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A table of contents for *The Sower* can be found here:

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THE SOWER.

"Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters."—ISAIAH xxxii. 20.

"In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good."—ECCLES. xi. 6.

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INDEX.

	PAGE
AMIDING Instruction	162
Address to our Readers	1
Anecdote	84
Anne Dutton	21, 55
Answer to Inquiry	43
Awful Nature of a Christless State	219
Brand Plucked from the Fire..	294
Bring my Soul Out of Prison..	112
Christian Sympathy in Trouble	116
Christmas Carol	356
Christ's Sheep	171
Christ, the Prince of Peace ..	61
Conformity to Christ	225
Couple Heaven with It	130
Concluding Address to our Readers	354
Cry of a Feeble One, The ..	231
Dream, A	330
Ever-Living Jesus, An	151
Excellent Example, An	129
Extract, An	28
Extracts from Hawker's Diary.	17
Faith and Works	85
Faithful Counsels	19
Forgiveness of Sins, The ..	291
Friendly Epistle	166
Fulness of the Time.. .. .	176
God a Jealous God	311
God All-sufficient	259
God the Deliverer of His People	86
Good Counsel to Ministers ..	346
Goodly Words by a Godly Martyr	321
Gospel Portions for True Believers	140
Grace in Time of Need	264
Gracious Visit, A	313

	PAGE
Healing of the Waters	217
Heaven	292, 312
Help in Affliction	27
Holy Spirit Sought Unto as the Glorifier of Jesus, The ..	237
Honey in the Wilderness ..	232
Is Popery Advancing	349
I Wait on Thee	249
I will Arise	49
Jehovah	342
Jesus Christ, and Him Crucified.. .. .	170
Jesus Veiling His Dealings ..	111
Joy in Dying	88
Leaning upon the Beloved ..	224
Let my Prayer come before Thee	69
Letter by a Lately-Departed Friend	113
Letter by Mr. Philpot	142
Letter by Daniel Herbert ..	250
Letters for the Young .. 28, 59, 89, 119, 150, 179, 209, 239, 269, 298, 329, 353	
Letter to a Nobleman	191
Looking unto Jesus	58
Luther	127
Luther's Firmness	25
Lydia,	252
Meditation on Genesis xxii. ..	148
Memoir of Edward Morgan ..	45
„ „ Eliza Hopkins	73
„ „ James Careless	200
„ „ Mary Walker	131
„ „ Mr. Robert Collins..	106
„ „ Mrs. Ellen Lowe ..	144, 163
Moments	270
My Thoughts are not Your Thoughts	155
My Times are in Thy Hand ..	141

	PAGE		PAGE
Nathanael	325	Sermons by Mr. Hull 91, 181,	331
Night Thoughts by a Watch-		" " Mr. J. W. Wren..	271
man 70, 221, 283,	343	" " Mr. Popham ..	121
Obituary of Samson Funnell ..	347	" " Mr. W. Mattingly	241
One Spirit.. .. .	177	" " Mr. W. Smith ..	211
On the Rock	258	Sighing of the Needy	199
o that Thou wouldst Bless		Sinner Directed to the Saviour,	
Me Indeed	310	The	286
Panting for the Living God ..	101	Solitude Sweetened	237
Paradox, A	268	Sympathy of Christ.. .. .	207
Path of Exercise	341		
Prayer, A	18	There Remaineth therefore a	
Precious Hiding-place	79	Rest to the People of God..	231
Prodigal's Repentance and		This is Not your Rest	263
Prayer	293	This Poor Man Cried	324
Psalms cvii. .. 80, 117, 137, 153,	194	Thou Knowest.. .. .	16
Publican's Prayer, The	128		
		Uses of Sanctified Afflictions ..	234
Rich Man a Pauper, The	89		
Right Way, The	135	Value of Christ's Blood, The ..	102
Ritualism in the Church of			
England	20	Waiting One Encouraged	257
Roman Catholic Statistics	59	Warning, A	169
		When wilt Thou Come Unto Me	26
Seasonable Words	50	Wise Resolution of a Queen ..	218
Second Onesiphorus, A	78	Wish, The	44
Secret Place of the Most High.	105	Word of the Lord	54
Sermons by Mr. Boorne .. 31, 301		Woeful Choice	233
" " Mr. Covell	6	Work and Effect of Divine	
		Love, The	316



THE SOWER.

AN ADDRESS TO OUR READERS.

IN crossing the threshold of another year, we desire to meet our readers with the words uttered by Boaz to his reapers, "The Lord be with you" (Ruth ii. 4), since we are assured in our heart that no better portion can we either desire for our readers or crave for ourselves; for if this God (the God of Jacob) is our God, we have a true and an all-sufficient Friend who will never be found wanting in mercy and goodness to those "who think upon His name," and "choose the things that please Him" (see Mal. iii. 16; Isa. lvi. 4).

We may now, as we enter upon 1882, reflect upon the fact that another year has sped its course, and another page is added to our life's short history below. Many of our friends have finished their course since we penned our last New Year's Address, and concerning some, we feel certain that they have proved the blessedness of being "absent from the body and present with the Lord." We are still, in mercy, spared, and have great cause to be thankful for the goodness which our covenant God has caused to pass before us thus far in our journey through life. The personal trials, afflictions, and sorrows which we may have known during the past year are over and gone, never more to return; and, if manifold sins of omission and commission, heart backslidings from God, spiritual sloth and unfruitfulness, are now before our eyes as a black list, and pain our hearts as we remember them, let us also consider how great that mercy has been which, notwithstanding our ill-deserts, has followed us through every varied circumstance of our experience; and may the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of all grace, fill us with that "godly sorrow which worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of;" and may we be led afresh by Him to the fountain of Jesus' blood, opened for guilty and unclean ones who are afflicted by, and mourn over, sin, there to feel the sweets of pardoning love and heavenly peace; and, looking up to Him who loved, and lived, and died, may we thus receive from the Fountain-head rich supplies of grace and strength, to renew and encourage us in the race that is set before us, as we onward urge our way toward the prize, "looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith."

In noticing the current of general events, we do not wish to waste time nor to foster a party spirit by even seeming to encourage among the disciples of Christ a desire to participate

in the angry strivings of worldly men. But we do not think we act wisely to close our eyes to, or manifest a spirit of indifference respecting, those things which concern our peace as citizens and our privileges as Christians. Therefore, while we deprecate that spirit which gives politics the precedence over every other moral consideration, and manifests itself in acerbity and unkindness toward those who differ from the views of its possessors, we, nevertheless, wish to see those who fear God and love Zion awake to the evils which are fast growing among us, to the danger of the rising race, the constitution of our country, and the peace of the Church of God. Can we look with unconcern upon the spread of infidelity and its accompanying evils, called Socialism and Nihilism? These have already borne deadly fruits abroad, and signs are not wanting of this leaven existing in our own beloved land. May God, in mercy, frustrate the designs of those who would give its advocates a place among the legislators of our nation; and may the power of the Holy Ghost so attend the spread of the divine Word that this offshoot of Satan may be effectually driven back and put to shame. Or is the spread of Popery to be looked upon by us with indifference? This foe to our faith and liberties is energetically seeking to obtain deep root in our once Reformation-loving country, where Rome would gladly again enslave the freed sons and daughters of Britain by bringing us under her dominant authority, and reducing us to the level of poor priest-ridden Ireland.

Some of the Papal dignitaries in that land have of late professed a want of sympathy with the *extreme* measures of the Land League; but, judging from their previous conduct, there is little doubt but they secretly encouraged that spirit of insubordination which has manifested itself openly in the "no rent" policy and the cowardly and cruel work of the assassin; and, had there been any reasonable probability of success, these same characters would most likely have been found among the leading spirits in a rebellious uprising of the people against good and wholesome authority. Popery is opposed to the best interests of men, civil and religious; and, while we live, we hope we shall never cease to oppose her, by informing the minds of the young as to her true character, and spreading abroad that truth which comes from God, and which is opposed to darkness and error. We hope that all lovers of the Gospel may be inclined to give their prayerful and earnest attention to this work, even though it may entail some sacrifice of substance and ease, lest our slothfulness should give the enemy an advantage over us. Oh, that the Spirit may be poured out from on high upon Zion, to melt and unite in love the hearts of those who are called with a holy calling; for not only is there thick gloom in the professing

world around us, but there is also cause for lamentation and humility before God respecting the state of what we believe to be the Zion of the Most High.

Ritualism is working like an eating cancer in the Church of England, where law-breakers are petted and promoted by some of our law-makers; and, on the other hand, the general sections of Nonconformists are going farther and farther from the simplicity of Christ, and it now appears that some, who perhaps are disappointed at not having received what they expected from the revisers of the New Testament in support of their errors, are daringly calling in question the inspiration of one or more books thereof. This, however, may naturally be expected where a kind of Rationalism is taught in so many pulpits, and is the *ignis-fabrus* followed by so many worldly-wise professors. But we may at least be thankful that, after the whole of that blessed Book ~~has~~ undergone a crucial test at the hands of a number of the ablest scholars of our time, every doctrine therein revealed, and dear to us, remains unimpaired and clear; and, however some of the alterations made may be objected to as rendering the new inferior in order and sublimity to the old version, yet we have the satisfaction of knowing that the old version (which we ourselves decidedly prefer) is acknowledged by the ablest critics of the time to be a faithful counterpart of the original text, as far as each part of divine truth is concerned; therefore, we may still cling to our old and beautiful version of the New Testament without any fear that it is likely to be supplanted by this late outcome of scholarly criticism. This, after all, is worth knowing, for however much degenerate professors may cavil at the doctrines of the Gospel, we are now assured that before the honest, though strictest, test of human learning they will ever stand inviolable. Here, then, we have a banner which is proved to be what we confess we have received—"the truth as it is in Jesus"—and we need not fear to display it, for the Author of truth has declared, "My Word that goeth forth out of My mouth 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."

And now, dear friends, having briefly noticed some things of an uninviting character, we wish to say that our object in doing so is to remind parents and friends of the young, of the great need of being alive to their interests; and especially should those who fear God ever be careful as to the kind of influence under which their children are allowed to come, for the snares that beset their path are many, and it therefore becomes us to be firm in the face of the foe, that we may not have to reflect when too late that the steps of those under our care were not sufficiently watched over in the time of weakness and danger. It is true we cannot give

them grace, yet we should not tacitly consent to their turning their backs on the truth and joining affinity with those who oppose it. We grieve to see so many things among professors of the truth which are great stumbling-blocks to the young. A worldly-minded, covetous spirit ; envies and evil-speakings, arising from jealousy ; a want of godly respect for the ministry and the Word of God, combined with self-complacency and hardness of heart—these, and like things, in professed lovers of truth, will be sure to have an evil tendency in the case of the young especially ; and yet, however widely we may differ from the spirit of some who profess it, we should grieve to see our children prefer false doctrine to the truth of God.

Dear friends, as lovers of Zion, let us pray for her peace and seek her good, for God has declared that they *shall* prosper that love her. Oh, that upon all who form part of the one body of true believers there may be poured out rich supplies of grace to make every branch fruitful in the house of the Lord ; and may divine peace and prosperity abound in each and every little community of saints. Child of God, look upward to Him who fills the mercy-seat. He knows thy sorrows and feels thy pains, and He has promised that “as thy days, so shall thy strength be.” Unbelief may question it, and circumstances may *seem* to contradict it ; but remember, He said to Paul in a like conflict, “My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore, be not discouraged, even though the trial continues, but resort still to the throne of grace, and think of the mercy of Jesus, as manifested in former times in answer to prayer, when thy troubles have been great, thy fears many, and thy strength small. One of old said, “Thou hast been my help ; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation ;” and may you not say the same ? “Trust Him ; He will not deceive you.” And may you, if spared, find, through the revolving days of this year, help bestowed from the sanctuary on high to suffice you in every trial, both temporal and spiritual, which you may have to endure.

But some one may read these lines who has never tasted Jesus' grace, nor known Him as a prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God. Oh, sinner, may He in mercy humble thy heart, and fill thee with repentance at His feet. Thy sin will ruin thee eternally if He does not save thee. May the Lord the Spirit, therefore, convince thee of thy sin, and of thy need of mercy, and bring thee to the throne of grace, seeking pardon and reconciliation by faith in the blood and righteousness of Jesus. For the good of such we hope still to labour and pray ; and also, for such as are seeking Him with sorrowful hearts, we hope still to bring forth words of encouragement and instruction, that their hearts and hopes

may be strengthened by the Word of life, which testifies that all true seekers after Jesus shall in due time be finders.

“Faith in the bleeding Lamb,
Oh, what a gift is this!
Hope of salvation in His name,
How comfortable ’tis!”

And now, at the commencement of another year's work, we again ask the prayers, sympathies, and help of our spiritual readers, who have done much, and may do still more, to encourage our heart and strengthen our hands.

Trusting that our labours in connection with the *SOWER* and *GLENER* may be carried on with a single eye before God, and prove to be profitable to the souls of many, both old and young, into whose hands the magazines may come, we wish each reader a Happy New Year; and may “the Lord that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion” is the desire of

THE EDITOR.

THE wheat and the chaff, they may both grow together, but they shall not both lie together.—*Dr. Goodwin.*

SAINTS are the best friends to each other when their best Friend, Jesus, is the end of their conversation; but the worst foes when He is excluded, and a vain, worldly, trifling conversation is indulged. One single word from the tongue concerning Christ I have often seen to extinguish vain talking, and, like a spark, kindle and light up a fire of love in the heart and heavenly converse from the tongue. Ever bear upon your mind the wonderful condescension of your Lord in these words, “They who feared the Lord spake” (not seldom but) “often one to another” (not in tittle-tattle of vanities and trifles, but of their Lord, His truth and salvation); “and the Lord hearkened, and heard it” (it pleased His ear and engaged His attention, so that) “a book of remembrance was written before the Lord for those that feared Him, and who thought upon His name”—that ever-precious name which is above every name to sinners—Jesus, the Saviour. See how fear and love are coupled together. By fear, they avoided a vain conversation; by love, their thoughts were engaged with Jesus. The lips were opened, and the tongue sweetly talked of Him, to His honour and glory, and for the spiritual profit of each other's souls. The Saviour loves to have it so. He not only hearkens to and hears it, but, just as we write down anything we are delighted with in our memorandum-books, lest we should forget it, so our Lord alludes to the holy spiritual conversation of His dear people. He will never forget it nor them.

A SERMON PREACHED BY MR. COVELL,
AT CROYDON, ON WEDNESDAY EVENING, MARCH 20TH, 1878.

"The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind; the Lord raiseth them that are bowed down; the Lord loveth the righteous."—PSALM cxlvi. 8.

SIN has so blinded our eyes that by nature we can neither see God as He is, Christ as He is, nor sin as it is. The Holy Ghost saith that we think God to be just such an one as ourselves; but God says, "I will reprove thee, and set them [thy sins] in order before thee: now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver." Christ is as "a root out of a dry ground" to us while in a state of unregeneracy; we "see no form or comeliness in Him," that we should give up our sins, lusts, and pleasures for Him. We do not see sin to be that cursed thing that the Scriptures declare it to be; so the Holy Ghost speaks of sinners as "alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them;" and of some He says, "twice dead," to show the utter ruin into which sin has brought us.

Now, my text declares who alone can open the eyes of sinners. "The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind." It is not in man, or anything short of the power of God, to do that; therefore He says, "Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears; ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord of hosts." Sometimes God uses the most unlikely means. As in the chapter I read, He took clay, which was more likely to blind than to clear the sight. Sometimes He will take the most simple, rude, and illiterate among the sons of men and use them. He took Amos the herdman. He says, "I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was an herdman, and a gatherer of sycomore fruit; and the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and said unto me, Go, prophesy unto My people Israel." Let it be by what means it may, the great thing is to have our eyes opened. When God opens the eyes, some see more than others at first; some see more in a week than others do in a month, or in seven years; but they will all see clearly in due time. What God has declared of Himself they will find to be true, that "with Him there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption." They will see that He is just and righteous as well as merciful. If God has begun this work in your hearts, He will perfect it. When He begins we only "see men as trees walking." Perhaps there is some particular sin we feel to be wrong; just in the same way as when Christ laid hold of the woman of Samaria, He said, "Go, call thy husband, and come hither: . . . thou hast well said, I have no husband; for thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband." That

is what He struck at. When Elijah raised the widow's son, she said to him, "Art thou come here to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?" So, when the Holy Ghost comes into the heart to begin His work, He convicts the soul of sin. Whatever that sin may be, it fastens on the conscience, and the man says, "I will put that out;" but, while he is trying to do that, others come up, and while he is trying to cleanse himself from them, more break out; so he finds it to be "deeper than the skin." He thought it was as easy to move as to cut off a wart from his face; but it has gone so deep that he begins to find—

"No outward form can make me clean;
The leprosy lies deep within."

Some of you, perhaps, have got as far as this, and no further, but you would give the world to be sure it is the work of God in your hearts. That sin is an evil, you see to be a plain truth and a fact. You sigh and grieve on account of it; you try nitre and soap to move it, but you feel that your iniquity is still marked before God; it is a plague-spot in your soul. You try to get it out, that you may be a different man, but you cannot be satisfied that the work begun in your heart is of God. You are ready to say, "If I were sure these convictions were of God, even these bitter things would be sweet to me, because I should know He would perfect that which concerns me. If I were sure it would eventually prove to be right, I would willingly bear it. I am ready to conclude that, if it were the work and finger of God, I should know it, and be able to say, 'God has made me feel it.'"

God called Samuel, "Samuel, Samuel!" He ran to Eli, and said, "You called me." "No," he said, "child, I did not call thee; lie down again." God called again, "Samuel, Samuel!" "You *did* call me," he said to Eli. Then Eli perceived it was of God. Samuel did not know it was of God; it is said he did not know the Lord. We do not know God's work. So Eli said, "When He calls again, say, Speak, Lord; for Thy servant heareth."

Now, there may be some of you here that cannot say you are at a point, but others, perhaps, that have to do with you, and know somewhat of your sorrow for sin, and desire to be different to what you have been, they see what you do not see) that it is the Lord's work, for it is "deeper than the skin." This is what is to be greatly lamented (I can say before God, I am often grieved about it)—there are so few know what it is to have the wound "deeper than the skin;" it is only a scab, and that gets cured without the power of God, without the healing grace of the Most High. When the plague is "deeper than the skin," it will be a frotting leprosy; it will not be at a stay. I know there will be times in

which you may not feel it so much, but it will break out again. My friends, if it is the work and finger of God, it will run on till it runs right through you, and gives you to see and feel just what the prophet found, "Turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations."

Forty years ago I felt I was such a vile wretch that I hated myself and my sins. I thought God had turned me inside out, and showed me what a black heart I had got; but a good many times since then it has been said to me, "Turn thou yet again, and I will show thee greater abominations." Nothing under the canopy of heaven is so vile as our hearts. If the work of God is begun in your heart, you have not found it has been at a stay; although it may have seemed to be so for a week or a month, yet something has come up again, and you feel to be a greater sinner than before. I ask you, Are you a better man than you were twelve months or five years ago? "I see," say you, "a good many things to be sin now, that I did not see to be sin then. I can see a great deal of sin in my thoughts, conversation, life, and walk, that I did not see then. I do not know where it will end." I will tell you where it will end; it will bring you to fall flat on Jesus Christ, with—

"Nothing but Thy blood, O Jesus,
Can relieve me from the smart."

The man in the chapter that I read did not know it was Jesus that opened his eyes. So it is with you; you do not know that it is the Holy Ghost that has done it. You cannot put your foot down, and say, "Now I have got a true evidence and a certainty that God has begun the work of grace in my soul." Who did it? "A man that is called Jesus." He did not know who it was. When they said to him, "What sayest thou of Him, that He hath opened thine eyes?" he said, "He is a Prophet." He did not know that He was the eternal Son of God. So we find in another case, the man could only "see men as trees walking;" then Jesus bade him look up again, and he saw every man clearly. If God brought you to see sin five years ago, or less, you see more of the hideous nature of it now than you did then. "Yes," say you, "I do." Blessed be God, it is He that has opened your eyes, and neither the world nor the devil will ever close them again. He will show you the worthlessness of your own righteousness, the insufficiency of human power, free-will, and creature merit, and discover to you Jesus Christ, and make you smite on your breast and say, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" If it be so, you will understand what Mr. Hart says—

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

I will tell you a blessed truth that the dear man speaks when he says—

“Sin’s filth and guilt, perceived and felt,
Make known God’s great salvation.”

That it does, my friends. Then—

“Sinners can say, and none but they,
‘How precious is the Saviour!’”

“The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind.” He opens the man’s eyes to see what he is. I will venture to say, if God has given you a sight of self, you have been ready to vomit yourself up. “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” Man will not believe that he is so earthly, sensual, and devilish, till God opens his eyes. “Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries,” and so forth. What a host! It will make a man cry out, “Can ever God dwell here?” That is just the place to which God brings the sinner, and then says, “To this man will I look, and with him will I dwell, even with him that is of an humble and contrite spirit.” This man will be humble and low indeed; yea, he will lie in the dust; therefore God says, “To that man will I look that trembles at My Word.” The light of God shining within has discovered all this to him; as in the case of the great Apostle, who, when the commandment came, found sin to be exceeding sinful. “The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind.” Some may be twenty years before God brings them thus down into the dust. The man keeps getting worse and worse, until at last he is altogether wrong. It may be many years before the leprosy gets from head to foot, but, as I before said, if it be “deeper than the skin,” it will go on till God pronounces the man clean.

All will come to this spot before they get to heaven. “By grace are we saved through faith; and that not of ourselves; it is the gift of God;” and thus “every mouth shall be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God.” If the Lord has begun to open your eyes to see what you are, He will show you something else. He will show you such a suitableness in Jesus Christ, such beauty in free grace and in His Word, where He speaks about the forgiveness of sins. His Word will be “a light to your feet and a lamp to your path.”

I will venture to say, till God opened your eyes, you never saw that in the Word you can see in it now. You can say, as Jonathan did, “I only tasted a little of the honey, and how mine eyes are enlightened!” Who opened your eyes to see the beauty and sweetness there is in God’s Word? It is the Lord who has opened your eyes. What a dry Word, what a dead letter, it is

to thousands that read it ! How few can see and feel about it as dear Luther did, who said, "One leaf of it is worth more than heaven and earth !" God so comforted his heart, and made the Word such a blessing to his soul, that he said (this is going a great way, you know), "I would sooner be in hell with the Word of God, than in an earthly paradise without it." What must he have felt it to be ! What a treasure it was to him ! We sometimes sing —

"Precious Bible ! what a treasure
Does the Word of God afford !"

"The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind" to see what there is in His dear Son. "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." We must have eyes to see Him, we must know something of Him, we must see somewhat of His suitability and sufficiency, before we shall desire Him. You will not prize a thing till you see some good in it. When the understanding is opened to see good in it, then the will and affections go after it. As I said just now, the poor man whose eyes were opened did not know who this Christ was at the first. When the Son of God asked him, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God ?" he said, "Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him ?" Jesus replied, "Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee." "I believe," he said. What light shone into his heart ; how his understanding was enlightened ; what a blaze of heavenly light burst upon him, as the Son of God was sweetly revealed before him in His beauty and blessedness, which brought him to worship Him, and, like Paul, to say, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift." When Christ was revealed to Paul, at the time Ananias went to him, and said, "The Lord that appeared unto thee in the way hath sent me unto thee, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost," then there fell from his eyes as it had been scales. The scales of ignorance, darkness, prejudice, and unbelief fell from his eyes in a minute, and he went and preached Christ, the wisdom and power of God. There will be no beauty in Christ unless the blessed Spirit takes of the things of Christ, and reveals them unto us. Has He revealed them to you ? How were thine eyes opened ? What think you of Christ ? Can your heart respond in faith, in affection, in truth, and say, "Give me Christ, or else I die" ? Can you really say in truth, sincerity, and affection, "No mention must be made of gold, silver, or precious stones, for Christ is above all compare" ?

"The one thing needful, dearest Lord,
Is to be one with Thee."

Is it so ? Can you say honestly before God that He knows it

is? Then I can say, "Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?" Hence it is said, "If Satan were divided against himself, how could his kingdom stand?"

