loving kindness changeth not.”

Sometimes the enemy of souls has tempted me to think that all these providences are nothing but natural occurrences, and though I have been receiving these mercies, it is no reason that I am one of the Lord's elect. On some occasions, after these seasons of trial, I have been strengthened a little by the Holy Spirit in the inner man, which is all my prayer and all my desire, as I feel my bodily strength to be comparatively nothing, seeming, as it were, to hang upon a thread. Nothing can satisfy my desire now but to know for myself that I have an interest in the blood of Christ. As Paul says, “I count all things but loss,” and look upon all things here below as nothing to be compared to Christ.

“ Not health, nor wealth, nor sounding fame,
Nor earth's deceitful empty name;
With all its pomp and all its glare,
Can with a precious Christ compare.”

I have many times felt great pleasure in reading the “Gospel Standard,” and particularly when any feelings were expressed in it

similar to my own. I remember upon one occasion having these lines made very sweet to me :

“ You that love the Lord indeed,
Tell me, is it so with you ? ”

This has afforded me season of reflection for some time, and I would also say it has given me great encouragement, to think that my mind has been similarly exercised with those who profess to be children of God, but, like myself, seem full of doubts and fears, some of them expressing themselves even to the end tempted to distrust the goodness of the Lord. I can say this is not my desire ; these are workings of the flesh ; but my feelings are fully expressed in Peter's answer to Christ : “ Lord, thou knowest all things ; thou knowest that I love thee.” Now I would say a few words to those poor afflicted tried ones of the Lord, who, like myself, have been weaned from the world. Many have been the ways and the means the dear Lord has used to draw us unto himself ; and now he has separated us from the world, I do desire that the creature may be abased, and the Lord alone exalted. I cannot take the least credit in anything to myself, knowing that it is all grace, free grace, from the first to the last. I think you will say with me, that you have had very little share in the way the Lord has brought you, and that your plans have been very different to his ; but after all the Lord has dealt mercifully with us. How many and mysterious have been the ways in which the Lord has supplied our temporal wants ; how we have been clothed, fed, supported in all troubles and trials which have been allotted to us in the wilderness ; and O believe not that after all these mercies past he will let us sink. His promises are sure, and he is a God that changeth not. He is the same to his dear people now as in the days of old. He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. We are told not to expect all pleasure, for the Saviour tells his disciples, “ In the world ye shall have tribulation ; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

E. B.

Nothing humbles us more than an opinion of the power and excellency of grace. Grace known and apprehended in its worth, layeth down proud nature on the earth. Christ's grace was Christ's account-book to Paul : “ But by the grace of God I am what I am.” (1 Cor. xv. 9, 10.) A borrowed garment, though of silk, will make a wise man humble. Many sins pardoned made much love to Christ and much humility in the woman, (Luke vii. 44,) and made her lay head and hair, yea, and heart also, under the soles of Christ's feet.—*Rutherford.*

Sometimes Satan makes use of a good man's bad ways, to spoil and harden the heart of them that come after. Peter's false doing had like to have spoiled Barnabas, yea, and several others more. Wherefore take heed of men, of good men's ways, and measure both theirs and thine own, by no other rule but the holy word of God. (Gal. ii. 11-13.)—*Bunyan.*

INQUIRY.

Sir,—A firm conviction of your superior judgment induces me to ask you to give, according to Scripture, your views on 1 Cor. vii. 10: "And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband." Is a wife under circumstances peculiarly trying to live with a husband,—I mean when her life is in danger?

ANSWER.

In giving our opinion on any point of "Inquiry," let no one think that we do so in a dictatorial, dogmatic, or self-exalting spirit. If a question be asked us, and we think we can answer it in a simple, scriptural, unobtrusive manner, we feel free to do so. We merely give an opinion on the subject. That opinion may be worthless, or otherwise; but let it be weighed in the balance of the Sanctuary, and examined by the light of the Scriptures, the teaching of the Spirit in the heart, and the dictates of a conscience made tender in God's fear. If it agree with the verdict of this unerring jury, let it be received; if not, let it be at once rejected. We feel ourselves bound to serve the church of God. Whatever light, or knowledge, or wisdom, natural or spiritual, we may possess, and we possess but little, we freely give it to our readers; and if we can in any way help them forward in the kingdom of God, strengthen any weak hands, confirm any feeble knees, instruct any that are ignorant, or comfort any that are cast down, we have all we want. Let no one, then, think, that by endeavouring to answer any question, we arrogate to ourselves any claim to superior wisdom, or constitute ourselves a dictator to the church of God. Our feeling is to be least and lowest among the servants of God; but if we can be of any use to any of the redeemed, we count that our highest honour, and our best employ.