Some of you, perhaps, may remember when Mr. Gadsby began to preach, there were many opinions and questions about him. Some said he was a good man, and others said nay. A godly man who had been many years in the way, and who had been to hear him more than once, was one day listening to a contention about him (they had not heard him, but went by report), so the minister said, "Well, Richard, you have heard him, what have you got to say about him?" He said, "If the devil sends such men as William Gadsby to preach, as some of these people affirm, although the devil and I fell out above forty years ago, we will be friends again." "Can a devil open the eyes of the blind," bring you to see a beauty and desirableness in the Christ of God, and so set your heart and affections upon Him that at times you could go through anything if you could but get Him? The language of your soul from time to time as you come to His house is, "Reveal Christ to me! Oh, that I may see somewhat of Him; see my interest in Him!" You would not mind going five or ten miles, again and again, if you could get a glimpse of Him; if you could taste somewhat of the sweetness that flows from Him. How were thine eyes opened? He was not always "the one thing needful." You would not have emptied your pockets or parted with your sins for Him. You did not want Him till your bones were out of joint. You did not want Him as a King to reign over you. You were willing He should be a Saviour to save you from hell, but not to save you from the spirit of the world. Your cry was not, "Let Jesus come into my heart." You could not say then, as you can now, "Christ is All and in all." "Nothing but Jesus I esteem." Oh, no; but "the Lord openeth the eyes of the blind;" and, if God the Holy Ghost has so opened your eyes to see the beauty and desirableness there is in Jesus Christ as to fasten your faith and affections on Him, God and you are agreed, and I am quite sure if you are that, you will be together in heaven. I never saw so much beauty in Christ as I see now; He fits me in every way. I want and desire Him every day—yea, I often desire Him many times a day. I often wake up in the night, and say, "Lord Jesus, come unto me now." I can say with the spouse, "He shall lie all night betwixt my breasts." I want Him close to me; I want Him in my heart to live and die by, that "the life I live I may live by the faith of the Son of God," so that "for me to live may be Christ," and that I may die to be with Him for ever. I saw somewhat of Him years ago that engaged my affections, made me willing to leave father and mother, and to push away all other things that stood in the way,

that I might have and possess Him, and be with Him at last. He was "the altogether lovely." "All over glorious is my Lord," and I have no doubt some of you feel and prove Him to be so. "Yes," say you, "I do. I can say, Christ is the Chiefest of ten thousand, and the longer I live the more I desire to praise Him. I can say, He shall be my wisdom, my sanctification, my justification, and eternal redemption." You will live with Him in heaven, then, for He has got your heart, and you have got a place in His. Ask all in this chapel if they feel as you do? Who made you to differ? How were thine eyes opened? Who did it? The world did not do it; the devil would not do it. Oh, no! None other than the eternal and ever-blessed Spirit removed the scales of ignorance, prejudice, and unbelief from your eyes, and brought you to see that Christ is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life," and "the one thing needful." You can see that the man that has Him is rich indeed, and the man that is destitute of Him is a poor wretch, whatever he may possess beside. The man that has Christ has everything. If you look into the blessed Word of God, you will find the rabble crying out, "Away with this Man! Release unto us Barabbas!" Now it is said, "Barabbas was a robber;" anything rather than Christ; and Pilate said, "What shall I do with Him that is called King of the Jews?" and they cried out, "Crucify Him! crucify Him!" Then, on the day of Pentecost, Peter comes along and tells them, "Ye have with wicked hands crucified the Lord of Glory; ye have killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raised from the dead;" and they began to say, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" and Peter replied, "Repent, and be baptized," and so forth. That very Christ who before they cried, "Away with Him!" now they will be baptized in His name, confessing and acknowledging Him alone to be the "Way, the Truth, and the Life." "The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind." These are they who can say—

"If asked what of Jesus I think,
 Although my best thoughts are but poor;
 I'll say, 'He's my meat and my drink,
 My life, and my strength, and my store:
 My Shepherd, my Husband, my Friend,
 My Saviour from sin and from thrall;
 My hope from beginning to end,
 My Jesus, my portion, my all.'"

They are the men and women whose eyes the blessed Spirit has opened. I believe I can say Scripturally of such, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see;" and you shall see Him to your eternal comfort, and your eyes will, one of these days, be fixed upon Him, never to lose sight of Him throughout eternity.

"The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind," not only to see what they are as sinners, and that He is everything, but He opens their eyes as He leads them about in a way of providence. It is said that He leads the blind by a way they knew not, and as He leads them about, they wonder if it will end right—

"Could we see how all is right,
Where were room for credence?
But by faith, and not by sight,
Christians yield obedience."

Sometimes it is in such a way that they think it is all wrong. "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." God tells us, "I will lead the blind by a way they knew not, and in paths that they have not known; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight." "*I will do it*;" it is God's own work; and, till God makes darkness light, and crooked things straight, you cannot get them straight. For ought I know, He may be leading some of you in this way now. "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord."

If we look, we shall find how He leads them in a way they knew not; then, when He opens their eyes, how plain it is! We look through a wrong medium; we look through the eyes of sense and reason or of unbelief. But faith sees things right enough at times, and will say, "Wait upon God; He will make it all right." We often find that we have more unbelief than faith. Reason says, "That is wrong;" unbelief says, "It is not of God." Unbelief, sense, and reason never speak well of God, while faith at times will rise and say, "It can be right, and will be right, because God says He cares for His people." God told Paul by a vision, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us." Paul gathered assuredly there was something to be done. He went, and was there for a few Sabbaths, and did not see anything doing. He went by the river side, and God opened the heart of Lydia, that she attended unto the things that were spoken by Paul. Then a woman with a spirit of divination said, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who show unto us the way of salvation;" and Paul commanded the devil to come out of her. But, when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they took Paul and Silas, and brought them before the rulers, and said, "These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city." Then they took and beat them, and threw them into prison; there they lay with their feet fast in the stocks and with sore backs. How puzzling this must have been to the great Apostle! "God told me to come here, and here I am in prison! Who is going to hear my Gospel here?" "I will lead the blind by a way they knew not; I will make darkness light before them, and

crooked things straight." Presently there came such a crashing ; all the prison doors were thrown open ; in sprang the gaoler, ready to kill himself, fearing the prisoners had escaped. But Paul said, "Do thyself no harm, for we are all here safe." Then he brought them out, and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved ?" and they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved ;" and he and his house believed and rejoiced before God. Paul could see now, but unbelief is always in a hurry.

How God will move His people about ! Hence we find Naomi must go down to Moab. Here God starves her out, and sends such troubles, one on the back of another, that she will stop in Moab no longer. She must go down to Moab to fetch the Moabitish damsel, Ruth, who will go back with her. Then, my friends, when Ruth is joined to Boaz, how Naomi and Ruth can see why Naomi must go down to Moab, and Ruth must come with her to Bethlehem. "The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind." Till God opens them we cannot make it out why this or that is come to pass. To reason all is wrong, nothing right ; but, when God opens it up, then it is as straight as a line. So you find again, Haman says to King Ahasuerus, "There is a certain people scattered throughout thy dominions, and their laws are diverse from the king's laws, and it is not for the king's profit that they should live." "Well, then," says the king, "here is my ring ; carry out your purpose ;" and, as soon as the decree was signed and issued at Shushan the palace, out runs Mordecai with a loud and bitter cry. What distraction ! But what now ? To be short, when Haman is hanged, and Mordecai is next to the king, and walking in and out before the people, he could say, "I can see now, God's design was to bring that enemy of ours to an end, and to lift up and exalt me." It is said that, before, there was such weeping and wailing in the city, and many lay in sackcloth and ashes ; now it is a feast day, and was to be kept as such ever after ; so their mourning was turned into gladness, and their sorrow into joy.

"To trust Him endeavour, the work is His own ;
He makes the believer, and gives him his crown."

"The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind." Though all is so dark you cannot now see why or wherefore, yet you will see by-and-bye. You will come here : "He has led me by a right way ; I never thought it would turn out so well." How blind were Jacob and Joseph ! The three children did not think their going through the fire was the way to promotion. God has a way of His own : "His way is in the sea, and His path in the mighty waters ; and His footsteps are not known." Why, He lays one by with sickness ; He sends trouble ; He moves a man to this place

or that place ; and what can it be for ? To what purpose is all this ?

“ Buts, ifs, and hows are hurled,
To sink us with the gloom
Of all that's dismal in this world,
Or in the world to come.”

What does the Scripture say ? “ He giveth no account of His matters ”—just in the same way as we tell our children, when young and inquisitive, that is no business of theirs. If they were to say, “ Father, what did you buy this house, or do so-and-so for ? ” we should not condescend to tell them. God is too wise to make any mistake. He “ leads us by a right way to a city of habitation.” Shall there be evil in a city, whether affliction, war, or anything else, and the Lord has not done it ? “ The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind ; ” and, when He opens them, we wonder at our blindness, and feel we will trust God for the future, and say, “ Choose Thou the way, and still lead on.”

“ The Lord loveth the righteous.” Then there will be nothing wanting ; God will see to everything. As I sometimes say, “ You need not tell love what to do ; love will find out plenty of inventions.” Where there is love, that will contrive, that will manage ; and where there is wisdom and power to carry out what love invents, you may depend upon it it will come right. “ The Lord loveth the righteous.” He will take care that all things shall turn out well and for our good. Just in the same way as you look at a rug—look at it underneath ; it is all knots, ends, and pieces. You might say, “ What is there in it ? ” But turn it over ; there are flowers and leaves, all coloured and shaded so nice and tastefully. Who would think the other side was so knotty and rugged ? So all things—all these knots, all these ugly sorts of pieces in your lot, are working in and forming the flower, and all will come right, and will bring you to say, “ He is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working.”

THE sprinkling of the blood of the crucified Saviour on the conscience by the Holy Ghost sanctifies a man, without which the most abstemious life and rigorous discipline are unholy.—*Joseph Hart.*

Wouldst thou know whether Christ is thine Advocate or no ? I ask, hast thou entertained Him so to be ? When men have suits of law depending in any of the king's courts, they entertain their attorney or advocate to plead their cause, and so he pleads for them.—*Bunyan.*

"THOU KNOWEST."

"Thou knowest," Lord, the weariness and sorrow
Of the sad heart that comes to Thee for rest ;
Cares of to-day and burdens of to-morrow,
Blessings implored and sins to be confessed :
I come before Thee at Thy gracious word,
And lay them at Thy feet—"Thou knowest," Lord.

"Thou knowest" all the past—how long and blindly
On the dark mountains the lost wanderer strayed ;
How the Good Shepherd followed, and how kindly
He bore it home, upon His shoulders laid ;
And healed the bleeding wounds and soothed the pain,
And brought back life, and hope, and strength again.

"Thou knowest" all the present—each temptation,
Each toilsome duty, each foreboding fear ;
All to myself assigned of tribulation,
Or to beloved ones, than self more dear ;
All pensive memories as I journey on,
Longings for banished smiles and voices gone.

"Thou knowest" all the future—gleams of gladness,
By stormy clouds too quickly overcast ;
Hopes of sweet fellowship and parting sadness,
And the dark river to be crossed at last :
Oh, what could confidence and hope afford
To tread that path but this—"Thou knowest, Lord" ?

"Thou knowest" not alone as God, all-knowing—
As Man our mortal weakness Thou hast proved ;
On earth, with purest sympathies o'erflowing,
A Saviour, Thou hast wept, and Thou hast loved :
And love and sorrow still to Thee may come,
And find a hiding-place, a rest, a home.

Therefore I come, Thy gentle call obeying,
And lay my sins and sorrows at Thy feet ;
An everlasting strength my weakness staying,
Clothed in Thy robe of righteousness complete :
Then, rising and refreshed, I leave Thy throne,
And follow on to know as I am known.

H. L. L.

SHOW me a man's books and show me a man's companions,
and I will tell you what sort of a man he is.—*Tiptaft*.

It is ten thousand times better to suffer for the sake of Christ,
who has promised us help and comfort in our troubles, than to
suffer for the sake of Satan, and be without consolation, and be
kept in despondency.—*Luther*.

EXTRACTS FROM HAWKER'S DIARY FOR THE
YEAR 1797.

January 1st, Lord's Day morning.—After a comfortable night's rest, through the good hand of my God upon me, I was awakened with a refreshing passage of Scripture, brought to my mind with some peculiar energy: "Ask what I shall give thee." I recollected that it was New Year's Day, and the Lord's Day also. "The New Year's gift which I ask, Holy Father, through the name of Jesus, is the blessed gift of the Holy Spirit," I replied; "increasing grace every day, and that the love of God may be shed abroad more and more in my heart by the divine power. Oh, that the grace of the Holy Spirit may rest upon me in my person, in my family, in the Church of Christ over which the Holy Ghost hath made me an overseer—that I may see the work of the Lord prosper in my hand, and of the travail of my Redeemer's soul, and be satisfied." I found my heart much drawn out in prayer on each of these points, and have reason to bless God for so auspicious a commencement of the New Year.

Memorandum in the evening of the same day.—Never, surely, did a year open with more promising and auspicious appearances. I found great strength through all my public services this day, in my morning, afternoon, and evening ministrations. Is it not worth the remark, oh, my soul, that, after the labour of the day was over, and before I sat down to supper, a man came to inform me of some gracious impressions wrought on the mind of a young person in the congregation, under the instrumentality of the Word? "Ask what I shall give thee" occurred to my mind most sweetly. Oh, what a God, awakening, hearing, and answering prayer, is my God!

Monday morning, January 2nd.—"Ask what I shall give thee" is still my motto, and I pray God that I may never lose sight of it, and of the refreshments which this portion of Scripture, applied as it hath been to my personal experience in yesterday's mercy, hath afforded me.

January 10th.—A day of providence, but not of gratitude. Oh, my forgetful heart!

January 16th.—The world broke in upon me this day; somewhat comforted in the evening.

January 24th.—Went to visit Mr. and Mrs. M—— on the death of their eldest son. This dear youth was a very promising child, and, from some expressions which dropped from him during his long illness, great reason is there to hope that he was a child of God. What can reconcile us to the separation of ties so tender but the assurances that our departed child or brother has fallen asleep in Jesus?

February 17th.—Heard of the death of Mrs. ——. Poor woman! I lament that anything should have arisen to prevent me from seeing her in her last hours. She made a jest of my religious principles, and my proud nature withdrew from her acquaintance. But ought I to have withdrawn for this? Might I not have gained upon her by a gentleness of persuasion? Was it not quitting the ground to the enemy to leave the case as I did? Lord, lay not this sin to my charge! Oh, may the Lord have regenerated her heart, and received her to His mercy in Christ Jesus, before she was called hence!

February 25th.—The prayer-meeting this evening was particularly refreshing.

December 31st.—The end of the year 1797, which began so auspiciously, ended as mercifully; and I do not recollect through the whole that I experienced one half-hour's sickness, from the beginning to the end of it. Upon the review, I see much to admire and adore of the Lord's gracious dealings, and abundant reason to take shame and confusion of face unto myself in my unprofitableness and shortcomings. "Ask what I shall give thee," saith the Lord. But oh, my God, how much more bountiful have been Thy gifts than my requests!

[It is much to be regretted that the original diary, which he kept to the close of his pilgrimage, when his views were more distinct, his judgment more mature, his communion with God more intimate, and his joy in the Lord more abundant, has been lost].

A PRAYER.

Oh, that mine eyes might closed be
 To what concerns me not to see;
 That deafness might possess mine ear
 To what concerns me not to hear;
 That truth my tongue might always tie
 From ever speaking foolishly;
 That no vain thought might ever rest,
 Or be conceived in my breast;
 That by each deed, and word, and thought,
 Glory may to my God be brought!
 But what are wishes? Lord, mine eye
 On Thee is fixed, to Thee I cry!
 Wash, Lord, and purify my heart,
 And make it clean in every part;
 And, when 'tis clean, Lord, keep it too,
 For that is more than I can do.

THOMAS ELLWOOD, 1639.

WILL you pity a body that is going to the block? and will you not pity a soul that is going to the pit?—*Dr. Goodwin.*

FAITHFUL COUNSELS.

[The following letter was written by Mr. Burrell to one of his hearers in 1830.]

DEAR FRIEND,—Whoever will be cumbered Martha in your house, see that you be not cumbered. One thing is needful—Christ. Seek Him ; turn a deaf ear to arrangements, but pray for the arrangers ; so shall you prosper. Be thankful that you have a good bed to repose on, and let not your rest in Christ be marred. If you hear of fierce countenances, hasty speeches, tumults, swellings, and an improper use of power, be not troubled, but pray. Who knows but the last shall be first, if you commit yourself to Christ only ?

I have sent a mirror to some, and I am standing upon the watch-tower to observe the effect of it. I know Him who directed me to send it, and I have a fearful sound in my ears, in case it be slighted. But take heed that you rejoice not if the rod should come. Think of peace, seek peace, and speak peace. “Cease from anger, and forsake wrath ; fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.” While they are busily engaged in making their earthly nest commodious, see that thou “set thy house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live”—I mean in God’s time. Take heed, therefore, by the help of the good Spirit, that the floor of your heart, with its contracted filth, may be well washed—yea, soaked and scoured with the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, that the Beloved may walk up and down in you with delight. See that the fleshy table of your heart be so rubbed and polished that He may behold His own blessed image in it, and, sitting down, may eat His own pleasant fruits. Give diligence to prepare for Him such a bed as He delights in, that is, a meek and quiet spirit, in His sight of great price, and a humble, contrite heart, in which He loves to repose. Consider that these things are the only realities. Turn away from all if Christ is not in them, and count every moment lost which is not spent in prayer. Cast away a legal spirit, but show Him your wounds, and magnify in ardent confession your manifold transgressions. Consider how pitiful He is to sensible sinners, and what tender mercy He shows to them who hide nothing from Him.

May the Lord influence you with the same meltings of heart and tears of unutterable love as He caused me to feel in writing this to you.

I am, yours in the Lord Jesus,

JOSEPH FRANCIS BURRELL.

P.S.—“Cease from man ;” let him not be the object of your terror or comfort. Let Christ be All in all to you.

RITUALISM IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

AT the autumnal Conference of the Church Association, held at Exeter Hall, the chairman, Mr. L. A. Valpy, congratulated those assembled on their having got back to their old quarters at Exeter Hall, a locality quite congenial to the Church Association. Their aim, he said, was to defend the Protestant principles of their Reformed Church; and so far were they from wishing to imprison clergymen, that they demanded the abolition of this penalty for contempt of court in the case of a recalcitrant clergyman, and had actually drafted a measure for the substitution of deprivation as an alternative. But the law must be vindicated; for, as Lord Selborne had said, to claim the right to set it at defiance was to assail the first principles of morality.

Dr. I. P. Fleming read a paper in which he said, once in our annals sacerdotalism wrought the downfall of the Church, and something more; and, if the bishops were to have an unconstitutional power conferred upon them, or Convocation to usurp it—if the laity were to have their rights adroitly suppressed—the multiplied and multiplying enemies of the Church would soon insist with some force that, as the Church of England had broken the constitutional compacts, by ceasing to be the “Protestant Reformed Religion,” it should also cease to be “established by law.”

In a paper on “Secret Societies,” by the Rev. Hely Hutchinson Smith, he spoke of the hundreds of such organizations with which our country and colonies are honeycombed, particularly of “The Society of the Holy Cross;” “The Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament;” “The Order of Corporate Reunion;” “The Association for Promoting the Unity of Christendom;” and “The Cowley Fathers,” taking less notice of the kindred sisterhoods. The common aim of all these, he said, was to undo the work of the Reformation.

[We read and hear of the bishops being powerless to subdue the evil republic (Ritualism) in the Church; but it is to be feared that, with one or two exceptions, their personal sympathies are a great source of strength to this anti-Reformation and Romanizing system. We sympathize with those men of Protestant spirit who offer a faithful resistance to the foe; but we fear that Jesuitism has so leavened the constitution of Episcopalianism that only the interposition of divine power can save the Church of England from utter apostacy; and especially so if our law-makers promote men to high offices in the Church who are law-breakers and Ecclesiastical Court despisers.—ED.]

ANNE DUTTON.

"A MOTHER IN ISRAEL."

[The following extracts from the life of that excellent and godly woman, Mrs. Anne Dutton, were sent us some time back by a friend, and we now give them, hoping that they will be read with interest and profit by such as fear God.—ED.]

THE subject of this account was born at Northampton, in the year 1695. She says :—

It pleased the Lord to order it so that I had the advantage of a religious education. My parents being both gracious, I attended with them upon the ministry of the late Mr. Hunt, who was the pastor of a Church of Christ at Northampton. From a child I was acquainted with the Holy Scriptures, and took pleasure in reading them, with other good books, especially hymn-books, which I greatly delighted to learn and commit to memory. But, notwithstanding my attendance upon public and private worship, and my notions of divine mysteries, I was, though I had little reason for it, a proud, self-righteous creature, and an awful stranger and enemy to God and the way of salvation, as it is alone by the Person, blood, and righteousness of Christ.

It pleased the Lord to work savingly upon my heart when I was about thirteen years of age. There was a mighty impression made upon my heart of the reality and consequence of a future state, either of misery or glory, of unspeakable happiness or inconceivable torment, together with the nearness of its approach. Oh, eternity, eternity was ever before my eyes, and the worth of my own soul, as an immortal spirit, was strongly impressed upon my mind. Now I needed none to tell me that I was the person that was undone by sin, and, if I died in a state of unbelief and alienation from God, I must be damned for ever. This raised a cry in my soul (though I kept it as close as I could from others), "What must I do to be saved?"

Now I set about religion in good earnest. I prayed, read, and heard in a very different manner than I had ever done before, but my wound was too deep to be healed by my own doings. I could no longer rest satisfied with knowing that God had chosen a remnant in His Son unto eternal life, unless I knew my own interest in electing grace; nor that Christ had died for sinners, without knowing that He loved me and gave Himself for me. I wanted to know these things for my own soul.

I remember once reading in the seventeenth of John, and when I came to those words, "I prayed not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me, for they are Thine," my heart was, as it were, struck with a dart, fearing that I was none of the Lord's,

but of the world, and, as such, was excluded from Christ's prayer. But, as a poor, perishing sinner, I waited at the throne of grace with earnest longings, and some hopes that mercy would bid me live. I saw there was grace enough in God to save me, and I have said, "Speak the word, Lord, and my soul shall be saved." The ministry of the Word was blest to the increasing my concern and enlarging my desires; and the reading of God's Word was another means which was greatly blessed to my soul, both for the discovery of my misery and the revelation of the remedy. The Psalms of David and Paul's Epistles were very precious to me. There was, I remember, an expression once dropped in company where I was that did very much affect me. It was this: "The least drachm of saving grace will land a soul safe in glory, when they which have abundance of common grace [or head knowledge] may go to hell with it;" and oh, how I longed for one drachm of this saving grace! Mr. Shepherd's "Penitential Cries" were also of great use to me. Oh, how my soul has breathed out its desires to God in some of these hymns, particularly that for communion with God.*

At length it pleased the Lord to visit me with a very dangerous illness, a fever, so that my life was despaired of. Death stared me in the face, and I thought myself just ready to launch into eternity, but knew not what would become of my poor soul. And now my distress rose high; indeed, the waves and billows of God's apprehended wrath passed over me. Necessity was laid upon me. I must venture on Christ or perish; believe, or die; and the conflict between faith and unbelief in my soul was exceedingly great. Like a man drowning, I caught at every twig. I laboured to take hold of the promises, but, if I got a little support one moment, my innumerable transgressions, as so many weights, came pressing upon me, and sunk me the next. Oh, here lay the difficulty—to believe for myself in the face of so much sin and guilt! The avenger of blood was at my heels; Christ Jesus, the hope of sinners, was also in my view, and my soul was fleeing for refuge to lay hold thereon; but oh, the weights which hung about me did much hinder me! My friends laboured to comfort me; but I have often thought this verse to be very expressive of my case at this time—

"Kind was the pity of my friends,
But could not ease my smart;
Their words indeed did reach my case,
But could not reach my heart."

I was brought, to all appearance, unto the point of death. My parents were put out of the room, that they might not see me

* See page 26.

depart. And now, behold, the time of my extremity was God's opportunity. He made the storm a calm, and brought me to my desired haven. I had faith given me in that word, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out;" and oh, the infinite grace and faithfulness I saw in it! Now I could believe for myself, in the face of ten thousand discouragements. This was a wonderful effect of omnipotent power and irresistible grace. Nothing less than the exceeding greatness of God's power could have raised up my soul from those depths of unbelieving fears to faith in Jesus! Now I could look upon the near approach of my dissolution with comfort. "Oh," thought I, "before another hour I shall be landed in glory." But lo, my wonder-working God not only wrought wonders for my soul, but for my body also. An unthought-of means was proposed to my parents, who had designed to use no more; but, however, being pressed, they yielded. I received the potion. It put nature in a mighty struggle for a time, but the Lord blessed it, and ordered its operation for life, and in a little time I could speak. Oh, the joy of God's salvation which I now felt, raised from the gates of hell to the borders of heaven! Oh, why me, why me, when thousands perish? What manner of love is this that has "plucked me as a brand from the burning"?

It pleased the Lord, in the fifteenth year of my age, to incline my heart to join with the Church of Christ in Northampton over which the late Mr. Hunt was pastor. Under his ministry I was often laid to the breasts of consolation; and, being fed with the milk of the Word, which was suited to my present state, I grew thereby. I had been once, I remember, at a meeting of prayer, but not meeting with God in it, I returned very sad; and, as I was lamenting my case, that word was brought to my mind, "Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say, rejoice;" and by it the Lord sealed my instruction, and filled my heart brimful of joy, in the faith of my eternal interest and unchangeable standing in Him.

After some time, Mr. Hunt, my first pastor, was removed, and another succeeded him. The ministry of this servant of Christ was of use to me in some respects, though I did not fall in with his judgment in several points. I thought it my duty to acquaint him with it. Many were the trials and great the supports I met with. A mighty spirit of prayer was upon me, and the liberty of God's bosom was afforded me in the day of my distress. Having received full satisfaction that it was the Lord's mind I should remove my communion from that Church to one over which Mr. Moore was pastor, I accordingly did so, and I have great reason to bless the name of the Lord for it. The Lord Jesus, my Chief Shepherd, led me, by the ministry

of His servant and under-shepherd, Mr. Moore, into green pastures.*

At the age of twenty-two my habitation was removed from Northampton to London, by my entering into the marriage state with Mr. Benjamin Dutton. Here I found the waters of the sanctuary were indeed risen waters, which filled my soul with wonder and joy. I found the same Gospel maintained and vindicated in the ministry of the late Mr. Skepp as I was wont to hear under Mr. Moore, with abundance of glory, life, and power. I had transient communion with the Church under his care, and at length, being dismissed from Northampton, I was received into full communion, and my fellowship with the saints there was very sweet. Oh, the glory of God that I saw in that place!

Mr. John Skepp was a most excellent servant of Christ. He had been a member of the Church at Cambridge under the ministry of the famous Mr. Joseph Hussey. Mr. Skepp became pastor of the Baptist Church meeting in Curriers' Hall, Cripplegate, in about the year 1715, and died in 1721. He was personally and intimately acquainted with Dr. Gill.

After having lived some time in London, we removed to Evershall, in Northamptonshire, and from thence, in 1733, to Great Gransden, in Huntingdonshire, Mr. Dutton being chosen pastor of the Baptist Church there. It increased much under his ministry. He built a new meeting-house and minister's house in 1743. In the August of that year Mr. Dutton went to America for the purpose of soliciting assistance towards the cause at Gransden. His applications were successful, and he obtained all the money he wanted; but, on coming home, having nearly reached the English coast, the ship was cast away, and Mr. Dutton was lost, to the inexpressible grief of his widow and people. Mrs. Dutton was much supported under this heavy stroke, as will be seen from the following extract from a letter to a friend. She says, "I am a sorrowful soul, and yet in the Lord I would and do rejoice. I have received the news of my husband's death by a letter from dear Mr. Whitfield, in which he tells me that he heard at Charlestown, South Carolina, that the ship in which my dear husband sailed for England had in all probability foundered at sea. I think he puts in the word 'probability' to prevent my too great surprise at the first mention of it, as throughout his letter he writes to me as a widow, and says, 'Your husband was the Lord's servant; no doubt he is at rest,

* Mr. John Moore was born at Keighley, in Yorkshire, in 1662. He was awakened at sixteen years of age, and continued nine years in great distress of soul, and became pastor of the Baptist Church at Northampton in 1700.

I heard him pray a little before he embarked. This is indeed a heavy stroke, but Omnipotence can enable you to bear it.' This stroke, my brother, is so great that it almost overcomes my weak nature, and at times I am ready to sink in deep water. But, glory to my good God, I feel the everlasting arms underneath me; and, when ready to faint, my Lord gives me a cordial. He tells me that this is among the 'all things' that work for my good; that none—no person or thing—shall pluck me out of His and His Father's hands. And oh, how sweetly did that word reconcile me to receive the evil of this affliction at the Lord's hand patiently—yea, thankfully: 'Behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces.' I saw the 'smoking furnace' of this great affliction, and that the 'burning lamp' of the precious promise to support me under it, and save me from it, did and should pass unto me from the heart-love of God my Father, through my bleeding Saviour, my crucified Jesus—through the divided part of His human nature, His soul and body rent in twain by divine justice for my sin, to take away the curse of this affliction from me, and to make it a blessing to me; and for it to the Three-One God my adoring soul gave thanks."

(To be continued.)

AS much as Lazarus coming out of the grave, and feeling himself restored to life, differed from those who only saw the miracle, or believed the fact when told them, so great is the difference between a soul's real coming out of himself, and having the righteousness of Christ imputed to him by the precious faith of God's elect, and a man's bare believing the doctrine of imputed righteousness because he sees it contained in Scripture, or assenting to the truth of it when proposed to his understanding by others.—*Joseph Hart.*

LUTHER'S FIRMNESS.—About the time the plague broke out in Wittenberg, a great part of the students and teachers left the town. Luther remained. "I don't well know," wrote he to his friend at Erfurt, "if the plague will allow me to finish the Epistle to the Galatians. Prompt and brisk, it makes great ravages, especially among the young. You advise me to flee. Whither shall I flee? I hope the world will not go to wreck, though Friar Martin fall. If the plague makes progress, I will disperse the friars in all directions; but for myself, I am stationed here, and obedience permits me not to flee till He who has called me recall me. Not that I do not fear death (for I am not the Apostle Paul—I am only his commentator), but I hope the Lord will deliver me from fear."—*D'Aubigné*, Vol. I., p. 167.

“WHEN WILT THOU COME UNTO ME?”

ALAS ! my God, that we should be such strangers to each other !
Oh, that as friends we might agree, and walk and talk together !
Thou know'st my soul does dearly love the place of Thine abode ;
No music drops so sweet a sound as those two words, “*My God.*”

I long not for the fruit that grows within these gardens here ;
I find no sweetness in the rose when Jesus is not near ;
Thy gracious presence, oh, my Christ, can make a paradise ;
Oh, what are all the goodly pearls unto this Pearl of price ?

May I taste that communion, Lord, Thy people have with Thee ;
Thy Spirit daily talks with them ; oh, let Him talk with me !
Like Enoch, let me walk with God, and thus walk out my day,
Attended with the heavenly guards upon the King's highway.

When wilt Thou come unto me, Lord ? oh, come, my Lord most dear !
Come near, come nearer, nearer still ; I'm well when Thou art near ;
When wilt Thou come unto me, Lord ? I languish for Thy sight ;
Ten thousand suns, if Thou art strange, are shade instead of light.

When wilt Thou come unto me, Lord ? for till Thou dost appear,
I count each moment for a day, each minute for a year ;
Come, Lord, and never from me go ; this world's a darksome place ;
I find no pleasure here below when Thou dost veil Thy face.

There's no such thing as pleasure here ; my Jesus is my All ;
As Thou dost shine or disappear, my pleasures rise or fall ;
Come, spread Thy savour on my frame ; no sweetness is so sweet ;

Till I get up to sing Thy name where all Thy singers meet.

from Shepherd's "Penitential Cries."

It is not so easy to be a Christian as some men think. For a living soul really to trust in Christ alone, when he sees nothing in himself but evil and sin, is an act as supernatural as for Peter to walk on the sea.—*Joseph Hart.*

It could never have entered into the heart of the wisest angel in heaven that Christ, the eternal Son of God, should become man ; and far less that He should take such a filthy and deformed creature and bride by the hand as sinners are.—*Ereline.*

HELP IN AFFLICTION.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Your kind letter reached me when from home, so that I had not an opportunity of answering it ; but I immediately sent friend Chandler word that, if nothing prevented, I would preach at Edenbridge on the 14th of November. Since that time I am become quite lame with what is called varicose veins in my left leg. It does not altogether confine me to the house, but I am obliged to be careful not to get about too much. I have been blessed for many years with a good measure of health, but have had my trials another way ; and, when unbelief prevails, they are not what I wish or should choose. But I should be afraid to be left to choose for myself ; and would rather say with Hart, “Choose Thou the way, but still lead on.”

You, my brother, have been brought nigh unto death ; but for a while you are spared. What a mercy to find a firm standing in Jordan, and to triumph with Paul, and say, “Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

I laboured for years under the guilt of sin and fear of death, and often prayed to God not to let me die in my sins ; and I believe with all my heart I shall not, they being cast into the depths of the sea ; and now my prayer is, “Cast me not off in the time of old age ; neither forsake me when my strength faileth me ;” and, through mercy, I do feel the blessed power of God helping me in my life and ministry, as Job says, “He has granted me life and favour, and His visitation hath preserved my spirit.”

I hope you continue to get strength, and that the Lord is gracious to you, and that you have His sensible presence. It is this that keeps us from the spirit of the world, and makes us contented with our lot. This affliction appears to have worked much good, and has been the means of making a very crooked thing straight. We sometimes wonder how these things are to be brought about, but Hart says—

“How, and when, and by what means
To His wisdom leaving.”

I have still much affliction. My wife can only walk with crutches, and my daughter every day gets much weaker, and at present there seems to be nothing for me to hope upon concerning her state.

I have been into West Street, and Mary Ann was writing to you, which reminded me of my debt to you also. I hope Mrs. Shoemith and your daughters are well. With our united kind regards to you all,

I remain, yours sincerely,

Brighton, October 31st, 1861

JNO. GRACE.

AN EXTRACT.

HE that pretends business to evade private prayer will be as ready to pretend business to evade family prayer, and he that pretends business to evade family prayer will be as ready to pretend business to evade public prayer. Well, sirs, remember what became of those that excused themselves out of heaven by their carnal apologies and secular businesses (Luke xiv. 16—24). "I have bought a piece of ground; I must needs go and see it; I pray thee have me excused," saith one. "I have bought," saith another, "five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them; I pray thee have me excused." "And I have married a wife," saith another, "and therefore I cannot come."

The true reason why they would not come to the supper that the King of kings had invited them to was not because they had bought farms and oxen, but because their farms and oxen had bought them. The things of the world and their carnal relations had taken up so much room in their hearts and affections that they had no stomach to heaven's dainties; and, therefore, it is observable what Christ adds at the end of the parable: "He that hateth not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also," much more his farm and oxen, "he cannot be My disciple." By these words it is evident that it was not simply the farm, or the oxen, or the wife, but a foolish, inordinate carnal love and esteem of these things above better and greater blessings that made them refuse the gracious invitation. They refused it under a pretence of worldly business, and God peremptorily concluded that not a man of them should taste of His supper.—*Brooks*.

LETTERS FOR THE YOUNG.—No. XX.

DEAR EMMA,—I daresay you will think it rather silly of me to write to you, as I see you so often; but I have been thinking about some things you said on Sunday night, and, having been in the same place myself, I can sympathize with you; and I thought you would not mind if I wrote you a few lines. Well do I know the heart-sickness of hope deferred. I have said, "Oh, could I but believe!" but could not, and have proved the truth of the words of Jesus, "No man can come to Me except the Father which sent Me draw him." I have felt something like a poor starving creature, who saw plenty of good food just before him, yet was totally unable to reach it. I have heard from the minister just what I felt I needed, and yet could not realize any comfort from it myself. The promise has met my eyes, but did not meet my case, and I have feared that my hope was all a

mistake, and thought I would give it up, which I should have done if I could ; but I found I could not, for the things that had once satisfied me I did not then care about. Sometimes I wondered how it would all end, for I did not know then that—

“The work His wisdom undertakes,
Eternal mercy ne’er forsakes.”

At times I had a little hope, and then, again, all has seemed darker than before ; and thus it went on, until one day these words fastened on my mind, “When I see the blood I will pass over you.” I had often read the words, but until then I had seen no beauty in them ; but, when I realized that my pardon was bought with that blood, which was shed that I, a poor, guilty, unworthy sinner, should be set free, I could praise Him who had shown such wondrous love as to bleed and die that I might live—

“’Twas here I stood at peace with heaven,
And felt the joys of sins forgiven.”

I think there is nothing on earth more sweet than this. But I know that the waiting-time is a weary time, and that “hope deferred does make the heart sick ;” but I know, too, that, “when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life ;” and it will come, for God is faithful. He will not—cannot—break His promise. Why, He has confirmed it with an oath, that we might have strong consolation ; and has He not said ; He *will* fulfil the desire of them that fear Him ? He also *will* hear their cry, and *will* save them. And, again, “Ask, and ye *shall* receive ; seek, and ye *shall* find ;” for “He taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy.” It does not say those who have realized His mercy, or those who are rejoicing in His mercy, but such as are only hoping ; yet “He taketh pleasure in them.” And will He, think you, leave one in whom He takes pleasure to perish at last ? Oh, no ; He cannot do so ; but He will fulfil their desires, and, though they may be feeble, yet—

“Those feeble desires, those wishes so weak,
’Tis Jesus inspires, and bids you still seek.”

He would not implant such longings and desires after Himself if He did not mean to satisfy them ; and, though He has not said *when*, yet, “if it tarry, wait for it, for in the end it *shall* speak.” You see it is positive ; it is no may-be or perhaps, for—

“His promise is yea and amen,
And never was forfeited yet.”

No, nor ever shall be ; therefore—

“However sinful, weak, and poor,
Still wait and pray at mercy’s door;
Faithful Jehovah must remain,
Nor shalt thou seek His face in vain.”

You know it says, “Whosoever will, let him come;” and “him that cometh I will in no wise cast out;” and, if you say, as I have done, that you would, but have no power to come, the same God who gave you the will (for it is not a natural will) will, I am sure, also give you the power: “Being confident of this very thing, that He that hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” But we must come to Him as sinners, without any goodness of our own. It has been well said, “The strait gate is so narrow that we must be stripped of everything.” Here many make a mistake. I know, to my sorrow, that I did; and yet, if any one had told me I was doing so, I should have certainly denied it. I felt that I could do nothing good, and yet it was a long time before I was divested of my self-righteousness. I thought, if I could but love the Lord Jesus, then I might trust Him, and I tried to work myself up into a good frame, or what I *thought* was a good frame; but it would not do, and I have seen since that, if I had been permitted to do so, I should have been trusting in my feelings instead of in Jesus, and this He will not have. It must be “Jesus only,” for He will not allow of co-partnership with Him. But He never was known to disappoint a praying, waiting, humble soul; therefore—

“Wait for His seasonable aid,
And though He tarry, wait;
The promise may be long delayed,
But cannot come too late.”

“Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” That He may thus come and reveal Himself as your Saviour, and that you may realize you are “complete in Him,” and “accepted in the Beloved,” is the earnest prayer of

Yours truly,
B.

When it is well with thee remember me.

GEORGE WHITFIELD said, when he preached on Kennington Common, near London, where they *threw dead cats and rotten eggs* at him, “This is only the manure of Methodism—the best thing in the world to make it grow. Throw away as fast as you please;” and, when a stone cut him on the forehead, he seemed to preach the better for a little blood-letting.

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THE SOWER.

A SERMON PREACHED BY MR. BOORNE,

AT DEVONSHIRE ROAD CHAPEL, GREENWICH, ON SUNDAY
EVENING, AUGUST 28TH, 1881.

"Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you; and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion: and I will give you pastors according to Mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding."—JEREMIAH iii. 14, 15.

THE prophecies of Jeremiah present to our view the Church of God under very unfavourable circumstances. A sad picture is drawn of the Mount Zion which God loved, for she was in a very desolate condition. Her highways were laid waste, her solemn feasts were set aside, and such a cloud was spread over her that Jeremiah lamented, "How hath the Lord covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud!" (Lam. ii. 1); and those days of Jeremiah were certainly somewhat typical of the days in which we live. Perhaps some of us are unwilling to believe that things national and political are come to such a sorry pass; but whether it be so or not is not our purpose now to inquire. The things that are spoken of by this prophet may find a sad counterpart in our own hearts, and a profitable examination of them may help to maintain an exercise within us, and be a means, in the Lord's hands, of bringing about a restoration in our own souls.

There are four things in the words of our text we may look at—

I. Those whom the Lord addresses as "backsliding children."

II. His call unto them, and the way in which He enforces that call: "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you."

III. What He promises He will do with His people: "I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion."

IV. What the Lord promises to *give* unto His people: "I will give you pastors according to Mine heart, who shall feed you with knowledge and understanding."

The first feature in our text is the people, or the characters, that are here addressed as "backsliding children." If we turn to different parts of this book we shall find abundant reason why the Lord called them "backsliding children." In the fifth verse of the second chapter, He thus remonstrates with them: "What iniquity [or perverseness, as it might be rendered] have your

fathers found in Me, that they are gone from Me?" There was, first of all, a departing from God; and then the Lord seems to speak thus: "Have you found anything wrong that I have done unto you, that you should go away from Me? Have I caused it?" Again, "Neither said they, Where is the Lord that brought us up from Egypt?" Daniel, you will remember, reminded the Lord of what wonders He had done for His people in the days of old. But these seemed to have ignored this altogether. "Neither, said they, Where is the Lord that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, that led us through the wilderness, through a land of deserts and of pits, through a land of drought, and of the shadow of death, through a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt?"

And then the Lord told them what a beautiful land He had brought them into: "And I brought you into a plentiful country, to eat the fruit thereof; but when ye entered, ye defiled My land." Besides this, the priesthood was defective, for "the priests said not, Where is the Lord? and they that handle the law knew Me not: the pastors also transgressed against Me [the Jewish writers take these to be their kings], and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that did not profit." And then the Lord goes on to show: "My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me, the Fountain of living waters, and have hewed out to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." They forsook those things which could help them, and followed after that which could not profit them. They forsook the ordinances of the law; they withdrew the shoulder, and gave God the back, and not the face; and thus, in their withdrawal from Him, the Lord saw what a solemn position they were in. They were losing their position and ruining their souls in turning away from Him.

But they also forgot Him. Forsaking will be sure to lead to forgetting. That God who had been the help of their fathers, and that God who had been their defence; He who had planted them a noble vine, wholly a right seed, even Him they forsook and forgot. Therefore God says, "My people have forgotten Me days without number."

Now, the tribes were divided into two parts—those ten tribes which were denominated Israel, and the tribe of Judah, in which was also included the tribe of Benjamin. And what do we see in the ten tribes? Idolatry. And what was the result of this treacherous departure? The Lord asks: "Hast thou seen what backsliding Israel hath done? She has gone up, upon every high mountain, and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot. And I said, after she had done all these

things, Turn thou unto Me; but she returned not: and her treacherous sister Judah saw it."

Now, this treachery of Judah was in the days of good Josiah, the king. Even in his day there was a hollowness in their profession; and, although the Lord said at one time, "Ephraim compasseth Me about with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit; but Judah yet ruleth with her God, and is faithful with the saints," yet now He reproves her for her treachery. These were, then, some of the circumstances which show that this was a backsliding people.

But now we come closer home, and we want the Holy Ghost to be our Teacher, to show up the treachery, idolatry, deceit, and pride there is in us; and how we, like ancient Israel, treacherously depart from Him. When we consider the matter, we can see sufficient cause why the children of God have gone down in the scale of vital godliness, for there are indications of backsliding. And what is one sign of backsliding? One sign is, a setting up of idols and becoming vain. Now says the Lord, "Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation, and hast not been mindful of the rock of thy strength, therefore shalt thou plant pleasant plants, and shalt set it with strange slips: in the day shalt thou make thy plant to grow, and in the morning shalt thou make thy seed to flourish: but the harvest shall be a heap in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow" (Isa. xvii. 10, 11).

And do you not find that the setting up of idols is preceded by a secret departure from the Lord? How is it that our hearts are so readily caught, our lips so soon entangled, and our feet so readily taken? What is the cause of it? There is a secret departure from the Lord; private prayer is not followed with that zeal and that earnestness which characterized the days of our first love; and there is not that turning to the Lord with all the heart, but rather a turning unto Him feignedly. We read the Word, and attempt to speak of His name; but, alas! what a hollowness there is in it; how much of the mere shell, how little of the kernel; how much of the form, and how little of the power!

And then how many will shelter themselves in this way: "We can't command the power." Neither can they. No; God must work that. But is there not a secret connivance with that which is evil, like Israel, who said, "We have followed after our lovers, and after our lovers will we go. Cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us"?

Then another sign of backsliding is, when persons will try to justify their faults by the failings of others. Thus, they will try to make it appear that what they see wrong in another will make their failings light. There is not a greater sign of a backsliding heart; and, besides, they will put on spectacles to mag-

nify the failings of others, while they will lightly pass over their own, and say, "This is my infirmity." Wherever you see this in yourself or others, write down, *a backsliding heart*.

Another sign is, when there is a turning away from reproof. Now, these reproofs have been, to some of us, times of profit, and the very way of life. How sad when they are turned from and slighted; and indeed in these days, commonly, the reproofs that are uttered by the faithful servants of Christ are looked upon as words of legality and tending to bondage. Solomon says, "He that despiseth reproof is brutish."

Another sign of a backsliding heart is, when there is a finding fault with the ministry of the Word—when persons will begin to say, "There are no ministers nowadays who preach the full Gospel." You will hear this fall from the lips of those who seldom hear any preaching at all. They will say, "There was a time when there were good men, but now they are all taken home." When men speak thus, look upon it as a sign of backsliding, for they thus slight the ways of God.

Another sign of backsliding is, when there is a turning aside from the pure Word of God, and following fables; when there is a leaving that which the Lord prescribes, and a preference shown for obituaries and periodicals, making them an oracle. All such persons are in a backsliding state. In making these remarks I don't wish to speak one word against the things which are published in some periodicals. It is only concerning things that beget a disrelish for the Bible. But when they cause you to search the Word more, and the Scriptures become more precious, then you may believe that they do you good.

But what a solemn thing to be in a backsliding state and not to know it! I believe there are such, to whom this Word would apply: "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked." Such persons reckon they are not in a backsliding state, and perhaps think they have more godliness than many believe they have. But, alas! their estimate is wrong, and this they will know when the Lord (He whose eyes are as a flame of fire) comes to reckon with them. What a solemn discount will be taken off their religion! When they will look for their plant to grow and flourish, it shall be a heap of desperate sorrow. Better, far better, to be brought down and to acknowledge our ways, which are not good, in this life, than to be destroyed at the end of a fair profession.

Secondly, we have to look at the Lord's call: "Turn, O backsliding children." God had indeed called them many times before. He had sent His prophets, rising up early and sending

them. But the Lord says, "Ye did not return unto Me." He had spoken by His providences again and again. The labours of their fathers had been destroyed; their vines and their increase were perishing from the earth. He had spoken unto them in this and many other ways, but there was no turning from their evil ways. Now He sends forth a special message: "Turn, O backsliding children. Turn ye at My reproof; behold, I will pour My Spirit upon you." And, as the Lord causes His people to return, He sometimes does it by rending the caul of their heart; and all hardness shall then give way, and self-justification shall be destroyed, and all the refuges they sought shall be torn down; and, as they are brought, with loathing of self and abhorrence of sin, at length to Him who calls to them, and though they may have heard something of the earthquake and of the wind, yet now it is a "still small voice": "Turn! turn ye at My reproof, saith the Lord."

Has the Lord spoken thus to you? There may be a backslider here who has not heard the Lord's voice for many a long day. Oh, that the Lord would drop that Word into your heart, and that you might be brought to say: "Bread enough in my Father's house, and to spare; and I perish with hunger. I will arise and go to my Father, and will say unto Him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in Thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called Thy son" (Luke xv. 18). Is this the feeling of your heart? Brought down at the sense of your own unworthiness, guiltiness, and lean condition, and brought to feel that the Lord has done you no wrong, and that if He cuts you down, and sends you to hell, you will tell devils and lost spirits that you are only receiving what your own sins have brought upon you—is this your language? Then the Lord speaks to you. "Turn, O backsliding children."

Here is a double bond of relationship. He calls them first children, and they had been rebellious children. He says, "I have nourished and brought them up, and they have rebelled against Me" (Isa. i. 2). But He calls them still His children. Though He hates their ways, He does not hate their souls; though He abominates their practices, He will not disinherit them. "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within Me; My repentings are kindled together" (Hos. xi. 8). These were some of the cities of the plain which God destroyed at the time of the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah.

"Now," says the Lord, "I can't thus give you up, and deliver you over to your own deserts, or to the will of your enemies; it goes against Me to do so." "My bowels are turned within Me;

My repentings are kindled together." Therefore the Lord says, "Is Ephraim My dear son? Is he a pleasant child?" or, if we omit the italics, it will read thus: "Ephraim, my dear son: a pleasant child. Since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still. I will surely have mercy upon him; and I will heal him, saith the Lord" (Jer. xxxi. 20). But the Lord corrects His dear children. "You only have I known, of all the nations of the earth. For though I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee, I will not make a full end of thee; but I will correct thee in measure, and I will not leave thee wholly unpunished" (Jer. xli. 28). Now, if you were to see your child among others that were not good, you would exercise your authority as a father or mother over him, and bring him away from them. As for other children, you would say, "I must leave them." And so the Lord leaves others to go on, until the time of reckoning comes, when He will solemnly repay them. But He causes His own children to return. Hence, says the Lord, "They shall come with weeping and supplications" (Jer. xxxi. 9). And have you not, when the Lord has caused you to return, gone with weeping and with supplications unto Him? Before, you would have been glad, even with a struggle, to have brought a tear into your eyes, but you could not. You have heard words from the pulpit, but, alas! you have not heard anything to move you, and perhaps was even glad when the sermon was over. But when the Lord has turned your captivity as the streams in the south, then you have had to weep; and not tears of sorrow—merely, but tears of joy; and you have felt a little of what dear Mr. Hart says—

" 'Tis a safe, though deep compunction,
Thy repenting people feel:
Love and grief compound an unction
Both to cleanse their wounds and heal."

"Return, O backsliding children." How are they thus joined unto Him as children? "He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied; He shall see His seed; He shall prolong His days; and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hands." "How shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land: a goodly heritage of the hosts of nations? And I said, thou shalt say, My Father, and shalt not turn away from Me." Is there a child of God here desiring to say, "My Father," but fears to do so? "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." The Spirit will be in your heart before the words will be on your lips. You are manifested as children, because you run to Him with all your troubles. Now says the Lord, "Like as a father pitieth his

children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him; for He knoweth their frame; He remembereth they are dust." We don't pity our children when everything is bright and comfortable; but when we see them in trouble, then it draws forth our pity.

But the Lord also enforces His call by a closer bond—the marriage union, even the union that exists between Christ and the Church. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it." "For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife." But how is He married unto them? "Forasmuch as the children were made partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same."