The tie of marriage is of the strongest possible kind, and almost anything is to be endured to keep that tie unbroken. So far from grace relaxing that tie, it, if possible, binds it still more strongly, for it adds the precepts of the Gospel, and the teaching of the blessed Spirit to the injunctions of the law, human and divine.

The apostle, in the passage quoted above, gave judgment on a most important case; and he expressly declares, "But the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord; Let not the wife depart from her husband." The husband in this case is an unbeliever, and, in those times, an idolater. He might be a persecutor and a blasphemer; but he was her husband still, and she was not to leave him, but live with him. We may safely conclude, therefore, that nothing can warrant a believing wife leaving her unbelieving husband, and *vice versâ*, but such things as render it impossible for them to live together. It is not disparity of age, or badness of temper, or difference of opinions, or fixed dislike, or discovery of hypocrisy, or wasteful extravagance, or loose, idle habits; no, nor drunkenness and abuse, or even a blow, which should make a woman leave her husband; and, in a similar way, a husband is bound not to leave his wife, as, if possible, he is tied

to her more than she to him, from her being the weaker vessel, and more dependent on him than he on her.

We can only, then, conceive two cases which would warrant a wife's leaving her husband.

1. If he be abandoned to the *vilest profligacy*. He may be unfaithful to her, but unless sunk in shameless profligacy, we do not think even that a sufficient cause for her leaving him. But if he bring prostitutes to his house, live in shameless adultery with the servant under her own roof, or by his base conduct entail on her *personal* suffering, we think she may, after every exertion made to reclaim him, leave him; but even then, not fully, nor finally, but be willing to return and forgive him, if he be really reclaimed from his base ways, and is desirous for her to come back.

2. The other case is *violence* pushed to the edge of *cruelty* and *endangered life*. A thorough brute must a man be to strike his wife! but many such brutes there are in this wretched world. But it is not one, or two, or twenty blows, which should drive a woman from her husband's house. He may be dreadfully passionate, and she very teasing, and what is called "aggravating." But it is not one quarrel, nor twenty quarrels, nor even, if the fist decide the battle, that will warrant a Christian woman leaving her husband. Where, however, there is a continued course of cruelty, an attempt made upon life or limb, and from abandoned drunkenness, or insanity, the woman's life is really in danger, and she cannot procure protection from the law, or any other quarter, then, we think, she may leave her husband; for who can counsel her to stay to be murdered, or who would not have much cause for self-reflection, if he advised a woman, under circumstances where her life was in danger, not to flee, and the next day brought him word she was found a lifeless corpse by her husband's hand?

Many Christian wives have grievous trials with their husbands. If any such read our pages, let us drop a friendly word of counsel for them.

Remember, Christian woman, he is thy husband, the father of thy children, and once, if not now, the object of thy tender affection. Art not thou, then, called by every consideration to bear with him to the utmost of thy power? If you leave him you probably cannot take the children with you; and how are they likely, if young, to be treated by their cruel father; or, if older, how liable to be corrupted and ruined by his example! You are bound, therefore, to do what you can to bear with him for their sakes. And think also what a poor, lonely woman you will be away from your own home; how friendless, and perhaps destitute; how exposed to temptation and suspicion! And not being certain that you are doing God's will in leaving your husband, how you may be tossed up and down in your own mind. But, on the other hand, if you do all you can to bear and forbear, you have the Lord's promises on your side, and may often be supported and blessed by his presence and smile. Many a persecuting husband has been called by grace, and the meek Christian conduct and deportment of his

wife has been the instrument employed, being "won," as the apostle speaks, "without the word, by the conversation of the wife." And should this be your happy case, you will bless the grace that enabled you to bear with him when you see your husband's soul saved.

R E V I E W.

The Church of God; or, Essays upon some Descriptive Names and Titles given in the Scriptures by God the Holy Ghost to the General Assembly of all True Believers in God the Son, or the God-man Jesus Christ. To which is added, *Christian Husbandry; or, a Companion for the Christian in his Field and Garden.* By AMBROSE SERLE. Printed at the Bonmahon Industrial Printing School, county Waterford; and published by W. H. Collingridge, City Press, Long-lane, London. 1855.