We are made partakers of the divine nature by partaking of His Spirit; and, as the Lord puts His Spirit into us, we rise with Him. He has entered into heaven with a humanity like our own (sin excepted), there to appear before God for us. "I have betrothed thee unto Me," saith the Lord. But the Lord complains, "Surely, as a treacherous wife departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with Me, O house of Israel, saith the Lord." Yet the Lord says, "I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name; and it shall be, saith the Lord, at that day that thou shalt call Me Ishi [*i.e.*, my husband]; and shalt call Me no more Baali [*i.e.*, my lord]" (Hos. ii. 16). Again, the Lord declares, "I remember thee, and the kindness of thy youth; when thou wentest after Me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown." This they had forgotten, but the Lord remembered it. And so He does still, dear child of God; He still regards your first love and the days of your espousals. He remembers all those pledges of His which you have left behind; yea, the Lord has them at hand, although you have not seen them of late. But by-and-bye He will come and cry in your ears and say, as He did to Jacob, "Go back to the pillar, which thou didst anoint." "Behold," says He, "I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her; and I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt" (Hos. ii. 14, 15).

III. We come to notice what the Lord promises He will do for His people: "I will take you one of a city, and two of a family; and I will bring you to Zion." How often these words are quoted; and how very often they are misunderstood! Perhaps the Lord has called one soul out of a family, and the others have been left. Or perhaps He has taken a second; and then Satan may object to a third being called, and says, "You must not

expect it ; there have been two called already." But, my dear friends, this is not the way to take it. You will remember there was a small family at Bethany, who were all called ; for it is said that the Lord loved Mary, and Martha, and Lazarus—yes, the Lord loved them all ; and, sometimes, where there are more than three : whole families have been called. But He will take them "one of a city." These poor captives were scattered here and there ; and perhaps there might be one in this city, and one in that. "Now," says the Lord, "I will take you one of a city, where you have been scattered." The term "family" may not mean a small family, as we understand it. There were the families of the house of Levi, and families of the house of David ; and these families were very large. And yet it might be taken in another sense. His people, when in captivity, were servants, bondmen and bondwomen, in different families, and the Lord took them from them. "I will take you." It shows also that there is a remnant according to the election of grace. "I will take you, and I will not allow you to perish on the road. I will not leave you to be destroyed by prowling beasts of prey. I will not permit you to apostatise, but I will bring you to Zion." And what is this bringing to Zion ? Paul tells us, "Ye are not come to the mount which might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words ; but ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, and to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel" (Heb. xii. 18—24). The Psalmist calls it, "the Mount Zion which He [God] loved." Spiritually, all His dear children shall come to Zion ; and I believe God will eventually bring the children of Israel literally to Zion. Peter says, "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious. Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief Corner-Stone, elect, precious, and whoso believeth shall not be confounded ; ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." And these lively stones are "fashioned like unto the similitude of a palace." They have no more power to bring themselves than the stones in nature's quarry ; but He sets His own gracious machinery to work to bring them to Himself. Has He given you a name and a place among His children ? Then you "are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." Your citizenship is in heaven. "For," says Paul, "our conversation [or citizenship] is in heaven [for this is the right word] ;

from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, and fashion it like unto His glorious body." Here they are spoken of as citizens, but they are also called a household. Citizens might not know each other. There are thousands in our great city who do not know one another. A household presupposes closer communion, and the babe at the breast is as much a member of the household as the oldest child: "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Corner-Stone." But what a great thing it is to be brought by God's own power! Have you sometimes marked God's footsteps in your pathway? "The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads. And they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock, and of the herd; and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all." This, then, is the grand summit of our expectation.

IV. The Lord makes a promise of what He will give unto this people: "And I will give you pastors according to Mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding."

Now, that this has reference to Gospel days there can be no question. Typically there may be an allusion to David, for it is written, "I have found My servant David, a man after Mine own heart; and with My holy oil I have anointed him." But David was far from being a perfect man, though he was after God's own heart; and so it is with us. Alas! how much we have to mourn over; for, if we have any likeness to Christ, how much we seem to bear towards Satan! As Erskine says—

"To good and evil equal bent,
I'm both a devil and a saint."

Paul, in writing to the Ephesians, speaks of what the Lord bestowed ministerially upon His Church: "He gave some, apostles; 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 in the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." And thus God uses pastors, to go in and out before His people; and indeed by this plan He feeds and nourishes the Church of Christ.

In the early days there were few, if any, regular pastors, for the apostles and evangelists went about confirming the souls of the disciples. But afterwards, where Churches were planted,

pastors were placed over them, who were called bishops. I know people differ in opinion on this point; but usually, where there is no settled minister, there is a cry, "Oh, that we could have a pastor!" And when the Lord causes His people to cry unto Him about this thing, He commonly hears and answers them. How good dear Hart's words are--

"Christian, dost thou want a teacher,
Helper, counsellor, or guide;
Wouldst thou find a proper preacher?
Ask thy God, and He'll provide.

"Build on no man's parts or merit,
But behold the Gospel plan;
Jesus sends His Holy Spirit,
And the Spirit sends the man."

The Lord commonly looks out a man that is in some measure of the same experience with the people. "I will give them pastors according to Mine heart. Just such a man as I want." "Separate for Me," saith the Holy Ghost, "Saul and Barnabas, for the work whereunto I have called them." They do not go a warfare at their own charges; the Lord anoints them, and enables them to bring out of their treasury things new and old.

I believe that dear man of God, Mr. Philpot, once said "that next to the gift of the Scriptures was the gift of pastors." The Lord gives the Word, and then He bestows pastors to give the sense, as in days of old. Hart says--

"Faith is by knowledge fed,
And with obedience mixed;
Notion is empty, cold, and dead, -
And fancy's never fixed,"

"Who shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." The Lord's people are often in a starving condition for the want of the ministry of the Word. Solomon says, "Where no vision is, the people perish." Again it is said, "The word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision." "They shall feed you." Hence the Lord will make His people hunger and thirst. The full soul loatheth the honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet. The word of reproof will be sweet to him. He is hunger-bitten, and he wants to get a word to feed him, though ever so little. "Feed the flock of slaughter, saith the Lord." And these are to be fed. The exhortation given by Peter was: "Feed the Church 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 as

being ensamples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." The Lord charges the Church to feed her kids beside the shepherds' tents. Are there some here that are young in the ways of God, who want to be fed, and fear they may perish with hunger? God help you to keep fast by the reapers.

"They shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." It was said that the Spirit of knowledge and of understanding should rest on Christ. True saving knowledge includes a knowledge of yourself. "Man, know thyself" was propounded by the ancient philosophers. But the dear children of God know themselves as weak, evil, and undone; but they shall also know the Lord; as it is written, "They shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them; and I will be merciful unto their unrighteousness; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."

The knowledge of salvation was preached by the Apostles, which is known by the remission of sins. "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy countenance: in Thy name shall they rejoice all the day; and in Thy righteousness shall they be exalted." But says one, "Oh, that I knew my sins were forgiven me!" Is this the cry of your heart?

"Tis a point I long to know;
Oft it causes anxious thought:
Do I love the Lord, or no?
Am I His, or am I not?"

Oh, that the Lord may enable you to wait upon Him! Keep close to the ministry of the Word. Keep close to those things that the Lord hath taught you, for "then shall ye know, if ye follow on to know the Lord." Blest with this spirit of understanding, they shall not perish, for He will give them a wise and understanding heart. It is said of the good-ground hearer that "he heareth the Word and understandeth it." But all others hear the Word and understand it not. Then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in their heart. But he that received seed into good ground is he that heareth the Word and understandeth it.

The Apostle James says, "Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the Word, this man shall be blessed in his deed." The Apostle John says, "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and be in Him that is true, even in His

Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life." May the Lord give you a listening ear, and grace to flee from a back-sliding state. He has given abundant reproofs in His Word; and they that justify themselves in going on in such a state give but little proof that they are called of God. But those that return unto the Lord with all their heart give evidence of being called of Him; for He says, "I am a Father unto Israel, and Ephraim is My first-born."

But let me speak a word to others who do not see their ways to be evil, and think there is as much hope of their being saved as of others. They will say, perhaps, "It matters not what I do; God will have His own." Oh, my friends, thinking thus, you are rushing on the bosses of God's buckler. Take heed lest God write upon you, "Reprobate silver." If God calls you by His grace, you will be brought to see things differently to this. Some may wish us to "prophesy smooth things." This may serve you for a while; but what will ye do in the end thereof? Death is on the road; your end is near to which there will be no end—no end to your soul—no end to your misery. May God, of His infinite mercy, make His Word as a sharp two-edged sword, and cause you to cry, "Carry me out of the camp, for I am wounded"—out of the camp of this world—yes, out of the professing world too—and cause you to

"Struggle hard, and cry aloud
On the good Physician."

"The whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

By the act of election the children are involved, wrapped up; and covered in Christ. He hath chosen us in Him, not in ourselves, not in our virtues; no, not for or because of anything, but of His own will (Eph. i. 4—11).—*Bunyan*.

If Christ puts any one into His Church, He puts him there to work for Him. If you are really a member of His Church, you were redeemed by His precious blood and renewed by the Holy Spirit. Did Christ die for you—did the Holy Spirit give you a new heart—that you might enter His Church, and fold your arms in indolence, and give your affections to earthly things, and leave to others the self-denial and the spiritual labours which the Church was instituted to perform? What would be done by the Church for the honour of God and the salvation and happiness of men, if all the members of the Church were like yourself?

ANSWER TO INQUIRY.

TO A READER.—We firmly believe that all the saints will be presented faultless before the throne of God, according to the testimony in the passage cited (Jude 24). But we cannot see how that passage can be thought to set forth perfection of the flesh in this present state. Every true believer in Christ will appear before His throne pardoned, justified, and perfect in Him, to whose image they are predestinated to be conformed (Rom. viii. 29), and in whose glorious righteousness they shall shine, with bodies changed from this vile state we now are in, and fashioned like unto His glorious body. There will then be no spot or taint of sin found in any whom He presents “before the presence of His glory,” for, as John says, “We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” To this perfection all the saints aspire and hope to come. But while in the body, though under the reign of grace, they will still feel the workings of sin in their members; as Paul says, “But I see a law in my members warring against the law of my mind,” &c. The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes the true believer free from the law of sin and death as to the rule and dominion of it in this life, yet this law in their members causes them trouble and sorrow, although they are under the reign of grace; and, in fact, if grace was not in them the ruling power, the law of sin would not trouble them. But where grace rules, the opposite is only, as Dr. Owen says, a law *in* them, not a law *unto* them, because “grace shall reign through righteousness unto eternal life.” Still the lustings of the flesh against the Spirit often render the believer weak, so that he cannot do the good that he would, and he often has to say, “Sin is mixed with all I do.” Yea, the Word of truth says, “There is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not;” and again it is written, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” Every child of God finds while in the body that it is as Paul says, a “vile” body, not perfect, because it is corrupt; but its very corruption and uncleanness make the sensible sinner a meet subject for the fountain which alone can remove the vileness and guilt of indwelling sin. “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son *cleanseth* us from all sin,” is a precious truth to those who know the plague of their own heart. But how can it be so to those who know it not, but who profess to be able to live without sin? Such are strangers to their own state and to the remedy provided. This body will be vile till Christ changes it, and while it is vile it cannot be perfect. But, nevertheless, grace will subdue sin and bring the body under subjection in the case of all who are born of God; and the time will come when their redeemed bodies will be raised

again from the dust, perfectly holy, incorruptible, and in the likeness of Christ, who will "present them faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy." We have thus given you a few thoughts upon the subject of your inquiry which, though brief and very incomplete, we hope will neither be unacceptable nor void of profit.

THE WISH.

Oh, how I wish I could but feel
The joys which pardoning grace impart !
And that my Jesus would reveal
Redeeming love within my heart !

Oh, that in mind I oft could walk
Gethsemane's dear garden o'er,
And hear the suffering Saviour talk,
And all His agonies explore !

Then to the cross I'd take my course,
And there employ each thinking power ;
And then most solemnly converse
With Jesus in His dying hour.

Oh, that His bleeding form would rise,
His dying love most clearly shine,
And break my heart and light mine eyes
With joys and sorrows all divine !

Oh, that the sight of all His pains
Might raise devotion's purest flame ;
Work deep abhorrence to my sins,
And purest love to His dear name !

Oh, that at last I might but die
In my dear bleeding Saviour's arms,
Then sweetly mount to worlds on high,
Amidst His all-refulgent charms !

—*Author Unknown.*

HE can never truly relish the sweetness of God's mercy who never tasted the bitterness of his own misery.—*Dr. Goodwin.*

Not all the floods of sin nor all the waves of ungodliness can ever extinguish the fire of God's love to His people in Christ ; yet the guilt of one single sin in the believer's conscience will raise such a storm, to the destruction of his peace and terror of his mind, as to overwhelm him in grief and fear. "See then that ye walk circumspectly ; not as fools, but as wise."—*Dr. Sibbes.*

MEMOIR OF EDWARD MORGAN,

OF LEICESTER, WHO ENTERED HIS ETERNAL REST MARCH 24TH,
1881, IN THE SIXTY-SEVENTH YEAR OF HIS AGE.

It is difficult to say when the Lord began His work upon the soul of my dear husband, as he frequently used to speak of his exercises of mind, of his convictions of sin, and of remarkable answers to prayer when he was a boy at school; but, through being drawn into evil company and losing a good mother who tenderly watched over him, he went far astray from God as he grew up.

About the year 1849 the Lord began to convince him more deeply of sin, and he endeavoured to reform in several outward things, such as trying to abstain from light conversation, &c. He also attempted family worship, but, notwithstanding all these endeavours to obtain peace, he found that no works of his own could relieve him of the burden of sin, and his fears and anxieties continued to increase. About this time he spoke of a word which had shone with sweet light and power into his mind, and had encouraged him in a way he had never felt before. The word was, "Ask, and it *shall* be given you; seek, and ye *shall* find." Until then he had always felt that he must *know* that he was a child of God before he had any ground to hope for mercy; but from that time there was a marked change in him, arising from this divine teaching, and it produced the effect of making him more diligent, tender, and circumspect in all his daily walk and conversation, which continued to deepen and increase more or less during the remainder of his life. Soon after this he was much encouraged by a very remarkable answer to prayer in temporal things, in our being removed from the village where we then lived, which was ten miles from any preaching of truth, to be under the ministry of Mr. Tryon, and also to be engaged in the work of teaching the young, which he had greatly desired for a long time, and for which the Lord had been secretly preparing him. Our removal was in 1852. I quote here a memorandum made at the time: "My dear husband's exercises are very encouraging to me, for, though his doubtings still continue, yet his hopes and encouragements, arising from clear views of the Gospel, are more frequent and more abiding." Before the close of this same year he wished to join the Church at Deeping, and he was more helped and comforted then than he had ever been before. He was admitted on the 25th of December, and was baptized by Mr. Tryon the first Lord's day in January, 1853. Though he had been so much helped, yet the following day he sank very low, and his prayer at the meeting in the evening was remarkable for his confessions of unworthiness, &c.; after which

Mr. Tryon read those most suitable words, Isaiah lxvi. 1, 2 : " Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool : where is the house that ye build unto Me ? and where is the place of My rest ? for all those things hath Mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord : but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word ; " and it was the means of again reviving his hope.

When he had been at Deeping about nine years his health so failed that he had to give up the school and leave his much-loved work, and though it was an unknown trouble to him, yet the Lord had a purpose in it. Thus we were again moved to a distance from the preached Word.

At Great Staughton we opened our house for worship, and a few of the "*living in Jerusalem*" were thankful for the opportunity of assembling around us. We had services on the Lord's days and on one evening in the week, and, as his health and strength allowed, he continued to instruct the young, who were much laid on his heart. For some considerable time he read sermons, but at length, through persuasion and entreaty, he ventured to speak himself at Great Staughton, also in a barn fitted up as a chapel in the neighbouring village of Keysoe, and he was profitably heard by the few who loved the truth. After a few years he formed them into a Church at Keysoe, in 1872, after which he only preached a few months, as his long illness commenced about this time.

I can only name a very small part of what I have known of his exercises of mind, and the various greatly-needed helps and encouragements he had from such portions of the Word as " Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out," and " If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink ; " also, " As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that *whosoever* believeth," &c. The Gospel was very blessedly opened up to him in these and similar portions of the Word, as many can testify from his teachings. He was also profitably led and taught in the study of the earlier books of the Bible—the fall of man, the calling of Abraham, the journeyings of the children of Israel, and what the Lord's dealings with them typified. The light and instruction the Lord gave him on those parts of the Word were very useful and profitable to many.

From the time of that first gleam of Gospel light which the Lord gave him in 1849 he was remarkably kept, and that from felt necessity, to the same point of " seeking," " waiting," and " trusting ; " and frequently he was favoured with sweet seasons of access to the Lord in prayer, which greatly encouraged his hope. I can only mention a very few of the times, after his long illness

began to draw to a close, when I have seen him melted into tears from renewed hope and trust in the Lord and His Word. On one occasion, two lines of a hymn had this effect. It was—

“Oh, the love that fills His heart!
Sinner, wipe away thy tears;”

when he said, “But it makes my tears flow.” Another time he quoted two lines of Erskine’s—

“Whate’er thou found’st Him at thy best,
He’s at thy worst the same.”

I said, “What did you find Him at your best?” With great emphasis he replied, “*Worthy* to be trusted.” Numbers of times he spoke of “Him that cometh unto Me,” &c., and “If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink,” as being the gracious word of Him who was the solid Rock on which his hope was built. He would say, “I know I have been enabled to come to Him, and shall not be cast out, because *He* has said it.”

As his weakness increased, the Word became more and more the very life of his spirit. One day, when he was very ill, I said, “How soon you may be face to face with death! How do you feel in the prospect of it?” He replied, “I don’t feel a dread of it.” “Then hope must greatly abound?” I said. He quietly replied, “Yes, it does.” On one occasion he said, “How I have been looking for manifestations! and I have felt this text to reprove me: ‘If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.’ If God is pleased to withhold manifestations, though greatly to be desired and valued, still let me look and trust.” One morning I remarked, “You look sorrowful!” He said, “I am,” and spoke of his fears which arose from the suggestions of the enemy. In the course of the day he said, “After you told me I looked sorrowful, the words came on my mind, ‘And ye now therefore have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you;’ and it has comforted me.” At another time, after I had read some portions of the Word to him, I said, “You will soon know for yourself what I have been reading about, and you will see that precious Saviour who died for such poor sinners as you and I,” when, with all the little energy and power he had, he said, “Yes, and be like Him.” Another time he said, “I have been thinking of the Queen of Sheba’s visit to Solomon. She said the half had not been told her of his riches, wisdom, &c.; but we shall say a thousandth part has not been told us, when we behold the Greater than Solomon.”

A few weeks before his death, he was much comforted by the words, “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose

mind is stayed on Thee, *because he trusteth in Thee* ;” showing that his mind was still kept to the same point of trust in the Lord Jesus, though he said “perfect peace” seemed a great word for such a sinner. After this he became so weak he could scarcely converse at all, but merely answer questions with “Yes” or “No,” though by indistinct words and the expression of his countenance he showed how much he enjoyed hearing the Word read, and any remarks of a spiritual nature, either spoken by myself or by the many kind friends who very frequently visited him, and often were the means of refreshing his spirit.

As his end approached, one said to him, “You seem now to be enjoying that peace which the Saviour said, ‘I give unto you’ ?” He replied, “Yes, I hope so.” The twenty-third Psalm was read to him, and he was asked if he felt the “rod and staff” supporting him. He firmly and distinctly said, “Yes.” “Then you are not afraid of the cold waters of the river ?” “No,” he replied ; and, while he could speak at all, he answered similar questions, showing that he was conscious, and that his trust in the sufficiency and faithfulness of the Redeemer continued up to the last ; and thus he departed, without the least struggle or groan. As the Psalmist says : “The end of that man is peace ;” “They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved ;” “He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”

Mr. Hazlerigg committed his body to the grave, he having been a member of the Church at Leicester since his increasing weakness had prevented him preaching to his own little Church at Keysoe, in Bedfordshire.

A. M.

PRAYER is a strong wall, and a fort to the Church : it is the Christian’s weapon, which no man knoweth or findeth but he who has the spirit of grace and supplication.—*Luther.*

No spiritual cure without spiritual faith. Hence the Great Physician often inquired of His patients after their faith, when they came to Him, saying, “Believest thou that I am able to do this ?” and, if they answered, “Yea, Lord,” then He replied, “According to thy faith be it unto thee ;” and the patient was made whole from that hour. We may be sick and sorrowful too ; but there can be neither health nor cure without faith : “If ye believe not, ye shall die in your sins.” Such must pine away in their sickness, and die in despair and sorrow ; for the unbeliever is condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth on him ; and the Judge of quick and dead declares that “he that believeth not shall be damned.”—*Huntington.*

"I WILL ARISE AND GO TO MY FATHER."

(LUKE XV. 18.)

[Lines suggested by hearing Mr. Hull preach of the *indirect* witnessing of the Spirit with our spirit that we are the children of God, and the remembrance of such a witnessing.]

"I WILL arise!" Yes, Lord, my wandering heart
A kindling feels to turn to Thee in prayer;
And own, like prodigal, my sinful part,
In hope, like him, Thy pardoning grace to share.
All gracious substance seems within me spent,
And mercies past no present succour brings;
Yet all the husks of earth can not content
The soul that yearns to feed on heavenly things.

But ah! though one of kin in mean estate,
Beneath him far I seem, alas! to fall;
Though great his folly, and his misery great,
He yet could say, "I'll on *my Father* call."
But how can I such wondrous kindred claim,
Though oft my soul hath longed the words to speak?
And now and then the tongue seemed bent to frame,
But failed to utter with a faith so weak.

Yet under heaven there's not another name
On which my soul so much desires to dwell,
Or which my heart so quickly can inflame,
Or mists and clouds of sin so soon dispel.
Though seeming dead, to Him I still would cry—
The most unlikely He should deign to hear—
Though oft against me all things seem, yet I
No other seek, my hopes all centre here.

Then hope, my soul, though to adoption blest
Thou hast not yet been favoured to attain;
A promise sweet is linked with Christ's behest,
That those who seek shall not Him seek in vain.
What tender love and deep compassion moved
The Father's heart, before the son could see!
Though most unworthy, yet how much beloved!
My soul, what if such feast was made for thee?

Oh, gracious Lord, who know'st my every way,
Regard the creature that would look to Thee!
Restore, renew, replenish day by day,
And let Thy children's portion come to me:
And when from Thee my foolish heart shall turn,
If pride, or sin, or shame shall bring me low,
Let grace and mercy cause my quick return,
That I may rise and to the Father go.

And when, O Lord, the appointed time shall come
 That I from earth and all things here must part,
 Oh, let me know I am but going home
 To see Thee, and be with Thee where Thou art !
 If Thou my Strength and Safety then appear,
 No sting of death my blood-washed soul shall know ;
 Without a pang of doubt or shade of fear,
 " I will arise, and to my Father go."

C. J.

SEASONABLE WORDS.

To the Editor of the Sower and the Little Gleaner.

MY DEAR FRIEND and Fellow-labourer in the King's household, —I see you are publishing in the SOWER some of the Lord's dealings with, and mercies manifested to, the late John Clark, of Fiveash-down. In looking over some papers, I have found a letter of his, which I forward to you, if you think it suitable to follow on after the obituary. It was written under particular circumstances, as you will see, the facts of which are these : On Lord's day, the 27th of November, 1870, he came to preach at Providence Chapel, Lewes. At that time (and for many months previously) I was under heavy soul trouble and exercise respecting the ministry, and by reason of the trials I was then passing through, my soul was filled with darkness and gloomy forebodings ; and what added greatly to my sorrow at times was, that for weeks together I could get no answer from the Lord, so that my life was bitter unto me. "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?" Thus I was brought low, and the fiery darts and temptations of Satan seemed to drink up my spirit. In this state I used to weep and cry to the Lord night and day, and could get no relief save in sighs and venting out my complaint before the Lord, though with many fears lest I had sinned the unpardonable sin. This was the sad state I was in when Mr. Clark came to preach for us. He knew nothing of my exercises and trouble, but he took for his text Genesis xlix. 13 : "*Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea ; and he shall be for an haven of ships ; and his border shall be unto Zidon.*"

1. He spoke of the sea of trouble the soul was often in through sin, unbelief, temptation, and the hidings of the Lord's face ; yet he should dwell at the haven, Christ, and though for a season he could get no answer to prayer, yet he would find a haven nowhere else ; therefore necessity compelled him to abide there, and there he should dwell.

2. "He shall be for an haven of ships." Here he spoke of the Lord's preparing a man for the ministry. In the sea of afflictions and temptations, what beauty and suitability he would see in

the haven Christ Jesus ; and when led into Him by the Holy Spirit, how it would enlarge his heart, and his soul resting in the eternal love of God, how ready he would be to receive into his heart and affections the poor tempest-tossed souls of God's people ; so he would be a haven for them, and draw out his soul unto them.

3. "His border should be unto Zidon," that is, God had fixed the bounds of his usefulness and his habitation.

I never can describe to you, my dear friend, the light, power, and love that flowed into my soul under these two sermons ; but you know the overpowering influence of the Spirit of love and truth, therefore I need not say more.