How little do we, for the most part, realise, and daily, hourly, live and feed upon those divine and heavenly truths which we, as Christians, profess to believe!

Take, for instance, that great, that astonishing truth—the *incarnation of the Son of God*, in its various fruits and consequences, such as his holy life on earth, his sufferings in the garden and on the cross, his resurrection, ascension, and exaltation to the right hand of God. This, the foundation of all our faith, hope, and love, our only refuge in life and death, our only source of consolation here and of bliss hereafter, how little is it realised proportionably to its divine blessedness!

To say we do not realise it, is to say we are unbelievers; for, if faith be "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," to say we do not feel a substance in the incarnation of God's dear Son, is to say we have no faith in it or in Him! On the contrary, it is only as we *do* realise in our own souls the felt blessedness of having a Jesus who suffered, a Jesus who bled, a Jesus who died, a Jesus who was buried and rose again, a Jesus now at God's right hand for us as "the great High Priest over the house of God," that we ever feel anything worth feeling, receive anything worth receiving, or enjoy anything worth enjoying. Nay, further, it is only as we *do* realise this blessed truth that the Son of God is in our nature at the right hand of the Father, "able (and willing) to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him," that we ever pray with any faith or acceptance, find any access or sweetness in approaching the throne of grace, or receive any answer to our petitions. The more deeply our soul is penetrated with "the great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh," the more strongly that our faith embraces, our hope anchors in, and our love flows towards a once crucified, but now risen and glorified Immanuel, the more prayerful, watchful, humble, tender-hearted, contrite, and spiritually-minded shall we be, and the more will every gracious fruit appear and abound in our hearts, lips, and lives. No man, therefore, is worthy the name of a Christian who does not believe in, and spiritually realise in his own soul, who and what the Lord Jesus is as God's dear Son in our flesh; and the more he

believes in him as such, and the more he receives out of his fulness "in whom it hath pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell," the more he glorifies him, and is conformed to his image.

And yet it is, for the most part, only at times and seasons that we so realise who and what Jesus is as to obtain any sensible victory over the evils of our heart, the strength of sin, the snares of the world, or the assaults of Satan. Faith, it is true, never dies out of the heart when once it has been implanted there by the hand of God; but in its actings it often seems latent or asleep. Yet as the babe slumbering in the cradle is as much a living child as when pressed to the mother's bosom it receives nutriment from her breast, so faith is as much a living faith when it slumbers as when it receives out of Christ's fulness grace for grace, and sucks the breasts of consolation.

Still we revert to our starting point—that compared with what is to be believed, known, and felt, we feel and realise comparatively little of the incarnation of the Son of God. How earnestly did Paul desire that he "might know Him, and the power of his resurrection," as if all he knew was but a drop compared with the ocean; and how fervently he prayed for his beloved Ephesians, that "they might comprehend with all saints what is the length, and breadth, and depth, and height, and might know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that they might be filled with all the fulness of God."

That he, who is the Father's co-equal and co-eternal Son, did really lie a babe in Bethlehem's manger, that he really did walk on this polluted earth, "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," that he hungered, thirsted, groaned, wept, sweat great drops of blood,

"Bore all incarnate God could bear
With strength enough, and none to spare;"

and then, when by his blood-shedding on the cross, he had offered one, and the only one sacrifice for sin, meekly laid down his life, that he might take it again—can we, can any of us say that we realise in this suffering and risen God-man, the thousandth or millionth part of the grace and glory, bliss and blessedness, peace and joy, liberty and love, treasured in, and flowing out of Him? Consider for a moment, what fruits have already flowed into the hearts of the saints from a risen Immanuel. By faith in him, as the incarnate God, martyrs have faced death in its most appalling forms, and patiently, nay, joyfully endured the most exquisite torments which the most fiendish malice in hell, or out of hell, could devise; by faith in Him as God-man, thousands of despairing sinners have found pardon and peace. The bed of languishing and pain, the lonely garret of poverty and want, the cancer ward of a hospital, the walls of the union workhouse, have all been illuminated by the rays of the cross, so that sickness had no sorrow, death no sting, and the grave no terror.