Mr. Clark said, when in the warmth of his subject, "But you will say, 'We do not want any more ministers, for we abound with them already.'" He answered, "Yes, we do want more, and just such as I have been describing, and the Lord knows we do."

I said nothing to dear friend Clark or any one else how well I had heard, for, as I had had so much darkness and sorrow, I thought I would have it all betwixt the Lord and my own soul ; but after some days, as it kept coming up again and again so fresh, and with power and love in my soul, I was constrained to write to him, and the following letter is the answer to the one I then wrote.

If you think this scribble suitable to go into the SOWER, you may put it in ; if not, put it into the waste paper basket ; whilst I remain, your affectionate friend in the path of tribulation, but in the best of all bonds,

Burgess Hill, October 31st, 1881.

E. ASHDOWN.

DEAR FRIEND,—Your letter came at a very particular time—so much so that, when I looked at the post-mark, I thought, "Ah ! some one has sent to find fault with my preaching ;" for I felt afraid for any one to speak to me about it. Not that I was ashamed of truth, but I thought it was so poorly spoken, and with such a want of ability ; therefore, when I read yours, and heard from others that the Lord made it a blessing, I was greatly humbled to think He should make use of such a poor thing as me ; and yet He has done so oftentimes, and He still comes down when there is mown grass for Him to come down upon. I find He deals with His people as the farmer deals with his farm. The farmer ploughs it, breaks the clods, cuts up the thistles, and burns the weeds. So the Lord does with His people ; and when the corn is grown, then He thrashes it, separating it from the chaff ; and in all this He uses His own sent servants, whom He makes honest and upright,

and whom He sends now as in former days, without purse or scrip, and they are not to take two coats, to have one for one place and one for another; neither are they to be shod with sandals—a false peace—and they are to be particular in looking after the Son of peace; for where the Son of peace is, there, and there only, are they to abide. And such as these do not make empty the soul of the hungry, nor cause the drink of the thirsty to fail; but as Paul found, so they are filled with their company, for a savour of the name of Christ is found among such; and thus walking with the wise, we become wiser, whilst the companions of fools are destroyed. This is what God is continually teaching His servants, to come out from our own country and our father's house; so the King greatly desires our beauty, which is a meek and quiet spirit; and as He is made known as our Lord, we worship only Him, lamenting that we cannot honour Him more; but this will always be found true, that those who seek not their own honour, but the honour of Him that sent them, there will be no occasion to stumble in such.

I now come to look at that part of your letter which speaks of your anxiety regarding the ministry, and must say I am pleased that it is no light nor trifling thing with you, and that you are not doing it from any sinister motive, nor yet to show to man your great abilities; and sure I am that, if God has sent you, you will be searching much to know whether your call is of God. It appears therefore from the Scriptures that in former time, generally those who were sent were observed to be men of deep thought and research, deeply affected with truth, and who entered feelingly into it, who tasted the fruits—as we are told, “The husbandman that laboureth must be first a partaker of the fruit.” Thus John says, “That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life, declare we unto you;” and Paul says, “Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.” This will prevent lightness and handling the Word unlawfully, and such will desire to commend themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God, knowing that from Him they receive all, and that, without the Spirit, they cannot know anything aright. This brings them to have converse with God. “Our conversation is in heaven,” and our fellowship is with God, who alone makes able ministers of the New Testament—not of the letter which killeth, but of the Spirit which giveth life. And as Paul preached the Word in the various places he speaks of by the Spirit, so with all in whom the Spirit dwells; and this made him to say, “I trust also that I have the Spirit of God;” and thus it is that the spiritual man judgeth all things, whilst he himself is judged of no man.

Christ's Church is a spiritual Church in every sense of the word. First, the men that are sent are spiritual men. Secondly, the members are those who are born of the Spirit. Thirdly, the weapons they use are not carnal, but spiritual, and are "mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, and casting down every imagination that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." Oh, glorious work, where everything is so complete! Fourthly, the clothes they wear are of wrought gold, made for strength and beauty, and the food they eat is the hidden manna. The language they speak is so peculiar that none can learn it but those who are taught of God; therefore, no wonder that the world does not know them, for it knew not their Master. He appoints His own under-shepherds, who take to themselves two staves—the one is called "Beauty," and the other "bands." The first is Christ; the second is, the bond of the everlasting covenant. Thus the flock is fed, and the poor will be sure to come and say they know it is the Word of the Lord by the power that attends it. Oh, how different is this from the proud in spirit, who seek the honour that comes from man and not that which comes from God! The servant will be sure to be like the Master. They may be called by vile names, they may be houseless and friendless, they may be driven from city to city, but they shall not go over all the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come. Then they shall find that His reward is with Him, and His work before Him. "He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and will gently lead those that are with young." Thus we see the different ones who compose His flock—lambs, sheep, and those who labour to bring forth, and these will be looked after, as He told Peter, if he loved Him, to feed His lambs and His sheep. Bless His name, these shall not be forgotten, for He makes His servants to know, first, that faith is His own gift, and this faith worketh by love; second, that it is the Word of life; third, the Word of righteousness; fourth, the Word of patience; fifth, the Word of counsel; sixth, the Word of cleansing; seventh, the Word of strength; eighth, the Word of rebuke; ninth, the Word of comfort; tenth, the Word of reconciliation; eleventh, the Word of doctrine; twelfth, the Word of exhortation; and this is all brought about by the "sword of the Spirit, which is sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart." And now the last thing—we are told to be clean that bear the vessels of the Lord. May we have grace given to enable us to do it, which, my friend, you will find you

need. Sometimes you will be enlarged, sometimes chastened; sometimes it will be pleasant work, and sometimes you will go in bitterness of spirit. But the Lord's commendation will be enough for you.

I hope you may be able to make this out, as I am a poor trembling thing, and fearful of everything but those who fear God's blessed name.

I remain, yours affectionately,
Buttlet, Maresfield, Sussex,
January 5th, 1871.

JOHN CLARK.

THE WORD OF THE LORD.

BY THE LATE HENRY FOWLER.

God of all grace, Thy powerful Word can melt
 The hardest heart; Thy grace can purge the guilt
 Of man's polluted soul; Thy power control
 His rampant lusts, and make him sound and whole.
 Melt down this heart with Thy celestial fire,
 To love and serve Thee as I would desire;
 Let praise, like burning incense, rise to Thee,
 For Thy rich grace and love bestowed so free.
 Then shall I walk at large, and spread abroad
 To Zion's sons the love of Thee, my God.
 Religion without love's an empty name;
 The holy fire of love alone can tame
 Man's beast-like heart, prone ever to depart
 From God, and after some base idol start.
 Lord, come and take possession of my breast;
 Rule there supreme, and let me ever rest
 Recumbent on Thy bosom while I live;
 And, when I'm called to die, my soul receive,
 To join the song of sinners gone before,
 And Thy dear name for ever to adore.

GOD is always doing good, and forgetting ingratitude; and yet it is His lot in this world to receive in return contempt—yea, blasphemy, abuse, and wickedness.—*Luther.*

If you be not gathered to Christ, you must be gathered to the devil. There is no medium; either Christ or the devil must be your master.—*Erskine.*

GOSPEL LAMPS.—No man would light and maintain a *lamp* fed with golden oil, and keep it burning from age to age, if the work to be done by the light of it were not of a very precious and important nature. What else are the dispensations of the Gospel but lamps burning with golden oil, to light souls to heaven?—*Flavel.*

ANNE DUTTON.

"A MOTHER IN ISRAEL."

(Concluded from page 25.)

AFTER the death of her husband she gave up her time, means, and every power for the good of the cause of God. Her correspondence was most extensive throughout England, Scotland, Wales, Holland, America, &c. She would usually write from sixteen to eighteen hours out of the twenty-four, and then lament that so much time was lost in eating, drinking, and sleeping, and long for immortality, when she should serve the Lord without let or hindrance. She published several works, including twenty-five volumes of letters, which are very spiritual, and specially suited to the young and weak of the flock. Her treatise on "Walking with God" is very valuable, and should be read by every child of God.

Mr. Christopher Goulding, a member of W. Huntington's, visited Gransden in 1822, and obtained full particulars of Mrs. Dutton's last illness and death from Mrs. Tippet, who was intimately acquainted with her, and followed her to her grave. He also erected a plain gravestone to her memory, and to mark the place where she was buried. I shall now close by giving a few extracts from the account of her last illness and death.

Nearly twelve months before her death, she complained of soreness in her throat, as if something stuck in the passage. She used several means to remove it, but in vain. At length the obstruction to her comfortable swallowing so far increased that she began to be apprised it might be the pleasure of God to remove her by it in the end. She would often say, "Who can tell but it may be the will of my heavenly Father to love me home to Himself by this affliction?" About the sixth or seventh month after her disorder began, she understood by a corresponding friend at Norwich that Mr. Sandeman's unscriptural notions were embraced by the minister of that place, and also by the one at Wymondham. She was enabled to write and publish, as her last public testimony to the truth, "An Attempt to Prove that Saving Faith is More than a Bare Assent to Gospel Truth." She was even yet enabled further to pursue her work of writing, for as her outward man decayed, her inward man was renewed day by day; and, having eight volumes of unpublished letters by her, she was willing to fit them for the press if the Lord should in His providence bring them out after her decease.

She would often, in the evening of a day when she had been able to take little or no bodily succour all day long, bless and praise God, who had strengthened her to write such and such

things for His glory. Thus, like her once suffering Lord, she esteemed it her meat and drink to do the will of her heavenly Father.

About three months before her death, being sensible of her duty to try all probable means for recovery, and to wait on the Lord for His blessing, she employed a skilful apothecary from Huntingdon, but her disorder baffled all skill and means. On August 24th, she thus writes: "I am ill and weak, and no better in my throat; it is very difficult for me to swallow anything. Last Saturday night I was almost choked, but much delighted to think that, when my breath was stopped, I should be with Christ, for ever with my dearest Lord, which is far better than this distant state. God grant that Christ may be glorified in my body, whether it be by life or by death, and that in faith and patience I may endure His good pleasure to His honour. I choose that which is most for His glory. Besides my poor throat I have some degree of fever, and, from the great weight I feel in my forehead, I fear a stupor will seize my brain. How kind it is of the Lord to cause various diseases to lend their influence to dissolve the body, that He may bring us soon up to glory!"

About the middle of September, she could take nothing down for two or three days together—no, not so much as a drop of milk or wine—and hearing of a poor woman who had died in the neighbourhood of the same disorder, and who lived a quarter of a year after she could take nothing but a little sugar in her mouth, she said, "If this be my lot, the Lord can make it pleasant. My Jesus has said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for thee.' Afflictions are as waters which pass away." She would receive her visiting friends as freely as ever, and they were amazed to see with what spirit she would walk up and down the house. Her conversation was always spiritual and profitable. She would frequently break out with, "Glory be to God, all is well! Blessed be His name, His wisdom cannot err. It is best as it is. I would not have it otherwise."

About the end of September she thus writes: "Is anything too hard for the Lord? If He speaks the healing word, I know I shall be restored; and then, oh, for grace to be doubly His! Sweetly He said to me yesterday, 'I am God, all-sufficient; walk before Me and be thou perfect.' Oh, that in respect of humble submission, sweet acquiescence to, and steadfast confidence in, His all-wise, all-gracious disposal, I may abound continually! My illness often changes, but that will be the most glorious change, to be made perfect in Christ's image."

About this time, under the exercise of an empty and craving stomach, she would be often cheerfully saying, "My poor stomach,

how it does crave ! It prays me to give it something, but I can get nothing into it. Blessed be my good God, another week hath He borne and carried me in the sweet strong arms of His eternal love and over-enduring mercy ; and sweet was that word to me, 'Behold, we count them happy which endure.' Nature calls its afflictions misery ; but the grace of Christ, which enables us to endure affliction to God's praise, in our afflicted state makes us happy."

On November 2nd her bodily weakness was now so increased that every one who saw her was amazed how she could rise from her bed at all, which she still continued to do, and to sit up ten or twelve hours a day. Those hours were filled up with her private duties and writing to her correspondents, though want of strength compelled her to much greater brevity than was her wont.

At this time she writes to one of her dearest friends, "My afflictions are light and short afflictions. Oh, for some happy fruit to the glory of God, which shall be to His honour and praise for ever ! I have been, madam, for several days this week so bad that, unless the Lord is pleased to give me a little more relief, my weak tabernacle must fall before another week is over. He gives me to see this affliction coming down upon me as a fruit of my Father's love, my Saviour's blood, and the grace of the Holy Ghost ; and I am enabled to receive it with humble submission and thanksgiving. I was much pleased yesterday, madam, to think that, after my long natural fast, I should shortly have a most delightful spiritual and eternal feast, when my gracious God will make me sit down to meat at His table in His kingdom, and there, oh, how sweetly shall I drink and bathe in that pure 'river of water of life, which proceedeth out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.'"

After this she had no strength to hold her pen, but for several mornings she would rise as usual and sit in her chair. The Lord gave her in mercy to sleep pretty much. Thus she continued till Lord's day, November 16th, when some friends went in to see her. With her finger pointing upwards, she could only be heard to say, "Glory, glory !" About midnight she could speak no more, but her mouth, eyes, and hands loudly expressed the joys of her soul. About noon the next day, a particular friend being by her bed-side, she put out her hand and took his ; and he, perceiving her soul to be quivering on her lips, put up with his whole heart the following ejaculation : "Lord Jesus, receive Thine handmaid's spirit !" and immediately her long-imprisoned spirit took wing and made its joyful flight. Thus this truly eminent and godly woman finished her course at Great Gransden on Monday, November 17th, 1765, aged seventy years. Her body

was decently interred the following Thursday in a burying-ground belonging to the Church of Christ of which she was for many years a very honourable member. A funeral discourse, agreeably to her request, was preached from 1 Thessalonians iv. 17: "So shall we ever be with the Lord." After her death many sacksful of letters were found, which were all burnt. She left by her will, for the use of all succeeding pastors of the Church there, houses and lands and a small library of very choice books, which are in the possession of, and used by, the pastor. There are several tablets in the chapel to the memory of former pastors, particularly one to Mr. Skilliter, who was pastor in 1822, and whose descendants still live in the neighbourhood. R. F. R.

"LOOKING UNTO JESUS."

"LOOKING UNTO JESUS," and not to the liveliness of our joy or to the sensible fervour of our love; otherwise, if only this love seem to cool, if only this joy fail us—whether as the consequence of our sloth or for the trial of our faith—immediately, our emotion being lost, we shall think we have lost our strength, and shall abandon ourselves to melancholy depression, if not to culpable inactivity. Oh, rather let us remember that, if sometimes the emotion and its sweetness fail us, faith and its power remain to us; and, that we may be able "always to abound in the work of the Lord," let us look without ceasing, not to our hearts, which are always changing, but to Jesus, who is always the same.

"Looking unto Jesus," and not to the degree of grief which our sins have caused us, or to the degree of humiliation which that may produce in us. If only we are so humbled by them as to be no longer satisfied with ourselves—if only we are so grieved by them as to look unto Jesus that He may deliver us from them—it is all He demands of us; and it is, moreover, this look more than all besides that will make our tears flow and our pride fall.

"Looking unto Jesus," and not to our strength. *Our strength serves only to glorify ourselves; to glorify God needs the strength of God.*

"Looking unto Jesus," and not to our sins, for health. The contemplation of sin only brings death; the contemplation of Jesus brings life. It was not looking to his wounds, but looking to the serpent of brass, that healed the Israelite.

"Looking unto Jesus," and not to our meditations and our prayers, to our pious conversation, or to our edifying reading, to the holy assemblies we frequent, nor even to our partaking of the Supper of the Lord. Let us faithfully use all these means of grace, but without confounding them with grace itself, and without turning off our looks from Him who alone can render them efficacious.

LETTERS FOR THE YOUNG.

"Looking unto Jesus," and not to our position in the Church, to the name which we bear, to the doctrine which we profess, to the idea which others form of our religion, or to that which we form of it ourselves. Many of those who have prophesied in the name of Jesus will hear Him one day say to them, "I never knew you;" but He will confess before His Father and before His angels even the most humble of those who have in faith looked unto Him.—*Selected.*

ROMAN CATHOLIC STATISTICS.—The "Catholic Directory" for 1882, published by Messrs. Burns and Oates, by the authority and under the sanction of the Cardinal-Archbishop of Westminster and the rest of the bishops of his Church, shows some interesting and instructive facts relative to the progress of the Roman Catholic religion in England. The archbishops and bishops in England and Wales are 14, not reckoning those of the Sees of Shrewsbury and Southwark, which are vacant. There are also in Scotland six other archbishops and bishops. The priests in England and Wales now number 2,036, serving 1,190 churches, chapels, and missionary stations. In Scotland there are 295 more, serving 286 chapels, &c., thus showing that both clergy and chapels have doubled in less than 25 years. In 1858 there were only 749 chapels in England and Wales and 177 in Scotland, the total of the priests who served them being 1,179. The Roman Catholic peers in the three kingdoms are 38; the baronets are 47. There are six Roman Catholic members of Her Majesty's Privy Council, and the Roman Catholic members of Parliament are 56, all representing Irish constituencies, except Mr. Jerningham, M.P. for Berwick-on-Tweed. The Sacred College of the Cardinals at Rome at this moment consists of 59 members—three English, viz., Newman, Manning, and Howard—the vacant hats being 11; and no less than seven cardinals have died during the year 1881.

[While bitter contentions and spiritual slumber are spread over Zion, the enemy is gaining ground, as the above statistics show. May the Lord pour out His Spirit upon His living family, and give us more single-hearted zeal for His glory.]

LETTERS FOR THE YOUNG.—No. XXI.

MY DEAR BESSIE,—You will no doubt be glad to receive a few lines from me. I hope you are all well. I am still very poorly, but not much worse, though the cause is not removed, neither have I much reason to hope that it will be, for internal diseases are not so easily removed. The doctors say it is a tumour forming, and there is also an affection of the liver, which takes away my appetite and produces a nauseous taste in my

mouth day and night, in consequence of which I have no desire or relish for my food, and I do not believe the doctors know what to do.

Well, my dear, I have had seventy-five years of good health and strength, and can I grumble or repine? Would not the Lord be displeased with me if I were to do so? Rather let me "lie passive in His hands, and know no will but His;" and then I have a blessed, sweet hope that, come life or come death, I am safe—saved with an everlasting salvation. The 1010th hymn (Gadsby's) expresses the desire of my soul.

I trust I have had *for nearly forty years testimonies and evidences in my soul of the dear Lord's love and mercy to me.* I am not very anxious about living or dying, for death has lost its sting. I believe for me to die would be gain; and the time must come. I have over-reached the reputed age of man by nearly six years, and were I to reach fourscore it would be labour and sorrow. Of course there are ties that would bind me down to earth, otherwise I would rather depart to Him whom my soul loveth, who to me, I hope I can say, is the "altogether lovely." I want to exalt Him and "crown Him Lord of all." I want to be where

"I shall see His face,
And never, never sin;
But from the rivers of His grace
Drink endless pleasures in."

My long life seems like a dream, and I have no desire to see my time over again, but I am still in the body, and cannot tell what may take place, but I pray that the Lord may give me grace and strength to persevere to the end and finish my course with joy, and His undeserved grace shall have all the praise. I believe there is but one real religion in the world, and I believe that religion to be inwrought in the soul of every elect vessel of mercy by the Holy Ghost; and I believe every one of these vessels of mercy, after calling, will be more or less tried about their calling, whether they came in by the door, or climbed over the wall and got in some other way. It has been a trial to me all my journey through to know that my calling and election was sure, and now I hope I feel a sweet confidence that it is sure. "Bless the Lord, O my soul."

Now, my dear, I hope the Lord has begun a good work in your soul, therefore press on, and "give all diligence to make your calling and election sure." You will never regret it. I am thankful to say I want for nothing temporal, and have a good, kind wife to attend to all my wants.

Please give our united Christian love to Mr. and Mrs. W—, and accept kindest love yourself from

Your affectionate grandfather,
Arlington, November 14th, 1881. THOMAS HICKS.

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THE SOWER.

CHRIST, THE PRINCE OF PEACE.

EXTRACTS FROM A SERMON PREACHED ON LORD'S DAY EVENING,
MAY 2, 1841, BY THE LATE MR. J. KERSHAW, OF ROCHDALE.

"Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."—Acts v. 31.

You will recollect, my friends, that last Lord's day evening we considered these words, and, on that occasion, we confined ourselves to the first branch of the subject, namely, to the exaltation of Christ with the right hand of the Father. The next branch of the passage is, that of His being exalted as a Prince: "Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince." To my own mind, that is a beautiful passage in which we have the Lord Jesus blessedly set forth in the ninth chapter of Isaiah, and the sixth verse: "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." Look at this, beloved. He is here called the "Prince of Peace," and it is our mercy, as poor sinners, to have such a Prince as the Lord Jesus Christ. In the prophecy of Isaiah we also read of the covenant of peace: "Mountains shall depart, and hills shall be removed, but the covenant of My peace shall not depart from you, henceforth and for evermore, saith the Lord." Now what is this covenant of peace? It is that of which David speaks, as "ordered in all things and sure." And why is it here called the covenant of peace? Because it has Christ, the Prince of Peace, for its covenant Head.

Again, my friends, this covenant of peace not only speaks of Christ as its covenant Head, but it has also the blood of this blessed Prince of Peace as its sealing: "And the God of peace, that brought again from the dead that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant;" so that Christ stands in covenant blood, and thereby this is a ratified, sealed, and confirmed covenant. And our comfort is everlasting, because it is founded upon this everlasting covenant: "Who has given us everlasting consolation," and a good hope through the grace of Jesus Christ, who is exalted as the Prince of this covenant. No sooner had this Prince, according to the promise, made His appearance here on earth, born of a woman and under the law, and even while He lies in the stable, as the poor Babe of Bethlehem, wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger,

than angels are despatched from heaven to give him a welcome becoming such a mighty Prince. The shepherds hear the song of the incarnation of the Prince of Peace, and it is this: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men;" "For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

Again, beloved, in referring to the Lord Jesus Christ as thus exalted, "whom God has exalted as a Prince," I must direct your attention to His character as the Prince of Peace, the Mediator between God and man. What does the Apostle Paul say of His character, in that precious chapter of the second Epistle to the Church at Ephesus? There he speaks of Him as having made peace by His blood. There is a blessed clause in Christ's sermon on the mount, and fitting no one as well as Himself; it is this—"Blessed are the peacemakers." Christ has made peace between a holy, just, and righteous God, and a fiery law, and poor, guilty, sinful, vile, rebellious man. "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men;" and that Mediator is Christ Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

And how has He made peace? Oh, my friends, He has made peace by shedding His own most precious blood; by dying "the Just for the unjust;" by putting away sin by the sacrifice of Himself; by being made a curse, that we might enjoy the blessing; so that Christ Jesus, in His glorious Person, is the Prince of Peace through His atoning blood. He is our great Peacemaker; and Him has God exalted, and lifted up as an ensign to the nations, that every guilty, burdened, and distressed soul might flee to Him for rest. Peace, my friends, is made for us, and is not made by ourselves; for Christ, the Prince of Peace, is our peace, and has broken down the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, by blotting out the handwriting of ordinances, and by removing every obstacle in our way to Jehovah the Father. In Him (that is, in Christ) mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed and embraced each other, in Him, and His glorious birth, and blood-shedding on Mount Calvary; and oh, my friends, where shall a poor, distressed soul look for peace and joy and rest but in this blessed Jesus, exalted at the Father's right hand as the Prince of Peace?

I recollect a minister visiting a poor woman who knew something of the Lord Jesus Christ, and he asked her, "Have you made your peace with God?" She smiled, looked up at him, and said, "What! have I made peace with God? Oh, no!" "Then," said he, "it is time you did." "Ah! but," said the poor woman, "my peace with God was made seventeen hundred years before I was born." He asked her how it was that her

peace was made so long back. Why, my friends, she had to turn preacher, and directed his attention to Christ, the great Prince of Peace, who had made peace for her by the shedding of His blood, whom God has exalted as "a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."

Now, you shall hear the voice of the Prince of Peace—for He is not only so in His glorious Person, and has made peace, but He is also a Preacher of peace, and He has left His people His peace as a legacy. In addressing His disconsolate disciples, in the fourteenth chapter of John, He says, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me," and so on; and He says in the twenty-seventh verse, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you; let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." When the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ is possessed by the soul of a poor sinner, oh, then there is a joy that is past all understanding! How blessed is the condition of the poor sinner when in the sweet enjoyment of this precious peace! Oh, then, let us see this very night how matters stand before the Lord. Are we at peace, or are we harassed under the oppression of sin, and sighing by reason of our evil hearts and the feeling of our numerous infirmities? Are we tormented by doubts and fears, perplexed with temptation, and know not what to do or whither to fly? Oh, let but the Prince of Peace speak to your troubled breast and say, "I have made peace for you, and am the peace of your eternal spirit"—oh, then your peace shall be eternal, for it speaks by the blood of Christ to your souls; and, when that is possessed, there is rest and joy which the world can neither give nor take away.