In the beautiful and experimental language of Kelly,

"The Cross, it takes our guilt away;
It holds the fainting spirit up;
It cheers with hope the gloomy day;
And sweetens every bitter cup.

“ It makes the coward spirit brave ;
 And nerves the feeble arm for fight ;
 It takes its terror from the grave ;
 And gilds the bed of death with light.”

And as from the cross flows all *salvation*, so from the cross flows all *sanctification*. What have not men done, to make themselves holy ; and by this means render themselves, as they have thought, acceptable to God ! What tortures of body, what fastings, scourgings, self-imposed penances, to sanctify their sinful nature, and conform their rebellious flesh to the holiness demanded by the law ! And with what success ? They have landed either in self-righteousness or despair—both of them, though at opposite points of the compass,

“ As far removed from God and light of Heaven,
 As from the centre thrice to the utmost pole.”

The flesh cannot be sanctified. It is essentially and incurably corrupt ; and therefore, if we are to possess that inward holiness, “ without which no man shall see the Lord,” it must be by Christ being “ of God, made unto us sanctification,” as well as righteousness—sanctifying us not only “ with his own blood,” (Heb. xiii. 12,) but by his Spirit and grace. If we believe in Him, we shall love him ; (“ unto you which believe, he is precious ;”) if we love him, we shall seek to please, and fear to displease him ; if we believe in Him, by the gift and work of God, this divine and living faith will purify our heart, overcome the world, produce that spiritual mindedness which is life and peace, give union and communion with the Lord of life and glory ; and every believing view of him, every act of faith upon him, and every visit from him, will conform us to his likeness, as the Apostle speaks : “ But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” (2 Cor. iii. 18.)

If, then, we are to feel an inward power sanctifying our hearts, drawing up our minds to heavenly things, subduing our sins, meekening and softening our spirit, separating us from the world, filling us with holy thoughts, gracious desires, and pure affections, and thus making us “ meet for the inheritance of the saints in light,” this inward sanctification must flow wholly and solely from the Blessed Spirit, as the gift of a risen Jesus : as he himself said, “ Nevertheless I tell you the truth ; it is expedient for you that I go away : for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.” “ He shall glorify me : for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you,” (John xvi. 7. 14.)

It is not, then, the hair-shirt, the monk’s cell, the midnight vigil, the protracted fast ; no, nor the soothing strains of the swelling organ, the melodious chant of surpliced choristers, the “ dim religious light” of the stained Gothic window ; no, nor the terrors of the Law, the accusations of conscience, the tears, cries, and resolutions of a heart that still loves sin, though professing to repent of it ; no, nor gloomy looks, neglected apparel, softly uttered words, slow walk, holiness of face, manner, and gesture, hollow voice, demure countenance, a choice assortment of Scripture words and phrases

on every occasion, or no occasion; no, nor all the array of piety and sanctity which Satan, transformed into an angel of light, has devised to deceive thousands, that can purge the conscience from the guilt, filth, love, power and practice of sin, or raise up that new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Like the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, they may, and even that very imperfectly, sanctify to the purifying of the flesh; but it is the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, which can alone purge the conscience from filth, guilt, and dead works, to serve the living God; and it is the work of the blessed Spirit alone which, by revealing Christ, and forming him in the heart, "the hope of glory," can create and bring forth that new man of grace which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.

The book before us is a reprint at the Bonmahon Industrial Printing School, of a work published in the last century by Ambrose Serle, a friend of Romaine, and a gracious, well-taught man in the things of God. He was what is called "a layman," that is, not a minister, and held, if we mistake not, some office under government; but was evidently a man of education, and of much research, both into the Scriptures in their original tongues and commentaries of learned men. His chief and best work is the "*Horæ Solitariae*;" or, Solitary Hours, the name he gave to an octavo work in two volumes, on the titles of Christ in the Scriptures. His chief object in it was to set forth the essential Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, by bringing forward, and separately expatiating on, the titles given him in the Scriptures by the Holy Ghost, and proving by a variety of arguments, that such titles express or imply his eternal, underived Deity.

Though from its learning rather beyond the ordinary Christian reader, yet it is a very edifying, instructive book, from gathering as it were into one focus the rays scattered through the Scriptures, and discussing the great truths of revelation, not with a doctrinal hardness, but experimentally, and at times very sweetly and unctuously. There is also, if we mistake not, a supplementary volume to the "*Horæ Solitariae*," on the titles given to the Holy Ghost, which are examined in the same experimental manner.