We have already seen that the peace of the Christian in Christ is gained by the shedding of the Saviour's blood. Now, you will recollect that the night God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, they killed the paschal lamb, and ate it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs; this was typical of Christ. Not a drop of the blood was to fall on the ground or be lost, but it was to be put into basins and sprinkled on the lintels and the door-posts of the houses of Israel; and on that very night, when the children of Israel were in their habitations, with their shoes on their feet, their loins girded, and their staves in their hands, eating the paschal lamb with unleavened bread and bitter herbs—oh, awful and solemn is the thought!—the angel of destruction is despatched from heaven, with the sword of divine vengeance in his hand, passes through the whole territory of Egypt, enters every habitation not sprinkled with the blood of the lamb, and all the first-born of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh to that of the meanest peasant in the land, are cut off.

But oh, see ; there is peace and rest for the Israel of God. They have the certain assurance of safety and security. As their lintel and door-post are sprinkled with the blood of the lamb, the destroying angel cannot enter their habitations.

I must pause on this point. It is one of great moment to man to be thus sprinkled with the blood of Christ, the Prince of Peace ; for then we have no cause to fear the flaming sword of divine justice. Having faith in Him, we sit down as "under the shadow of a rock in a weary land." He is our refuge from the storm and our covert from the tempest. There is no rest for a poor guilty sinner but in Jesus Christ's atoning blood. But having our hope in Him, we are as sure of heaven as if we were there already, for there is no condemnation to that soul that is in the Prince of Peace. No charge can be brought against God's elect, for Christ, their Prince, has died for them.

There is another circumstance to which I will refer—it is that of Rahab, the harlot. She having hid the spies, the children of Israel made a covenant with her that her house should not be destroyed with the rest of the inhabitants of that devoted city, and the house was to be known by a scarlet line in the window, which should ensure her safety ; so that this woman, and her kindred who were with her in the house, had peace, while all the rest were in fear and consternation. When the children of Israel entered Jericho the people fled in consternation. And why was this ? Because the terror of the Lord God of Israel had fallen on them. As the woman said to the spies, "Their hearts are like water, because they have heard of the great things God had done for them by bringing them out of Egypt, dividing the waters of the Red Sea, giving famous cities into their hands." They trembled. But the woman trembled not, and all that were with her had peace and rest.

And so, my friends, will it be on the great judgment day, when Christ comes riding on the clouds of heaven, and the trumpet of the resurrection begins to sound. The enemies of God will then feel dread and consternation, and will say to the rocks and mountains, "Fall on us !" but Jesus will be the Prince of Peace and glory of His people. All the Church of God will claim Him as their Elder Brother ; and, looking with faith, will stand with firmness and boldness, and will lift up their heads in triumph, and cry, "I see Him come ! It is our Friend and Mediator, Saviour and Redeemer ;" and Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace to His Church and people, shall claim them as His own, while those who would not have Him to reign over them shall be driven back into the shades of everlasting sorrow.

Hearken to the voice of this Prince, my friends, once more.

He says, addressing His disconsolate people that are near and dear to Him, "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." He says, "In Me ye shall have peace." Now, flesh and blood do not like tribulation. You and I, planning to get on in the world, never form crooked plans, but smooth plans, and straight plans, and so on. But the Prince says, "In the world ye shall have tribulation," and "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps," but "a good man's steps are ordered by the Lord;" and He "leads the blind through paths they have not known, and makes darkness light before them, and crooked things straight," and says He will "never leave them nor forsake them." But the misery of it is, that sometimes we are for doing the work of this Prince of Peace ourselves. We are for making the crooked things straight, and the rough places plain; but let us not attempt to do the work of the Prince, but leave Him to do it, and let us only watch His hand; and, however thorny our paths may be, let us trust our affairs entirely to His guidance, for He is an able and a just Prince, and all power in heaven and earth is in His hands; and the crooked will soon be made straight, and the rough places plain.

The Church of God, in this world, my dear friends, is like a vessel on a boisterous sea, and the members of His Church have to buffet with storms and tempests as they pass along, and sometimes they "reel and stagger like a drunken man;" but, when we get a sight of the Lord, then there is a little peace and rest, but not else. "Cast thy burden on the Lord, and He will sustain thee;" for He is our Pilot, and will steer the vessel safely into the haven of eternal peace.

It is indeed a mercy to be under the protecting care of this Prince of Peace; and, through faith in Him, the billows of life shall drop harmless at our feet, when ready to overwhelm us. Perhaps some of you may know something about the sea. In Luke viii. 23, we find Christ had gone to sleep. He slept as a man, but as a God He slept not. "But as they sailed He fell asleep; and there came a storm of wind on the lake, and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy; and they came to Him, and awoke Him, saying, Master, Master, we perish! Then He arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm." You see here, my friends, the disciples woke their Prince with terror and dismay. He arose with a countenance calm and serene; and, with majesty and power on His brow, He goes on the deck—takes a survey. The wind roars, the storm increases, and seems to threaten destruction every moment. The Prince speaks, "Be still!" The elements obey, the face of the waters is changed, and there is a calm.

Oh, my friends, have we not often felt such a storm raging in

our own bosoms ? I do not know how you Londoners are, but with me there is often sad kicking within ! We shall never have peace till we come to our Prince ; and, when we look to Him with the eye of faith, we shall hear His heavenly voice, saying, " Be still ! " and all will be calm.

I have heard a circumstance related, but the truth of it I know not. It has afforded consolation to my mind, and I will give you the relation, since it illustrates the point we are now dwelling on. There was a ship out at sea. It was overtaken by a storm. The vessel was in great peril, and the passengers at their wits' end, expecting every moment to be buried in the waves. Death, grief, and destruction were in their countenances. One of them, with much surprise, observed a boy playing, and seeming quite indifferent and unconcerned. He said to the boy, " Why, how is this, that you are so calm in such a storm, and the danger we are in of going to the bottom ? " " Oh," says the boy, with a smile, " I am not afraid, for my father is at the helm, and I look to him." Oh, my friends, in every storm let us look to our Father in heaven ! Every Christian is a vessel of mercy. Christ is the Pilot ; He is at the helm, and will steer the vessel in safety through every storm, till we arrive at the haven of happiness, as our eternal resting-place.

Then observe again, my friends, Christ is not only called the " Prince of Peace," but also the " Prince of Life ; " and this appellation is given to Him in a most solemn and striking manner by the Apostle Peter, at the time Peter was interrogated by the elders of the Jews, in reference to the power and ability by which a lame man was healed. Peter disclaims all power in himself by which the cripple was restored, but ascribes all power to Christ.

Now, I will read you two or three verses from the Acts, third chapter : " And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this ? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk ? " No, no, my brethren ; there is no power in us. Then he goes on to say, " The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified His Son Jesus ; whom ye delivered up, and denied Him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you." Then comes the verse to which I will direct your attention—" And killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raised from the dead, whereof we are witnesses."

Now, you see, Peter charged the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, on the wicked Jews. He says, " But ye have killed the Prince of Life." What ! killed the Prince of Life ? Did they kill His Godhead ? Oh, no ; that they could not touch.

What ! His soul then ? Oh, no ; fear not that. What did they kill then ? Why, they killed the body of the Prince and no more, for that was all they could do. You see, then, they killed the body of our Prince of Peace, and nailed Him to the accursed tree, exhibited Him as a spectacle to men, angels, and devils. He died this shameful, ignominious death ; was laid in the cold and silent grave for three days and nights, but saw no corruption. He has risen again, and is now exalted to the right hand of the Father in glorious majesty.

Oh, my friends, hearken to that voice of His in the chapter I read to you to-night. It is the voice of our Prince, who suffered death that we might live. Oh, His sweet voice is dear unto my soul ! Our Prince says, to stimulate our souls from earth to heaven, "I am He that liveth, and was dead ; and behold, I am alive for evermore." So our Prince is not a dead Prince. No, though He died, "the Just for the unjust," He is alive, and lives in the high court of heaven as the Prince of Life ; and for this reason He says, "Behold, I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and death." Thus Jesus Christ was victorious over the grave, and is now exalted to the right hand of the Father, and is the Prince of Life as well as the Prince of Peace.

Now, my friends, this part of our subject is of vital importance, in the view I have taken of it. I have endeavoured to show you that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Prince of Life—that is, He is the life of His saints, Church, and people. Now, my brethren, I give you time to ponder this, and may it yield consolation to your souls. I say, the life of Christ is the life of every saint of the Most High God. I repeat it, that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Prince of Life, and the saints' God ; and those who have this Prince for their life will never die till their Prince dies ; and when will He die ? Oh, (blessed word), never ; for it is written, "He is a Priest and Prince for ever, after the order of Melchisedec." Now, I speak not of the body of God's Son ; no, His body died ; but I speak of His spiritual life, the life of God in the soul ; and the life of God in the soul is the Lord Jesus Christ, and He is the life of every one of His subjects.

Now, you shall have the testimony of the Apostle Paul, first, by way of doctrine, and also by way of experience. Now, hearken to what he says to the Church at Colosse, by way of doctrine, third chapter, third verse : "For 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 ;" so you see that Christ is here represented as the life of the mystical body, the Church. Now hearken unto Paul in reference to his experience : "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live ;" that is, "not as in former times I lived, a natural life, but I live now that life which

Christ keeps in existence." Oh, my friends, may we all say, like Paul, "'I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live;' yet it is not I that live, but Christ, the Prince of life and glory, lives in me. My life is now by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

Oh, cheer up, brethren, you that complain of hard hearts, tribulation, harassing doubts and fears. If you have the Lord Jesus Christ, you have the root of the matter in you. He is the light of life in your souls; they shall never die while He lives. Hear His gracious voice. Oh, "blessed are the people who know the joyful sound." Jesus says, "Because I live, ye shall live also." He is the Head; there is no spiritual separation. He is the Head of the body, and that body is the Church; and, as the members of the natural body can only live by being united to the head, so Jesus Christ is the Head of the spiritual life, and we live in Him, by Him, and through Him. Oh, how do these things affect you, my friends? Do they not bear your soul up to Jesus Christ, now sitting at the right hand of God, but who reigns on earth as the Prince of the saints and life of His people?

A subject of this Prince cannot live without prayer. He must pray; it is the food which nourishes his spiritual life. And this Prince is the life of prayer; and He is also the life of reading. There is no reading the Word of God with any comfort without Christ. And I well know by experience, my friends, that He is the life of preaching. I sat in the vestry quite faint, before I came into the pulpit. I seemed like a post, and felt as if I had nothing to say. I said to myself, "What shall I say to this people?" But, oh, my friends, I have had a glimpse of the Prince! He has opened my lips and enabled me to preach to you. He is the life of preaching. No life in religion without the Prince. As the body without the soul is dead, so religion is dead without Christ. He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last of it.

But I feel I must conclude. I have not bodily strength to go further. I will now just refer you to the first chapter of Revelation, fifth verse. Christ is there called "the Prince of the kings of the earth." You see, my friends, He is there called a Prince—king over all crowned heads and potentates. They all hear His voice, for He is a great Prince over all the kings of the earth. What does this glorious Prince say? "By Me kings reign, and by Me princes decree justice." All things are in His hands. The nobles of the earth are subject unto Him. He lifts up one and pulls down another. He is God omnipotent—triumphs over all—and He is the Prince of Peace, keeping them in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Him.

But, to conclude, my friends, do you know the Lord Jesus

Christ ? Do you know this Prince of Peace ? Do you know the character of this Prince ? You know it is often said, "as rich as a prince ;" so likewise He is very rich. None have so many honours as He. All blessings and treasures are at His disposal, and He is ready to give them to all who ask Him. Oh, then, acknowledge Him, receive Him, remember Him, come to Him for mercy and consolation, and enjoy His peace in your souls for evermore ! Amen.

"LET MY PRAYER COME BEFORE THEE."

(PSALM lxxxviii. 2.)

God of all mercy, grace, and power,
Save me in this distressing hour !
No hand can help but Thine alone,
No mortal understand my groan.

My soul is overwhelmed with fear
That Thou hast turned from me Thine ear ;
On Thee I long, I try, to cast
My care, remembering mercies past.

But, when I come in prayer so faint,
To make before Thee my complaint,
Satan, that arch, malicious foe,
Draws nearer to increase my woe.

He knows the baseness of my heart ;
Meets me with many a fiery dart ;
Tells me 'tis like a hypocrite
To cry when I in troubles get.

That, when I'm not in such a case,
I do not really seek Thy face ;
And that I do so oft offend,
God will no more my prayer attend.

And in the darkness of the night
I have no skill nor strength to fight ;
But do, O Lord, put forth Thy power,
Let not the foe my life devour.

Oh, let me feel Thy presence near
To banish all my gloomy fear ;
And once more manifest Thy power
To save me in the trying hour !

Then grant me grace to live and walk
In the blest footsteps of Thy flock ;
Through life to trust in Thee alone,
And dying, tell what grace has done.

NIGHT THOUGHTS BY A WATCHMAN.

“ As fast as the moments roll on
They bring me still nearer to Theo.”

YES, dear reader, time swiftly glides away; and, whether we rejoice at the thought or not, we are hastening to God. Each day, each hour, each pulse, is one the less, as they, consciously or unconsciously, merge into the past, and make the future approach, with its joys or griefs, its bliss or woe; and not for time only, but for that vast eternity also which we each must enter, and, as we enter it, so for ever remain unchanged in our condition and fixed in our place. Eternity with Christ, or with the worst beings that ever existed, must soon be your portion. What is your outlook, your expectation, and your desire? There must be a meetness for God. Consider, then—

Firstly, that every child of God is being conformed to the Person and likeness of our Lord Jesus Christ. By the fall of our first parents, and our own personal transgressions, our souls are awfully and painfully deformed. How defaced is that beautiful image in which man was first made! True, there are many remains of departed grandeur and traces of lost nobility; but the grandeur is *departed*, and the nobility is *lost* beyond recovery by any act or effort of ours, however powerful our will or determined our labour, in order to restore the God-like form in which we came from our Creator's hands. Look at your soul, study your heart, consider your ways, remember your sins, and measure your daily thoughts by the rule and light of God's holy Word. Ah! does not the rule say you are much too short, and the light show you to be as an unclean thing? Are your best devotions clean? Nay, do not your prayers cause you to pray for mercy, and your praise make you mourn because of the much flesh, self, and sin mingling with all? Do you not wonder that God ever regards you at all otherwise than with abhorrence? “Yes, oh, yes,” say you; “I am ready to doubt as to whether God ever did or ever will look with any other feeling than that of anger and indignation on one so unusually black and hardhearted as I see and feel myself to be.” Did not the Apostle Paul say that he could not think a good thought, as of himself? And you are also ready to say, “If my possession of eternal joy depended on my thoughts and affections being set on God and glory for one hour, without the intruding of any sinful and worldly idea, I should be entirely without hope of obtaining it. My mind is so driven and tossed with temptations and the cares of this life that I am almost dead in regard to the inner life—the life of my spirit—so that, when I am alone, and have a little quiet, I have to mourn, sigh, and complain, in the bitterness of my soul, ‘Oh,

that I could find that joy and peace, that rest and hope, which I once was favoured with!" But, alas!—

" 'Tis sorrow all and sighing,
When the morning hours are flying,
And weariness and sadness when the evening shadows move.

" Nigh quenched is all the fire
Of my heavenward desire;
My strength is waning weak, and my love is but a name.

" Oh, show to me once more
Thy lasting love and power,
And leave me not exhausted thus to die beside the way!

" And oh, be with me still
When Thy hand I do not feel,
And keep from denying Thee, and keep me from despair!"

Are these *your* desires? Are these the longings of one destitute of life and love? Could any but those who know and thirst for God adopt those lines? Is not this panting after Christ and His grace the fruit of His own Spirit which dwelleth in you? Well, by wind and wave, by darkness and light, you will arrive at the appointed haven, and enter the royal city, where you will behold the King in His beauty. He has predestinated us to be conformed to His image, and to reside in His house. Nothing less than this could satisfy a true follower of the Lord. He was holy, harmless, and undefiled; holy in Himself, harmless in His ways, and undefiled by sin and His daily contact with men. And can you rest till you find you are like Him? Could you be content to dwell for ever in this earthly body of which you now are possessed? Every seed hastens to bear its own likeness and reproduce itself. The growth may be slow; it may have many changing days and seasons to pass through, and, at times, seem to make no progress; but, being watered, watched, and screened from the deadly blast of the destroyer by the great and good Husbandman, the full corn in the ear will be found at the appointed time. Mark you, it is a plant's *nature* to grow and bring forth its own seed; one can hardly say it is its *duty* to do so. Its power to increase is not in itself; this it derives from its position and the influences which bear upon it. Being in a suitable position, and under the proper elements, it should, it does, it must grow. How dependent, then; yet, thus situated, how sure its increase! So the heaven-born soul shall grow up into Christ, even to perfect likeness.

Secondly, His own home shall be the home of His children. Christ will have His people to be *with* Him as well as like Him.

As they could not be happy without Him, so He will not rest without them. "I go to prepare a place for you," dropped from His loving and faithful lips. Never did you pray to be with Him with the same fervour and affection as He requested you might be when He breathed forth His heart, saying, "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am." Heaven is in the presence and likeness of Christ. You can desire no more ; you will have nothing less than this.

However, with this there are many other things which should endear to us the home above, and not the least of these is the cheering fact that heaven is getting more home-like day by day. Especially is this so with the aged of the Lord's family. Many of their dearest and nearest friends are already gone before. This makes our poor earth to them more than ever a wilderness—a solitary place. They have oft wept at the departure of a dear brother and sister in Jesus, and have longed to be freed from the body of clay in which they so frequently groan. My aged brother, "look up, and lift up your head, for your redemption draweth nigh ; for now is your salvation nearer than when you first believed." You will again be with these loved ones ; perhaps before the present year closes. And may you, my young friend, be favoured to engrave the following lines on your memory, and be instructed by them—

"Lean not on earth, 'twill pierce thee to the heart—
A broken reed at best, and oft a spear—
On its sharp point peace bleeds and hope expires."

Remember, oh, remember, and be not deceived—

"The world's gold is dross,
And the world's gain is loss ;
There is nothing here for Christian hearts to love."

Here you must fight and keep watch. This is the battle-field and the enchanted ground ; therefore, keep your armour on, and be wakeful. Do not desire perfect ease, for therein lies the greatest danger. Always have your Book of instructions by your side. Obey your Captain's orders, and you shall never fail, but be "more than conqueror." You will soon be called a way. Think of that hour when thy Captain will say, "Come up hither."

"Oh, glorious hour ! oh, blest abode !
I shall be near and like my God ;
And flesh and sin no more control
The sacred pleasures of my soul."

W. B.

MEMOIR OF THE LATE ELIZA HOPKINS, OF BATH.

[Mrs. Hopkins, the subject of the following brief account, and her father, now also deceased, and of whom we hope to give some particulars in the *SOWER*, were well known to us as godly people, whose consistent lives adorned the doctrine they professed; and, though some may think it late for the following abridged notice of Mrs. Hopkins to appear, we insert it in loving remembrance of her, and as prefacing the one we hope to give of her father, Mr. Collins.]

THE subject of this memoir had the privilege to be born of God-fearing parents. Just before her birth, which took place on January 4th, 1836, her dear father, now deceased, was led to seek the Lord on behalf of the child's best interests. She was mercifully preserved from outward evils, and did not seem to have the wish to pursue the vanities so common to childhood and youth. She was scrupulously truthful, and, like Timothy, knew the Scriptures from a child.

At the early age of nine years the Lord began a work of grace in her soul. She was at that time attending a school near Bath, where she heard a minister preach a sermon, from which she dated her first convictions; and these words often followed her when young, "The thought of foolishness is sin." From that time she gradually grew in a knowledge of divine things, but she was much exercised respecting her call by grace, as she had not experienced that deep law-work upon her conscience which many of God's people have passed through. Nor is this to be wondered at; for, being very circumspect for her tender age, she would know but little of the deep depravity of her own heart; and, her only companions being among the Lord's people, she had, perhaps, but little insight into that wickedness which many wallow in. Yet the Lord, who hears the desire of the humble, was pleased partially to remove her burden while she was listening to a sermon preached by the late Mr. Roff from these words, "By the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. iii. 20).

But her full deliverance from the bondage of the law and the guilt of sin came while she was hearing the late Mr. Gorton preach at an anniversary at Acton Turville; and in August, 1855, she, with her dear mother, were baptized by Mr. Gorton, when they both joined the Church of God at Bath. To this circumstance she at different times referred in after life as a step that she never regretted, also as a time from which God had upheld her, though she frequently lamented that she had not the same measure of love, joy, and peace, as in the days of her first espousals.

*Once, when visiting London, she was much encouraged in hearing the late Mr. Godwin, from Hebrews ii. 10; also by the

application of these words, "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice" (John xvi. 22). Upon having this portion, she writes, "And so I feel it will be when 'the Sun of Righteousness arises with healing in His wings.' When He shall appear my heart will be made glad, and I shall rejoice in Him."

Writing to her parents about this time from Chippenham, she says, "Yesterday was not such a Sabbath as my soul desired, but, in the evening, I had a little sweetness under the Word. I did feel right after the evening service, while in conversation with Mrs. E——. She is a nice person, and is much on my mind. I love her much, and hope, for her sake and mine, that the Lord has loved us both with the same love."

In the year 1859 she was staying in Swansea. Writing home at that time, she says, "I was very glad to have such a long letter from you. It is kind of you to spend so much time over me. Sometimes I feel unworthy of all the kindness shown to me both by my dear parents and others, and most of all for all the mercies I am daily receiving from the Giver of all temporal and spiritual blessings, especially when I can feel to have an interest in them, and in the precious blood of Christ; then it is that I feel blessed indeed, and this makes all other mercies to be prized. I can say feelingly—

" 'Not more than others I deserve,
Yet God has given me more.' "

"I hope I have felt so at times, though now, for the most part, my hope declines and my fears prevail; and the burden of my petition is, 'Lord, quicken Thou me, for my soul cleaveth to the dust.' I am like the poor woman, bowed down, and can in no wise lift up myself, yet I know that one word from Jesus would be enough. Lord, speak this word, and Thy servant shall be healed. May the Lord give me patience to wait His time."

Once, when her parents were from home, she wrote to them complaining of her want of feeling and enjoyment in hearing the Word preached, but speaks of reading Mrs. Winslow's Memoirs with profit, whose lively exercises she contrasted with a sense of her own ignorance, coldness, and indifference.

At one time she was staying at Ponterdawe, in Wales, where she was much charmed by the picturesque scenery. Writing upon this, she remarks, "The air on the mountains is beautiful, and the scenery delightful. Look which way you will, there are mountains before and beyond, with valleys between. These things remind me of a hymn by Mr. Hart—

" 'But what are seas, or skies, or hills,
Or verdant vales, or gliding rills,
To wonders man was born to prove—
The wonders of redeeming love? ' "

"It all comes infinitely short even compared with a hope of an interest in so great a love. Although well-nigh in despair at times, yet, blessed be God, the anchor, hope, remains, and so every storm will be safely got over as we pass on to the desired haven."

While on a visit in London, she wrote to say she had heard a Mr. Gaskin preach from these words, "These all died in faith" (Hebrews xi.); and adds, "I liked him very well—better than on Sunday last, but I would not blame him. I know that power belongs unto God, and of late I have had to prove the truth of it, for I feel so barren and cold. It is seldom that I hear as I desire to hear. I like to feel my heart softened and melted with a sense of the goodness of God, so that I could weep with joy, as I did when Mr. Collingo preached at Calne. I would often feel as I did then."

The last quotation we have to make is from a letter written from Chippenham in August, 1865, as follows: "I went to Corsham on Sunday last, and last evening also. I felt it good to be there. Mr. Keevil spoke much about baptism. I had some sweetness under his preaching; and, while singing that hymn at the water side, 'Jesus, and shall it ever be?' &c., it reminded me of the day when my mother and I were baptized together; and these two lines I felt as sweet last Sunday as I did when we sang them that day in Bath—

" 'Ashamed of Jesus, that dear Friend
On whom my hopes of heaven depend.' "

"I felt that the Lord had been good in keeping me thus far with a hope of an interest in His precious blood. I have had many fears of falling and giving up; but, bless God, He has helped me hitherto."

The foregoing extracts will show that she was one that was ever fearful of being deceived, and anxious to be right, and one whom the Lord alone could satisfy.

Her dear husband, to whom she was married in 1870, bears a very high testimony to her as follows: "My acquaintance with my dearly-beloved wife began in the year 1867. Her neat, modest, and Christian behaviour as my helpmeet was carried out to the end of her life. I found her disposition very reserved; so much so, that few would know much of the workings of her mind, but closer acquaintance revealed her Christian character as being thoughtful, honest, and sincere. She was slow to form an acquaintance with any one, and still slower to give one up, except where it was really necessary to do so. In my wife I have lost my best earthly friend. I felt safe in her hands in everything with which I had to do. She was constant and unwearied in her attention to the business and

to her children, who have lost one of the best of mothers. She was an example to both old and young—a living epistle known and read of all who knew her as a new creature in Christ Jesus. She was a conscientious Christian, an honourable member of the Church of God; never fond of strife (that was a grief to her), and she was of a forgiving spirit."

We much object to anything that savours of creature laudation, and should not have inserted all the foregoing remarks had not the good man added, "And how came these things to be made manifest in her? It was because the grace of God was in her heart, and the Lord helped her to walk according to it."