The subject of the present work is the names and titles given by the Holy Ghost to the Church of God, which are unfolded somewhat more briefly, but on the same model as in the "*Horæ Solitariae*." As it is only from the Scriptures that we know the Person and work of the Son of God, so from the same inspired record alone do we know the blessings and privileges which belong to the Church of God. We see her now only in her time-state, in her rags and filth, in all the misery and wretchedness of the Adam fall. Some sparkles, indeed, of divine glory we see in the grace bestowed on her—a few scattered rays of the Redeemer's suffering image reflected in her countenance. But as she stood from all eternity in the mind of the Father, the Bride and Spouse of the Son of his love, and as she will stand to all eternity the Lamb's wife, washed in his blood, clothed in his righteousness,

filled with his glory, enraptured with his love, and perfectly conformed to his glorified image, we only receive by faith in the sure testimonies of God.

Go into that sick room ; look at that poor, pallid, emaciated wretch, in the last stage of consumption, coughing, gasping, dying. What a spectacle ! The faint, sickly smell of the low-roofed garret, fresh as you are from the pure air, almost drives you back. But who lies there ? A suffering member of the mystical body of the Son of God. Is that all you can see ? Can you look beyond the pinched, pallid features of the poor sufferer, or even beyond that grace which shines forth in those dying words which melt your heart as they slowly drop from that feeble tongue ? You see in that poor sufferer what sin has done, and you see what grace has done. But can you see what glory will do ? Can you lift up your believing eyes to the realms of eternal bliss, and see what that member of Christ will be when clothed with an exceeding and eternal weight of glory ?

When all these members are gathered together, they will form the glorified body of which Christ is the living Head. What that body will be surpasses every thought of the renewed mind, every conception of the believing heart. But it will, we may be sure, be a fit body for such an exalted Head ; a fit bride for so glorious a Bridegroom ; worthy of his love, his sufferings, his blood, his incarnation ; and eternally will He be delighted with her, and eternally she be delighted with Him.

We cannot pursue this train of thought, bounded as we are by the limits of a review ; and indeed the connection of our whole article with the work reviewed is probably not very obvious.

But this is the idea which has guided us throughout. There are two most blessed subjects of spiritual contemplation as revealed to us in the word of truth. The one is, the Son of God in our flesh—suffering on earth, glorified in heaven. The other is the Church of Christ viewed in her relationship to this once suffering, now glorified Immanuel. What blessed subjects for meditation, searching the Scriptures, believing views of, and sweet experimental realisation !

Now these are the two subjects that Ambrose Serle, the first in his "*Horæ Solitariae*," and the second in the little work before us, has sought to bring forth from the Scriptures of truth.

We do feel that whatever leads us to search the Scriptures, to penetrate beyond the mere surface into the treasures of Divine truth therein laid up, and above all, to feel the power and blessedness and to realize by a living faith the present grace and future glory of oneness with Christ, is indeed most profitable. It is chiefly in this point of view that works such as Ambrose Serle's are valuable ; not so much, perhaps, for what we find in them of the author's interpretation, but because we are led by him to the fountain of truth, to search the Scriptures for ourselves, to read them with an enlightened understanding and a believing heart, and thus draw water for ourselves out of the wells of salvation to which he has brought us.

Here we feel there is in our day a great deficiency with most that fear God. They have a few hopes and many fears ; a sense of their

ruin and misery, and at times sweet glimpses and glances of the sufficiency and suitability, the blood, grace, and love of the Lord Jesus; but they do not seem to realize, or even seek to realize, what he is in himself to those that believe in his name. To search the Scriptures, as for hid treasure, because they testify of him; to ply a throne of grace for a revelation of this Divine Saviour to their hearts; to seek an entrance by living faith into the mystery of his glorious Deity and suffering humanity, so as to have them brought by the blessed Spirit before their eyes, and into their very souls; to resort unto Him as unto an ever-living, ever-loving Mediator and Advocate at the right hand of the Father, so as to receive supplies of strength and comfort out of his fulness—how short most seem here to come! If a wealthy and liberal friend were to put into a banker's hands a large sum of money for us, how eager should we be to draw for what our wants required. Alas! how slow and backward, how unbelieving, and, at times, almost unwilling to resort to the only storehouse of grace and strength, our only hope and help, for the supply of our spiritual wants. Surely, it must be grace and grace alone which can make us feel our need; show us in whom is the supply; draw forth prayer and desire after it, and then bestow what is needed.