She showed great respect for the Lord's sent servants, especially for the late Mr. Collinge, and for that dear man of God, the late Mr. Sears, whom she heard with great profit and comfort the last time he preached in Bath, in the Corridor Rooms and the Gospel Hall. She said on those occasions that, if Mr. Sears was led to speak of higher things than those she had attained, she was not jealous of him; she only desired to know more of them in her own soul.

During the last two years of her life she was in a declining state, suffering much bodily pain. Her disease was consumption of the bowels. In her affliction she was very patient, though she sometimes begged the Lord to grant her a little ease, and was anxious that her mental powers might be preserved. She said at one time, "I am like a garment that the moth is eating away."

About two months before she died, she was very dark in her mind, and begged of the Lord for more light to cheer her by the way. Many things which she said were rendered unintelligible in consequence of her excessive weakness, but she was heard to say, "I have much to tell you, but have not power to do so." This was a grief to her, but it occasioned the two following lines to be made a great blessing to her—

"Give Him, my soul, thy cause to plead,
Nor doubt the Father's grace."

She also much enjoyed some remarks which Mr. Hoblyn made to her upon Revelation v. 5. Before her death she gave birth to her sixth child, and, in answer to the united prayers of both her husband and herself, they felt the Lord interposed in ordering for her her dear friend and respected doctor to attend her. She was brought safely through the trial, but soon her sufferings were brought to a close. She spoke with great calmness of her funeral, and had the dear children and the servant to her bed-side to bid them farewell, and to whom she gave some wise and kind parting words, which they may think of in days to come.

She asked for those words to be read to her, "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God" (Psalm xlii.). She entreated that she might have more light, as she dreaded the thought of departing in the dark. She bade her dear husband and her father and mother farewell, but rallied again for a little while, when she sent for her husband, and asked him to read the following lines of Toplady—

"While I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eyestrings break in death,
When I soar to worlds unknown,
See Thee on Thy judgment throne,
Rock of Ages, shelter me,
Let me hide myself in Thee."

She then took leave of her relatives again, but lived on until Wednesday, August 28th, 1878, when she left the path of sore tribulation to enter the kingdom of God, aged forty-two years, leaving a widower and six children to mourn her loss.

Mr. David Smith, who has forwarded us the particulars from which this account has been written, says of her:—

"Eliza Hopkins was, to my knowledge, a very conscientious person. She possessed a tender conscience in the fear of God. I knew her for some years before she was married, and noticed her chaste conversation, which was coupled with meekness and fear—I mean of a godly sort. I was for some years a supply at Providence Chapel, Bath, where she was a member of the Church; and during those years I often visited her father's house, where spiritual conversation was the principal theme, mingled with prayer and praise. Certain ministers' names were mentioned whose ministry was approved or disapproved of by the members of the Church, but, to my remembrance, I never heard Eliza speak disparagingly of any. She would listen, and, if she could not speak approvingly, she would say nothing. Would to God we had more such living epistles among the Churches! . . ."

Here we close the Memoir. May the Lord add unto the Church many who shall follow Eliza Hopkins as she followed Christ!

THE child of God is sometimes like a man in a storm at sea in the dark, and who is thrown into the water by the force of the gale. While plunging about in the water he lays hold of something, he knows not what, but he clings unto it, feeling his life is in danger, until daylight appears, when, to his great surprise and inexpressible joy, he finds it to be a rock. He renews his hold, and cries and waits for deliverance.—*W. Smith.*

A SECOND ONESIPHORUS.

IN those sad times of cruel persecution (three centuries ago) when God's poor people were suffering imprisonment, torture, and death, because they could not submit to bow down to and embrace the false doctrines of the Church of Rome, God, in His mercy, raised up a kind friend, who was the means of cheering and helping many of the poor sufferers to bear up and go through their troubles; and this friend was wonderfully preserved by God, no doubt for this very purpose. His name was Augustine Bernher. Of his early history little is known; but that he was a true Christian, and acted the part of "the good Samaritan," there is abundant proof. He would gain admittance to the poor saints who were confined in dungeons, and was ever ready to convey money and assistance to them. One of these sufferers styled him "an angel of God." He passed from one part of the country to another, cheering with his presence, animating with his words, and no man was permitted to harm him, even though he frequently accompanied the martyrs to the stake. Oftentimes their anxiety for his safety was most intense, and they praised God for such a friend, and prayed for his preservation, which was mercifully granted. Not a day passed during those terrible persecutions in which he was not actively engaged in ministering to the necessities and cheering these poor persecuted saints. He immured himself in dungeons that he might cheer and comfort them. This good man supplied "Fox, the martyrologist," with a great deal of information and copies of letters, so that by this means many a martyr, "being dead, yet speaketh."

Bernher was a true Christian hero, imparting the "oil and wine" of spiritual consolation wherever he came in contact with the poor sufferers. He is also described as a "powerful preacher," but he is known most to us as a "succourer of many" and a warm adherent to the cause of the Reformers. His moral courage was very great. Bradford's keeper once said to him, "It will be death to you to hold communication with John Bradford;" at which Bernher smiled, no doubt feeling the Lord was able to protect him. He continued to visit Bradford, and spent whole nights with him and others, cheering and strengthening them with his godly conversation and prayers. His faith and love were most marked, but more than all, his felt sympathy. He so fully entered into the same sufferings as the martyrs, and, when they had passed through all their sufferings, and had entered their blessed haven of rest, he exerted himself to the utmost to interest those in better circumstances to provide for their widows and orphans. No harm happened to this truly noble Christian. "His end was peace;" and to him, we feel assured, would be addressed those blessed words, "Well

done, thou good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

What a striking contrast such a man bears to many now who, while professing to be Protestants, are aiding the enemies of Protestantism by willingly giving up one after another of our civil rights, and tampering with Ritualism, which is Popery in the bud, and, there is reason to fear, will ere long come out into the full-blown flower. Let us, then, shun as we would a serpent everything approaching to pomp and outward show in the worship of God. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth;" and, though He is the "high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy," He says, "I dwell in the high and holy place, WITH HIM also that is of a contrite and humble spirit," &c. (Isa. lvii. 15, and Isa. lxvi. 1, 2).

A—A.

A PRECIOUS HIDING-PLACE.

"A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished."—PROVERBS xxii. 3.

A PRUDENT man the evil day foresees;
He can no longer settle on his lees;
His eyes are opened to his real case;
He flees to Jesus, precious Hiding-place!

Now, he considers well his former days;
With pain reflects on all his wicked ways;
He feels indeed he is a sinner base,
And longs for Jesus, precious Hiding-place!

He sees and feels his sinful, solemn state,
And does his ill-spent life sincerely hate;
Though oft in fear, he feels it is of grace
He thirsts for Jesus, precious Hiding-place!

He tastes that God is gracious in His Son,
And that He saves the ruined and undone;
This makes him grateful, that he knows his case,
And looks to Jesus, precious Hiding-place!

Though often drooping, yet he mounts again;
He sows in tears, but does not sow in vain;
The Lord appears, and shows him, by His grace,
He's safe in Jesus, precious Hiding-place!

The simple don't regard, they onward pass,
Till death o'ertakes; and so they die, alas!
And go to hell, that awful, dreadful place,
And miss of Jesus, precious Hiding-place!

A. H.

PSALM CVII. VIEWED AS THE BELIEVER'S PROGRESSIVE EXPERIENCE.

[In giving insertion to these papers, it must not be understood that we fully endorse the writer's views of the *consecutive* teaching of this Psalm. We have taken it as prophetic of, or applicable to, the gathering of God's ancient people, who were for their sins and stubbornness scattered to the four winds of heaven. Besides which, we have considered it pre-eminently suited to the various states the Lord's people come into in all ages of times, adapting itself both to providential and spiritual trials. We ourselves have at different times trodden its diversified pathway, but we should not feel free to lay it down as a map of the undeviating heavenward course of one, or of every, child of God. However, as the writer has been led in this way, we gladly publish it for the benefit of the Church of God. He has evidently been clearly instructed both in law and Gospel, knows the changes to which God's people are subject, and has a gracious knowledge of his own heart and of the Lord.]

As no Scripture is of private interpretation, so there is something more in its teaching than appears in the simple text or narrative. Not only the truths of revelation, but the order in which they are given, is full of instruction. The early books of the Old Testament not only relate the history of the patriarchs, but have a consecutive significance with respect to the experience of the saint and of the Church, as shown by the Early Fathers and some of our own day. The messages to the Seven Churches in Revelation ii and iii. have been thought to refer to different periods of the Church's condition through time, as well as containing the solemn admonition given to each. So in this Psalm there is not only the experience of the child of God, but it is given in the order in which it is usually imparted to the believer, as the following notes will attempt to show:—

Verse 1 : "O give thanks," &c. Give thanks because the Lord is good, and not merely, as in Psalm ciii. 2, "for all His benefits." It is a good thing to give thanks for good received, but it is a much higher act of faith and knowledge to give thanks because of what the Lord is in Himself. This the saint will surely allow, but it is one of the old age blessings to delight in the attributes of Deity (Psalm xxxvii. 4).

"His mercy endureth," &c. There is something in our natural disposition which always disputes this, because it cannot comprehend the quantity of the divine attributes. That mercy should meet the need and misery it does, and bear with all the contempt and the repeated abuse of it, is beyond the comprehension of created intelligence. There is nothing like

it but in God. That the attribute of mercy should equal all the other attributes cannot be received but as revealed to the spiritual mind, and that little by little and repeated a thousand-fold. This ever-enduring mercy astonished David, and in his song of it (Psalm cxxxvi.) he cannot get through a sentence without bursting forth at half-sentences, "His mercy endureth for ever!" It is equally astonishing to every child of God, as it is manifested to him on the back of his multiplied and aggravated transgressions.

Verse 2 : "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so." Indeed they ought, and they only can say it truly and feelingly. "The redeemed;" how much is in the phrase! The purchased at such a cost, the washed, the clothed, the adorned, the re-redeemed so often (Psalm cvi. and Job x. 12, "Thy visitation hath preserved my spirit"), the re-washed and clothed, forgiven seventy times seven. The purified, sanctified, notwithstanding all their filth and pollution by nature and practice, let them say so; and they must and will, for they are the people specially formed for this end, to show forth His praise.

"From the hand"—the iron hand of the strong, the hand which thrust down their first father in paradise. Let the redeemed remember this, and magnify the gracious power which rescued them from such a terrible foe.

Verse 3 : "Gathered" out of all lands, as in Revelation vii. From the east first, as Israel before the Gentiles and the whole world. Let us be thankful salvation came west as well as east; and north and south too, for the earth in due time shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the sea is of water. Let us never cease to pray, "Thy kingdom come!"

Verse 4 : "They wandered." There are two kinds of wandering. The whole race are wanderers from God, from rest, peace, and happiness; but there is a peculiar kind of wanderers who need something that cannot be found in this world. Even the unregenerate, though they crave a something, do not ask for anything better than this world can give. The believer, whose eyes are opened, feels pangs of hunger and thirst beyond all he felt naturally. "They wandered" to and fro in search of something they must have or die; but it could not be found on earth. They became solitary in their loneliness, like the wounded animal, for a deadly disease has taken hold of them, and no cure can be found in the wilderness. It is a place of barrenness and death to them, where nothing good will grow. The Lord in His mercy meets these wanderers (Psalm lxxviii., "Setteth the solitary in families"), as He (not Adam) said, "Where art thou?" and after arguments like those used by our first parents, the mouth is stopped (Romans ii.), the promise is spoken, and the Gospel is revealed.

"They found no city." No, not a house or hovel, not one

spot on earth fit to rest or dwell in now. Before they could rest, but now nothing less than heaven and God Himself will suffice (Psalm xc.).

Verse 5: "Hungry." With hunger and thirst to fainting, their spirits droop and fail altogether, for the Lord kills before He makes alive, and wounds deeply and incurably before He heals. This spiritual fainting and dying is as real to the believer as are the natural feelings thus expressed. There are two days of judgment spoken of in the Bible—one which takes place in life, when the soul is brought in guilty before God and justly condemned—himself obliged to admit the justice of the sentence; and this is as real as will be the last awful day when all shall meet before the great white throne (Rev. xx.)

"Their soul fainteth." It is the self-despair of the wretched soul, and it is an awful place to be in; nevertheless, all must come here, for "ye must be born again;" and the cry of the infant at birth shows pain on its part as well as the mother's. Here is the first judgment and the first death. It is the new birth of the soul issuing in "Then they cry" (of v. 6).

Verse 6: "Cried in trouble." Never such trouble, such cries, before. Like Saul, they may have been more religious and devout than all around them, but they never prayed or cried as now. The Lord can say now, "Behold, he prayeth." As in Song iii. 6, viii. 5, "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness?" Then they cry with the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" and with the disciples, "Lord, save!" God is a present help, a help in time of need (Psa. xlv.). so it says, "Then they cried, and the soul was delivered." Deliverance is as sure as the cry, for both are from one source. It is not of him that willeth, but of God that showeth mercy. He neither could nor would thus cry if he had not been quickened, and the Holy Spirit put within him. As the mother hears and attends to the cry of the infant, so God hears and delivers.

Verse 7. He not only hears and delivers, but undertakes the nursing and training of the infant life: "As an eagle stirreth up her nest," &c. (Deut. xxxii. 11); "As one whom his mother comforteth" (Isa. lxvi. 13). The Lord alone did lead him, and now to a safe dwelling-place. "He led them to a city of habitation." They could not find such a place in the wilderness, but now a place is prepared for them, even here in God (Psa. lvi. and xc.; John xvii.; 1 Cor. iii. 23; John xv., "Abide in Me"). This is not only a safe, but a comfortable and happy abode. It is but a tent life here, as it is said "that they might go to a city of habitation." Like Peter, when we feel this on earth we are for stopping short; but the life of the believer is one of advance (Phil. iii. 12), and where this is not, something is wrong, and

needs looking into, for it is either the conduct of Solomon's sluggard, or guilt retained, or worldly surfeit. Which of the three is it? Now we come to

Verse 8, suited to the eighth and first day, the Sabbath, which is and ought to be praise, and when known and enjoyed it is so. Praise or the power to praise is waiting (Psalm lxxv.) because of the Lord's absence, or the want of the knowledge of Him. Where He is known and His rest—the Lord Jesus and the Sabbath—there will be praise. It is to leave off working: "Return unto thy rest, O my soul." It is not solitary praise. He would not render it alone, but with an enlarged heart. Now he desires both the glory of the Lord and the good of mankind, and so breaks forth, "Oh, that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!"

Verse 9: "For He satisfieth," &c. "I sat down under His shadow," &c. (Song ii. 3). Except a man dwell here and feed here (John vi.) he can never be satisfied, but here is full satisfaction. "Except ye abide" (John xv.), "Except ye eat" (chapter vi.), there is no spiritual feeding, therefore no enjoyment; for the new nature can never be satisfied with bread alone, nor with the best the world can give. There is, however, enough at Zion's gates for all her children, but they are such wanderers, and have such an appetite for sugared vanities, and such a yoke or muzzle upon the mouth of prayer, that they neglect wholesome food, and too often forget to ask for it. "Ask, and ye shall receive." Through the depravity inherited from Adam our propensity is to forsake our own mercies and observe lying vanities.

"The longing soul." What a blessed state! next best to satisfaction, for "blessed are ye who hunger." In due time (and there is an accepted time, a set time) ye shall be satisfied. Longing: "As the hart panteth," "As they that watch for the morning." Oh, that sense, that deep, deep sense of need, that aching void, this longing soul feels! No natural appetite is half so strong. It is a craving which all the world cannot satisfy—no, nor ten thousand worlds beside; for the little heart of man was made capable of enjoying the Infinite, and shall be united to Him in everlasting enjoyment of that full ocean of felicity. How can less than the Infinite satisfy? Poor foolish man, that heart of thine will ache, even if it has Solomon's portion of this world, if it enjoys not the Infinite. "Filleth with goodness." It was the overflowing of goodness that moved the Infinite to create vessels capable of receiving that supernatural overflow. Now that regeneration and restoration are brought about, and full union through the Mediator is enjoyed, the infinite fulness of God flows into the soul with an almost crushing weight, an unspeak-

able, indescribable weight of the glory of Goodness (1 Pet. i. 8). "Satisfieth, filleth;" true to the letter, yet awaiting expansion of the receptive power that more may be known and enjoyed. "Waiting for the adoption." "Then shall I be satisfied when I awake in Thy likeness."

(To be continued.)

ANECDOTE.

SOME few years back, a Dissenting minister was invited to preach in a licensed barn, several miles distant from any town. The preaching had continued for some months on a Lord's day evening, and many people from the adjacent villages attended. Two farmers, men that the world call respectable, agreed that they would come and disturb, or, as they might term it, have a little sport with these poor despised people that assembled to worship. One of them, an excellent player on the flute, was to come with the other into the barn, and, at a fixed time, to begin playing "God save the King," whilst a number of their labourers were to be arranged outside the door, to sing the national song. Accordingly, on the day appointed, the two farmers came and took their seats in the barn, and the men, who had procured a bench from the neighbouring public-house, were arranged outside; and, to encourage them in this laudable undertaking, they were plentifully supplied with beer. Some short time after the preacher had entered upon his discourse, the player on the flute not beginning, according to their previous engagement, the other pulled his coat, and whispered to him to begin; but God, who "worketh all things after the counsel of His own will," had discharged the arrow of conviction into his conscience, and he remained motionless, although repeatedly urged by his neighbour to commence playing. The labouring men came several times and looked into the barn, waiting for their leaders to begin the disturbance; but, as God had stopped the leader, they behaved peaceably. From this time the farmer became an earnest seeker of the Lord Jesus Christ, and was brought to a saving knowledge of Him, and to this day continues a follower of the despised Nazarene, while his companions remain in utter darkness.

He has often declared that such was the power of God and the deep impression of his own guilt, that, although he came fully determined to make a disturbance, he had not the least power to take his flute out of his pocket. Thus was fulfilled the Lord's word, "One shall be taken, and the other left."

Shall we ascribe the conversion of this poor sinner to God on account of any work done by him? Certainly not; but wholly

to the free, sovereign mercy of God in Christ Jesus. All His sheep shall hear His voice at the appointed time. Eternal life shall be freely bestowed upon them, they being predestinated to the same; and that eternal life given them in Christ Jesus before the world was shall be manifested by the quickening, life-giving operation of God the eternal Spirit; and, whenever the appointed time arrives to favour him, the "dead in trespasses and sins" shall hear the voice of the Son of God and live. "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith." Even so. Amen.—*The Remembrancer*.

FAITH AND WORKS.

IF we are saved and justified entirely by a righteousness imputed, to what purpose are those good works the Bible everywhere inculcates? I answer that, as robes and coronet do not constitute a peer, but are ensigns and appendages of his peerage (for the will of the sovereign is the grand efficient cause which elevates a commoner to noble rank), and, as the very patent of creation is only an authentic manifesto, not casual, but declarative, of the king's pleasure to make his subject a nobleman; just so, good works do not make us alive to God, nor justify us before Him, nor exalt us to the dignity and felicity of celestial peerage. They are but the robes, the coronet, and the manifesto, shining in our lives and conversations, and making evident to all around us that we are indeed and in truth chosen to salvation, justified through Christ, and renewed by the Holy Ghost.

"Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." Are we to infer from this that works cause us to live in the sight of God? No; it would sound very odd in your ears, and with very good reason, if I was to affirm that I am therefore alive because I have the honour of preaching before you this afternoon. No; my preaching does not make me alive. It only shows that I do live; since, if I did not live, I could neither move, nor speak, nor act. In like manner, holy works do not endue us with life; they only prove us to be spiritually alive, if the Spirit of God has enabled us, *from right principles, and to right ends*, thus to bring forth fruit to His honour and praise. The goodness of the fruit does not make, but discover and declare the goodness of the tree; since, if it were not good, it could not produce good fruit. The purity of the water does not make the fountain pure, but declares it to be so. A man or woman is what his manners declare him to be, as the tree is judged by the fruits. He is a just man that doth good; and there is no sap of life in the tree if no fruit appear in the branches.—*Toplady*.

GOD THE DELIVERER OF HIS PEOPLE.

DURING those moments of anxiety and peril when Israel stood on the shores of the Red Sea, uncertain how to act—when in front of them the billows roared, behind the Egyptian pursued them in frantic rage with horse and chariot, and on each side insurmountable rocks rose like walls, perpendicular to the very sky, rendering escape impossible—the Lord appeared to Moses, and said, “Wherefore criest thou unto Me? Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward.”

How astonished must the man of God have been at this call, and how much greater must their astonishment have been when the people also heard it! Neither crying nor sighing proceeded from the mouth of the prophet, but, on the contrary, firm and collected, he zealously engaged in comforting and encouraging Israel with earnest effort, forcibly holding out to them the promises with which the great God, who is the “Amen, blessed for ever,” had solemnly bound Himself to be their protection and their succour. “Fear ye not!” he exclaimed to the collected masses; “stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord which He will show you to-day; for the Egyptians whom ye have seen this day ye shall see them again no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.” And, while he thus spake to the multitude, himself apparently so strong, so heroic, and so blessed in his God, the word came from the Lord, “Moses, wherefore criest thou unto Me?” Moses alone was capable of comprehending the divine call; and he did comprehend it. It is true no cries had escaped his mouth, but his heart cried the louder; and, though outwardly he was energetic, courageous, and intrepid, like a young hero for the people’s sake, that they might not despair, but, alas! how different was the man of God within! There was storm and danger, perplexity and great fear. His faith struggled in hot conflict with the waves of the sea which impetuously broke in upon him, threatening to overwhelm and bury him in their gulfs. Though the promises of his God seemed like a rock beneath his feet, and a sceptre in his right hand, they fell, alas! into his soul like beams of the moon into the greatly agitated mirror of an ocean broken and unsettled, without any fixed shape. The Lord, indeed, saw how Moses felt, and, ere Moses had found time or space to complain to his God, and to address Him with, “I believe; O Lord, help Thou mine unbelief!” the Lord was, with a Father’s care, about to appease the storm in his heart, and it was appeased by the call, “Wherefore criest thou unto Me? Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward.”

We have a God, my beloved, who is perfectly at home in the

depths of our heart. His eyes, with illuminating power, constantly traverse the chambers of our souls, and penetrate into the most secret recesses of our being. Even before we have ourselves discovered and complained of our distresses and misery to Him, He is already preparing our help and rescue. He looks upon our misery as if it were a prayer, and hearkens—not unto us; no, but unto our misery; for what His children stand in need of, what is useful and necessary to them, is strictly known to Him at all times, and far better known to Him than it is to themselves; and truly He never guides them otherwise than they themselves would implore to be guided by Him, were they able to appreciate their own hearts and wants as He does. But we know in a very few cases only what is beneficial to us, and therefore are the ways which the Lord leads us, for the most part, mysterious and obscure, from the very reason because the “why” and “wherefore” are hidden from us. Yet, however hard and cruel, and however purposeless our guidances may appear to us at times, still they are, in reality, nothing less than evident answers, if not to our immediate prayer, at least to our distress and to our yet unperceived wants. They are all in all the ways of mercy, and their design is purely salvation and blessing.

“Moses, wherefore criest thou unto Me? Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward.” Thus saith the Lord. What a charge! “Lord, seest Thou not the sea at our feet, and how fiercely the breakers roar?” “They shall go forward.” “Lord, can our feet traverse waves also, and pass over whirlpools?” “They shall go forward.” “Lord, Lord, where then is the bridge Thou hast constructed; or where are the boats? Willest Thou, O Lord, that Thy people shall perish in the raging elements, and Mizraim blaspheme Thy name?” “Speak to them that they go forward,” says the Almighty; but, as yet, He does not touch a single wave to curb or rebuke it; He does not as yet uncover the bottom of the sea, but lets the waters roar over it at will, and, pointing to the wild commotion, He exclaims, “Go forward! Go forward!” They shall venture upon His word. They shall believe before they see and proceed in security. They venture it, and, behold, at the very moment when they prepare to go forward in the name of their God, the billows, stricken by the staff of the prophet, divide and separate, heaping themselves on both sides like walls, leaving a dry passage in the midst, and Israel, shouting with joy, marches over.

This is the way of our loving God. We have to venture upon His word; and truly there is no risk in ought we venture in His name. Everything shall have a glorious end.

KRUMMACHER.

JOY IN DYING:

DR. T. C. HENRY, of Charleston, America, was cut off in the midst of his usefulness and happiness, leaving behind him an ardently attached partner and three children. But, while they were overwhelmed in sorrow, he proved the mighty power of religion in the trying period of death. The following expressions, among many others, tend to show the state of his mind.

When he had given his directions in reference to his temporal affairs, he requested his friends to leave the room, that he might say a few words to his beloved wife. He afterwards called for his children, addressed some affectionate words to them, and gave them a parting kiss. He soon after remarked: "I shall soon know more of eternity than I now do. Eternity! there is my exalted glorious home! Oh, how vain, how trifling, how little, does everything appear in the light of a nearing eternity!"

When asked, "Are you ready to go?" he replied, "I am rejoicing under a merciful Redeemer. If He call me away, I am safe. I like to have Mary's dependence." "You have chosen the good part?" "Oh, I have no hope or wish on earth!" "But you have above?" "Yes; sweet, sweet! I have not the shadow of a doubt of fear upon my mind; I have not a wish, desire, hope, or thought on earth; they are all above—nothing can turn my thoughts."