Mr. Doudney acts wisely in confining himself to works of sound, sterling divinity; and in doing this, he is not only doing good to his industrial school, but benefiting the Church of God.

To say that we can see with, or approve of all that we have met with in this little book, would be to say of it what could scarcely be said of any book in the world but the Bible. We look at an author's drift and general aim, and where these are spiritual and experimental, we do not wish to dwell upon specks and spots.

The following extract may convey a good idea of its spirit and execution:

"In thus being strangers, and pilgrims, and Hebrews, they are also truly and spiritually the only Jews, that is, the confessors and glorifiers of Jehovah. He is not a Jew (says the apostle) who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God. Three things made a Jew in the flesh, who is but a shadow of the Jew in spirit; namely: 1. Circumcision; 2. Baptism; 3. Sacrifice; and the purport of these constitute a Christian, who is the true and living Jew. 1. Circumcision of the heart, or cutting off the old man with his deeds, so as not to live by him as the principle of life towards God. 2. The baptism or regeneration of the Spirit, which is putting on the new man, even Christ Jesus, as the substance of spiritual life. 3. The sacrifice of the whole body, soul, and spirit, to the will of Jehovah, through Christ Jesus. Where this hath taken place, the soul is brought into communion with God as a friend and a child, is enabled to crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts, is rendered a stranger and pilgrim upon earth, is brought into the bond of the everlasting covenant in perception and experience, and hath a right and title, through Christ, to all the promises, mercies, blessings, and truths, revealed in the gospel. This gospel is the common charter and deed of conveyance to the heirs of salvation, who are privileged now to cry, without a falsehood, 'Abba, Father.' They are but of one nation under the same King, one chosen generation under the same Head, one family under the same Father; all dear to him, and by him provided for and protected continually. Oh, what a transcendent glory is put upon poor worms, when redeemed from

the earth, and made kings and priests unto God and the Father for evermore! What honourable thoughts should the Christian have of his own renewed state and condition! How clear should he strive to keep it from all impeachment and degradation! How full of praise should he be to Father, Son, and Spirit, the one Jehovah, who hath done so much for him, and will yet do more in time and in eternity. O my God, when I think upon these things, often doth my heart melt within me, and my soul is ready to cry out, 'Who, and what am I, that thou hast brought me hitherto.' What, but love divine, could have taken me from the base and vile condition of a stranger to God, of a rebel, a slave, a traitor against him, and have raised me, not only to the honourable degree of a servant, which would have been an honour that the first of angels rejoices to receive, and infinitely beyond my expectations, but to the affectionate relation of a friend and a son, and that son an heir, even an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Christ Jesus, of an exceeding and eternal weight of glory? Oh what hath God done for my poor unworthy soul! How hath he made me to rejoice in the earnest and assurance of his favour. Let, oh, let this kindle in my heart the warmest flame of affection and gratitude; and let me learn more and more to become a stranger to all but thee, my God, and what belongs to thy truth and salvation. Let me daily feel and remember that I am but a pilgrim, a passenger, a sojourner here; and consequently let the staff be always in my hand, my loins girt, and my lamp burning; ever waiting, in meek and patient expectation, for the coming or calling of my Lord Redeemer. Thus may I stand oft upon my watch-tower, eagerly looking for the Aijeleth Shabar,* the hind of the morning, the appearance of the Son of Righteousness to bless me in his kingdom. I am but a poor traveller, weak and sore, beset within and without: Lord, help me. Strengthen me for my journey, and quicken my pace in it that I may not be slow of heart to believe, nor dull in spirit to follow thee, in the ways of thy salvation!"

Some Christians are like decayed milestones, which stand, it is true, in the right road, and bear some traces of the proper impression; but are so wretchedly mutilated and defaced, that they who go by can hardly read or know what to make of them.—*Toplady.*

Who but the children of Zion ever said, (Isa. xlix. 14,) "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me?" The very complaints of your unbelief are marks of your faith being sound; and that nothing but real communion with God can content you.—*Timothy Priestley.*

It is very remarkable, that though we are told Elihu's wrath was kindled against Job and his three friends, and though (as it appears from the ensuing chapters) he spoke very close and cutting things, yet, at the end of the book, we find no blame laid on him by the great heart-searching God; whereas, the other three are severely reprov'd, and commanded to apply to Job for the benefit of his prayers.—*Whitefield.*

Simon's believing seems to be no more than an outward professional faith, taken up for by respects, to preserve his interest and repute among the people, who now began to fall from him, and to follow Philip; whose disciple he himself will profess to be, rather than to be quite cashiered. Besides, this profession of his might (in his conceit) be a step towards "purchasing the gift of the Holy Ghost," which, if he could obtain, he had been again in as good a condition, both for reputation and profit, as before.—*Elisha Coles.*

* Title of Psalm xxii.

POETRY.

THE FOLLOWING LINES WERE COMPOSED BY A CHIMNEY-SWEEP, WHO KNEW THE LORD, AND WERE OFTEN REPEATED BY HIM.

THE SWEEP.

A chimney sweep, how black the skin,
But blacker far it is within.

This secret, then, the sweep does
know,

Tho' black as hell, as white as snow.

Water will wash and cleanse the skin,
But O, 'tis blood must cleanse within;
That blood that ran on Calvary's tree,
Tho' but a sweep, 'twas shed for me.

While thro' the street 'tis "sweep" I
cry,

But oft within a heavy sigh;
A smutty sweep, but O, withiu
A den of unclean beasts is seen.

Tho' but a sweep, I oft times weep,
That Christ should own me as his
sheep;

And on the cross should bleed and die
For such a smutty sweep as I.

What matters it, dear Lord, to me,
Tho' I a chimney sweep should be,
If thro' thy blood I'm freed from all
The sin that issued from the fall?

A chimney sweep of low degree,
Yet lov'd by all the sacred Three;
Electing love, what tongue can tell?
Tho' loved of God, deserving hell.

I envy not the rich man's gold,
If I on Christ but lay my hold;

There's something more I seek to win;
'Tis Christ in me, and I in him.

Tho' but a sweep, can I forget,
The word that my dear Jesus spoke,
When on the brink of hell I stood:
"I have redeem'd thee by my blood."

'Tis all of grace the sweep must say,
That he was led to Christ, the Way;
If ever one has cause to bless,
Sure tis the sweep, thro' sovereign
grace.

In by-gone days, with curses foul,
I've call'd damnation on my soul;
Then who has greater cause to say,
'Tis Christ the Truth, the Life, the Way?

Let none despise the smutty sweep,
But rather with him let them weep;
That Christ should own me for a son,
And for my life lay down his own.

Tho' black without, 'tis worse within;
'Tis nothing but a mass of sin;
Yet after all I'm white and fair,
More comely than the roses are.

Comely I am, thro' God's dear Son;
He has on me his robes put on;
Which makes a sweep, when led to
see,

Oft times to say, Why me, why me?

CAST DOWN, BUT NOT DESTROYED.

Surrounded with doubts and dismay,
Uncertain which path to pursue,
No promise enlightens the way,
No sweet Ebenezers in view.

No answer to prayer, tho' I cry,
And spread my case to the Lord,
He seems to pass silently by,
And answers me never a word.

In worldly affairs but a fool,
In heavenly ones worse than that,
Sore tried in adversity's school,
I murmur how hard is my state.

Will he always see fit to chastise,
Nor ever to mercy incline?
Shall I never attain to the prize,
Nor the joys of salvation be mine?

So worthless my prayers appear,
So little in earnest, so vile;
No wonder they reach not thy ear.
O quicken them, Lord, with thy smile.

I fly to my chart, but in vain;
I strive there my pathway to find.
The way that to others seems plain,
Is to me as the path of the blind.

O shine with thy light on thy book,
For surely 'tis needed by such,
And grant thy poor servant a look,
If thou wilt not vouchsafe him a touch.

O help me to trust in thy name,
Whatever misfortunes befall,
And call, thro' the flood and the flame
Upon thee, as my all and in all.

May the dawn on my spirit be found,
The day-star from heaven glad my eyes.
May his righteousness gird me around,
And the sun in his beauty arise.

Lord, shine on the path I must tread;
O guide me through life's troubled sea;
And when the cold earth is my bed,
May my spirit sleep sweetly in thee.

B. M.

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