Between nine and ten o'clock at night, Dr. Palmer said to him, "My dear brother, do you know me?" He replied, with great emphasis, "Yes, my dear friend, Dr. Palmer." "Are your prospects still bright?" "The same; no change, no change." "Has death lost its sting?" "There is a kind of mild, meek, sweet, departing, going down of my soul. • I am His, and He is mine." His friend added, "What can I want beside?" He answered, "Nothing; having loved me, He will love me to the end." Some little time after, he exclaimed, "Oh, glorious expectation! glorious expectation!" and then repeated—

"Angels will hover round my bed,
And waft my spirit home—my spirit home."

Thus did this godly and useful minister depart hence, on October 5th, 1827, aged thirty-seven years.

Reader, how are you likely to die? How do you live?

HE who trusts in his own strength will surely fall, but he who believes will see the glory of God. The Angel of the covenant dislocated Jacob's thigh, but not his arms, by which he clung round his neck.—*Krummacher*.

THE RICH MAN A PAUPER.

A FRIEND of mine in America went to see Jacob Strong, the great farmer, during the war, to try to get some money for the poor soldiers. After dinner my friend was taken by him up to the cupola on the top of his house, and he said to him—

“Reynolds, look over yonder, as far as your eye can reach. There is no finer land in the Mississippi valley than that land; and that is all mine. I came out West a poor boy, and I have earned all this property by my own energy and effort.”

Then he took him to another view from the cupola, and pointed out farms and pastures for thirty miles around, with large herds of cattle and sheep grazing, and he said—

“These are all mine.”

And then he took him to another view, and showed him farm after farm, all stocked and improved, and he said—

“Those farms are all mine.”

And then he took him to another view, and showed a town where he lived. There was a great hall named after him; there were great blocks of buildings, and there were shops; and he said—

“These are all mine.”

Then my friend said, “Well, what have you got up there?”

And the man's countenance fell; he knew what my friend meant, but he said, “Where?”

My friend said, “What have you got in heaven?”

He replied, “I have got nothing there.”

My friend exclaimed, “You have spent all your time and energy in accumulating this wealth, but you will die a beggar, and enter eternity a pauper.”

Four months from that time Jacob Strong died as he had lived. He had lived without Christ, and he died without Him. What an illustration of the Redeemer's words, “What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?”

LETTERS FOR THE YOUNG.—No. XXII.

COPY OF A LETTER FROM THE LATE W. HUNTINGTON TO MISS ELIZA MARCHANT (AFTERWARDS MRS. MOON), AT MRS. ALLFRIE'S SCHOOL, AT HURSTMONCEAUX.

W. H. TO HIS LITTLE PATIENT.

MY LITTLE DEAR,—Your mother informed me when at Boincy that you were appointed to come and see your old companion, *Loes*, at Christmas next, and to spend her days of vacation with me, which I shall be very glad of, as I much wish to see thee,

hoping to see some improvements from her diligence at school; and, likewise, I shall require whether she "remembers her Creator in these days of her youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh when she shall say that childhood and youth are vanity, and I have no pleasure in them." I have great expectations from my little Betsy, and that she will be like the *little captive girl* (2 Kings v.) who waited on Naaman's wife. This little maid loved her master and her mistress, and sought their good. She loved Elisha, the Lord's servant, and she believed in the power and goodness of the Lord, and said to her mistress, "Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy;" and all that this little captive girl said came to pass. Read the whole chapter. Thus you see how God loves these little ones that think upon Him, love His name, and who are afraid to offend Him. Though she was a captive taken in war, and carried away from all her friends into exile, yet God provided for her. Naaman was a great man, next the king; his wife a great woman—perhaps a lady of honour at court—and this little maid became a lady in waiting; yea, more, the Lord made her a little prophetess. All that she said came to pass; and how much must her lord, Naaman, love her after this, when he got the cure of his leprosy!

There is a little bird, my dear Betsy, that you may carry about with you. It lives in your heart as in a cage, and God has put it there to tell us when we do wrong. People that are grown up, and who are learned, call it *conscience*; but the name of it in little children is MONITOR. This bird will make you blush, colour up, and stutter, and take shame when you do wrong—yea, sometimes it will not let you sleep in the night. But the countenance of little girls always looks pleasant, cheerful, fresh, and handsome, when this little bird of paradise is attended to, regarded, and obeyed. Much inward peace, sweet sleep, and happy days of tranquillity are obtained this way; but, if bad deeds are done, this bird will mourn, but make no melody; and if bad words be spoken, then God says, "This bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter" (Eccles. x. 20).

Adieu, little dear. Tender my love to Miss Hooper, and tell her that I may, before long, send a little epistle to her. Farewell

Your loving friend and kind instructor,

W. HUNTINGTON.

As the stars do not make heaven, but only decorate and adorn it, even so works do not merit heaven, but adorn and decorate the faith which justifieth.—*Luther*.

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THE SOWER.

A SERMON PREACHED BY MR. HULL,
ON JULY 3RD, 1881.

"Christ died for the ungodly."—ROMANS V. 8.

THIS is a short sentence, but of mighty import. The words are few, but they overflow with wisdom, grace, and love. They are soon read, but they never can be fathomed. They are far beyond the line of human reason, and they far exceed the stretch of human knowledge and creature understanding. In these few words we have God's great mystery, the mystery of grace and of Christ. How little many that read them and hear them think that herein lie couched the infinite wisdom of God, the untold depths of His grace, and the evidence of His secret, everlasting, and unchanging love to His own Zion! "Great is the mystery of godliness;" "Christ," being God manifest in the flesh, "died for the ungodly." To me this appears the very centre of Bible truth and of the economy of grace. Every part of the Word of God, of the covenant; and of the Gospel point to this one truth, "Christ died for the ungodly." "If this foundation be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" Ah! and what would the ungodly do? for all the righteous are by nature ungodly, and they are made to feel themselves to be so. But not all the ungodly are righteous. There is not a righteous soul upon this earth but is plagued with ungodliness; but there are many ungodly sinners who know nothing of Christ's righteousness. God's people know something both of the mystery of sin and of the mystery of godliness; but the world is dead in sin, and dead to God. Solemn thought! Oh, sinner, there is no heaven for you unless you are brought to repent of sin and believe in Christ, who "died for the ungodly."

But many here present this morning are, I feel sure, interested in the subject of the text; and we may divide them into two classes, and try to show how suitable this blessed truth is to the case of each. First, there are those who are anxious to know their interest in the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ; and, second, there are those here who have felt the virtue and efficacy of it, and who are still proving this to be the foundation of their hope and the substance of their faith, "Christ died for the ungodly."

First, then, let us look at the encouragement there is in these words for those who are convinced of their sin, and anxious to realize the atonement of Christ. They have been made to feel

the ruin sin has wrought, and the awful distance at which it has placed them from God. Yet all such as are thus brought to feel that they are alienated from God will be inquiring after Him. "What!" say you; "will those that are alienated from God be inquiring after that God from whom they are alienated?" Yes; because, notwithstanding all their fears, He has put something in their hearts that hungers and thirsts after Him; something that pants to know Him, and that longs to get near Him. He has put a new principle in their hearts that fears to be wrong, and desires to be right with God, and the soul that has this new principle says, "How can man be just with God?" Oh, friends, what an important question! How can a holy God look with favour upon an unholy sinner? If the heavens are not clean in His sight, and He charged His angels with folly, how, then, can I, who am all unholiness, stand before this holy God? I am vile and full of sin, a hell-deserving sinner. How can I be just with God? How can I dare to venture near His throne or approach His mercy-seat? How can I hope to find favour in His eyes? Well, friends, God teaches every one of His people this lesson of their vileness in order that they may look away from themselves for justifying righteousness; and He makes them so sick of sin that they tremble at the sight of it, and are only too glad to look away from themselves, as God the Holy Ghost pours the light of the Gospel into their souls. Every one thus instructed wants to know if there are any means by which God and the sinner can come together—if there is any spot on which they can meet, and reconciliation be effected. Well, if there is such a poor sinner here, let me say that to find this desired haven you will have to look to the Lord our Righteousness, to Jesus, who is the centre of the Gospel, the centre of the whole economy of grace. The secret of justification is in Christ; He is the Daysman set up for this very purpose to lay His hand upon both, and so make peace; as it is said, "This Man shall be the peace," and peace is never to be found elsewhere. This is God's appointed way. "What!" says the poor soul, "can the holy Son of God be my peace?" Yes, "Christ died for the ungodly." "But," says the sinner, "how can I hope that the holy Son of God will be the Daysman betwixt me and God? How can I hope that I shall find favour in His eyes, seeing I am a stranger?" Why, our text blessedly explains the secret: "Christ died for the ungodly."

If the subject of this text were taken out of the Bible I should have no Gospel, no glad tidings to preach to you; but here the grand secret is plainly declared and blessedly opened up—"Christ died for the ungodly." There is no way open to me or you as a way to God but in, through, and by Christ.

But in Christ we can speak of Him as "a just God and a Saviour." Here judgment and mercy meet together; here righteousness and peace have kissed each other; and here God and man are reconciled. Thus all inquiring souls are, sooner or later, led to this truth, "Christ died for the ungodly." Yes, the Holy Ghost always leads seeking souls here. He first teaches them out of the law, but it is to give them rest from the days of adversity; and I will tell you how you will have to come—

"A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On Thy kind arms I fall;
Be Thou my strength and righteousness,
My Jesus, and my all."

Will that do for you? "No!" says the poor sinner, "but will He take me in His kind arms?" I answer, "Christ died for the ungodly." "Ah! but when He died, did He think of a wretch like me?" "Christ died for the ungodly." "Well, but had He such a case as mine?" "Christ died for the ungodly." But some one may say, "You do not know what an ungodly sinner I am." I think I do. Paul said that he was the chief of sinners, and I feel to be the same. But I will suppose you are the blackest of sinners, and that your case is the most hopeless of all cases. "Oh," says the sinner, "you are about right there." Well, if the Lord Jesus Christ were to fail in your case, He would fail in all, because we are all alike here. Your case is your own. But mine is the worst to me. I have not your heart, and you have not mine. You have your peculiar sins and infirmities, and I have mine: "The heart knoweth his own bitterness."

There are a number of people in this chapel this morning who, if I were to ask them, would each say that theirs is the worst case. They would all be the vilest of sinners. All taught of God are brought to this one seat, the chief of sinners. They every one come to the dust and dunghill in themselves, and they all sit down in the ashes, and cry out, "Unclean, unclean!" Now, these are they whose case is met in this blessed truth, "Christ died for the ungodly."

When Christ Jesus came from heaven, how was He welcomed, as He left His radiant throne on high to tabernacle here below? Why, we find, in the first place, that there was no room for Him in the inn. Mr. Hart says—

"The crowded inn, like sinners' hearts
(Oh, ignorance extreme!)
For other guests of various sorts
Had room, but none for Him."

He was born in a stable, and cradled in a manger. Such was the

beginning of His life here below. Oh, what an advent ! What a reception for the Son of God ! The heavenly host proclaimed His advent, saying, "On earth peace, good-will toward men." But did the multitude receive Him so ? Oh, no ! They would not believe Him ; they would not believe that He was the promised Messiah. They crucified Him as an impostor, and said, "His blood be on us and on our children," and they had their request. They knew Him not, for "had they known Him, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."

When He came upon this earth, He came among those who, even at the commencement of His ministry, desired to take His life ; for when He declared to them the truth of God's sovereignty, they rose up and thrust Him out of the city of Nazareth, and led Him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast Him down headlong. But He, passing through the midst of them, went His way. John says, "He came unto His own, but His own received Him not ;" that is, He came unto the Jewish nation, and nationally they rejected Him, for they crucified the Lord of glory. But there were a few among the Jews who did receive Him. "Oh," say some, "if we had been there we would not have been among those who crucified the Lord." Why, there are many now who profess to love the Lord, that hate His truth, condemn His justice, and think it inconsistent of God, as the God of love, to take eternal vengeance upon impenitent sinners. Well, God gave us an evidence that He will by no means clear the guilty, when He punished the sins of His people in the Person of His dear and well-beloved Son ; for, if Christ had not died, every soul must have suffered the curse. The only way of delivering the ungodly was by the Lord Jesus Christ assuming our nature and becoming the Redeemer ; therefore He came in the flesh, "was made of a woman, made under the law to redeem them that were under the law." So it is said, "He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." Thus God Himself provided the way by which He could, honourably to Himself, justify the ungodly. Oh, what a blessed mystery this is ! "Christ died for the ungodly" that the ungodly might be justified. He took the place of rebels, that rebels might be delivered from going down to the pit ; He stood in the breach, and made up the gap, that sinners might be reconciled unto God. Our iniquities were made to meet upon Him, and He died the accursed death, in order that death might be swallowed up in victory ; and so it is said, "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 unto God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord

Jesus Christ." Thus "Christ died for the ungodly." No man "can by any means redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him," neither can he recommend himself unto the favour of God; for "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." All were by nature aliens and strangers, "having no hope, and without God in the world." "Children of wrath," says the Apostle, "even as others." But the Son of God came to those who were in these very circumstances. He took up the case of His own people, became their Representative and their Surety unto God, and He "made peace by the blood of His cross." That blood was not shed for Himself. No; He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners," but it was shed that His people might be redeemed—redeemed from sin, redeemed from under the law, redeemed from the curse of God, redeemed from hell, and brought nigh to God. All this was done by the precious blood of Christ, which was shed on Calvary's tree. How suitable, then, is this blessed Gospel, which declares the Lord Jesus Christ to be the Friend of the ungodly, who, as the Surety of the covenant, made atonement for their sin, that they might be called "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ"!

Some people would say this is not going high enough in doctrine. God's people were all chosen in Christ from eternity; they were all heirs of God and joint-heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ before Christ died. Yes, the covenant of grace was made before the foundation of the world was laid, and *Christ was in* that covenant. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost were all parties to it, and God's people were all chosen therein and united to Christ. But in that covenant it was also ordained that we should be redeemed from sin by the death of the Lord Jesus, so that there was no covenant of grace instituted apart from Christ and His death. Yea, all grace benefits flow to us through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, with respect to the whole economy of grace, we find that He has the pre-eminence over all things; He was set up from everlasting; as it is said; "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the sceptre of Thy kingdom is a right sceptre." It is an everlasting kingdom, an everlasting righteousness, an everlasting salvation, and an everlasting Gospel, because the subject of it is God's everlasting love and grace. "Christ died for the ungodly." What would all that is said of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Bible be apart from His death? Nothing to you and me; since, without it, God could bestow nothing of mercy, nothing of grace, nothing of love upon the ungodly. Sin would have prevented our knowing God in any other way than as a consuming fire. Thus all the covenant of grace, all the purposes

of the infinite wisdom of Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, point to this one fact, the death of Christ. It was the centre of all God's pre-ordination ; He made everything in our salvation to hinge upon the atonement of Christ. What a momentous subject, then, is this to poor sensible sinners—the most momentous in the Bible ! What shall we say, then, of those who try to explain away the atonement of Christ ? Why, they are thieves and robbers—ah ! and the worst of robbers, too, for they would rob God of His glory, Christ of His kingdom, the Church of the atonement, and of every spiritual benefit arising therefrom.

Some think that, because people are sincere, they will be sure to go to heaven ; but they may be sincere, and yet be very far from Christ and from the truth. They may be sincere in their lives and in their conduct ; but, friends, it is not the mere stamp of sincerity that will do us any good, but the stamp of God's approval. Oh, sinner, if you are satisfied with anything short of God's approval, you are wrong. But if God gives you His approval, you will have that which the world can neither give nor take away, and you will rejoice, not in your own works, but in Christ, who "died for the ungodly."

But, in the second place, there are those who can bless God that they are saved from the delusions of Satan by an experience of redemption, and all such are "kept by the power of God," and find comfort in this truth, "Christ died for the ungodly." They are not left in the devil's snares ; no, for they are "sanctified by God the Father, preserved in Jesus Christ, and called ;" and Paul says of these, "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord : because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." No matter what devoted servants they have been in the devil's kingdom, they are so no longer ; for when God calls such, He breaks up their allegiance, dislocates their heart, putting it out of place with respect to Satan's service, and sets it on the Lord Jesus Christ. And He not only separates the heart from the service of Satan, He also dislocates it as to the world, that He may set it "on things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God." I trust some of us can heartily unite with one of our poets when he says—

"Join thou, my soul, for thou canst tell
How grace divine broke up thy cell
And loosed thy native chains ;
And still from that auspicious day,
How oft art thou constrained to say
That grace triumphant reigns !"

But we could not have sung this had not "Christ died for the ungodly." Oh, blessed river of grace! It rises above sin, above Satan, and overflows every heart that is the subject of it.

If you have had a glimpse of Christ crucified, and have realized His love and favour, God has taught you the best of secrets, "faith in the bleeding Lamb." It is by faith you feel your sinnership; and it is by "faith in the bleeding Lamb" that you are enabled to look to God as your Father and your Friend. So Paul says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." Oh, friends, beware of those that would rob you of the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ! There are some who appear to come very near the truth, but yet are not of the truth; and these characters are the most to be dreaded of all professors. I am at a point here, feeling sure that, if you and I enjoy anything of the mercy of God, we shall find it comes through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ; and if you and I get to heaven we shall sing this song there: "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." Like as the sun is the centre of our solar system, so in grace the Lord Jesus Christ is the Sun of Righteousness, round which ten thousand—ah! ten thousand times ten thousand—stars in His kingdom all revolve, and not one falls from its place. They all pursue their course, all are under His divine control, and His divine power and wisdom are seen in the ordering of all their ways, both in providence and grace, from the beginning to the end. Take away the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Church is thrown into utter confusion. There is no beginning, there is no foundation, there is no hope, there is no abiding. The Church of God would only be left in a state of ruin, of condemnation and eternal death. Oh, the deep mystery of grace! Oh, the exceeding riches of that grace! "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" (Rom. xi. 33.)

Oh, poor child of God, although feeling ungodly in thyself, thy faith and thy hope centre in the Son of God, the Friend of sinners! He that "died for the ungodly" loved us when in our undone state, pitied us when in our blood, and cast His mantle of covenant love over us, and said, "Live." He loved us then. He loved us when in the grave of our natural corruption, when our eyes were blinded by Satan and our feet were posting the way to death; and He manifested His love to us by inter-

cepting us in our way to hell, and by opening up to us the way to heaven ; yea—

“ He changed our heart, renewed our will,
And turned our feet to Zion's hill.”

Thus we can look back and see the truth of the Apostle's words,
“ But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

“ Loved when a wretch defiled with sin ;
At war with heaven, in league with hell ;
A slave to every lust obscene,
Who, living, lived but to rebel.”

Paul says, “ Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief ;” so it was with Mary Magdalene, and the dying thief ; and so it was with me, and with some of you. Oh, friends, we may well sing—

“ Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wandering from the fold of God ;
He, to save my soul from danger,
Interposed His precious blood.

“ Oh, to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be !
Let that grace, Lord, like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to Thee.”

Oh, what wondrous love is the bleeding, dying love of Christ ! “ He was made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” He not only came from heaven to suffer, bleed, and die, but He rose again and “ ascended up on high, to receive gifts for men ; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.” Oh, how ardently we at times desire that this great love may be made known to the seeking ones of whom I have been previously speaking—the lambs of Christ's fold, the “ weaklings in faith,” as Mr. Hart calls them ! “ Ah !” says one of these little ones, “ I wish I was one of the sheep ! I wish I had been brought as near the cross of Christ, and had tasted as much of His love and mercy, as they have. What a blessed portion this would be !” Well, but those whose case you envy are the ungodly ; they feel themselves to be so, although they have been washed and made clean in the blood of the Lamb. These have often mourned over a wicked heart, a carnal nature, and have cried out again and again, “ Oh, wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord ;” so that if you take away this truth, “ Christ died for the

ungodly," we should all sink to ruin. There would be no Gospel, no good news, that would or could suit our case.

Many years have passed over some of us since the Lord taught us that we were ruined and undone sinners, without help and without hope in ourselves ; and it has been many years since the Lord first led us to Calvary, from whence flowed the rich balm that healed all our wounds, revived our souls, and allayed all our fears. This took place many years ago in my case, but I find that the old wound breaks out again. I thought and hoped that it would be quite healed, but I find the old venom of sin has gone to the very bottom, and it still rankles there. Oh, the depth of the malady of sin !

Well, friends, when Christ heals our souls, we are sometimes apt to think more of the healing than of the Healer ; but this will not do. We love the healing, and for a time how we praise the Healer for the grace and peace thus brought to our souls ; and while we have walked in the enjoyment of His love, we have said, "What happy souls are we ! Who is favoured like unto us ? Oh, there are none that have such cause for singing praise unto God as we have ;" and then, perhaps, our hearts have grown proud and cold, and communion has declined until a sudden pain has seized the heart. The old sore of sin has manifested itself again, and we have been in such trouble about it, because we could not understand our case. "Why," says the soul, "I thought the Lord had taken away this pain, had healed this sore ; but here it is, and it seems worse than ever." "Ah !" says the old enemy, "you thought you were all right for heaven ; you thought you knew the secret of the peace and love of God in the heart. Now it is like water spilt upon the ground. You are out of the secret after all ; for if the Lord Jesus Christ had made you clean, if you had had His blood applied to your conscience, as you hoped you had, you would never have been in such a state as this. You are not right after all." Have not these insinuations sometimes dashed your hope to the ground ? But they have made you cry again for mercy, and you have again been glad to find that "Christ died for the ungodly."

These are some of the paths the old sheep have to walk in ; and you young lambs that think, if you could but feel the blood of sprinkling, and have the love of God shed abroad in your heart, you should then go singing all the way to heaven, you will find the truth of that word, "It is through *much* tribulation we must enter the kingdom."

I do not wish to dash your hope, for I desire that you may have a revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ in your heart ; because if you have a revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ to your faith, all will be right, and you will live with Him for ever.

"Well," some may be ready to ask, "if the soul is right with God, what can possibly give it trouble?" Why, I want to know and feel the love of Christ, and when He draws near to my heart I do know and feel it. "Well," say some people, "but you have the Bible." Oh, yes, I have the Bible, and the text I have now read is in the Bible: "Christ died for the ungodly;" and the Bible also says that the Lord Jesus Christ has for ever redeemed all His people. Do we, then, want more than the Bible says? Well, the Lord Jesus Christ is in the Bible, and in heaven; still that is not enough for those to know who want Him in the heart. But, if the Lord Jesus Christ is in the Bible, in heaven, and in my heart too, then I have a three-fold cord which cannot be broken.

The fact of the Lord Jesus being in heaven will not take me there unless I am united to Him. Oh, sinner, He may be in the Bible, and in heaven, but He may not be in thy heart. Here is the point: what is He to me and to thee? Those souls who have felt the virtue of His death want to prove Him again and again, as Hart says, speaking of the fountain—

"But if guilt removed return and remain,
Its power may be proved again and again."

This is how the Lord heals us afresh, when we are plagued with sin, and when guilt afflicts and bears us down; and when the enemy disputes our evidences, and tells us we are not interested in the redeeming work and blood of the Lamb of God—

"Jesus appears, disproves the lie,
And kindly makes it o'er again."

The blessed Comforter also takes us to the cross, and shows us the pierced hands and feet of Him who "died for the ungodly;" and then we can say, with the poet—

"Here it is I find my heaven,
While upon the Lamb I gaze;
Love I much, I've much forgiven;
I'm a miracle of grace."

Oh, friends, here is the mercy of mercies: "Christ died for the ungodly," blessed be His name. This is the centre of the whole revelation of the Gospel of grace, and the only point of rest for every poor sin-plagued and afflicted heart. Oh, that we may be favoured to know and love Him more, and He shall bear the glory!

PANTING FOR THE LIVING GOD.

ALL right teaching comes from above, and leads the soul to God, the effects of which we see in the Psalmist, who says, "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?" How striking is the expression, "for God, the living God"! He wishes no one to be mistaken about what God he wanted. He knew there were many gods which the nations around worshipped, and Israel at times followed after strange gods—gods that could not deliver them. What a truthful description of them in Psalm cxv.! But David wanted the living God, and as earnestly as the hart pants for the water-brooks when pursued by the hunter, and the dogs close upon it. I believe I have heard that if the hart can get to the water it is safe; so then it is a life and death matter with the hart, a time of trouble. If it does not reach the water the dogs will have it, and death must follow. How striking the figure! "My soul pants for God, the living God." David had the grace of God in his heart; he knew God as a God hearing and answering prayer, a Refuge in time of trouble. He had been to the house of God with the voice of joy and praise. He had known what it was to be brought up out of the horrible pit and miry clay; to have his feet set upon the rock, and his goings established; a new song put into his mouth, even praise unto God. But now it is a time of trial. It may be that God hid from him the light of His countenance, and he walked in darkness, or else, as I think most likely the case, he was sore beset with outward trials, and the Lord appeared not to regard him as formerly, and his enemies, seeing the strait he is in, mock at him, saying, "Where is now thy God, this living God that you think so much of? If He can deliver you, why does He not, seeing you delight in Him?" All this was enough to make him thirst and pant for the living God. Do we thus thirst and pant for the living God? If we do, the love of God must be in our soul, for the dead cannot thirst and pant—"The dead know not anything." It is the living soul that is born to know its lost state by nature, and how it justly deserves to be for ever banished from the presence of God to the place "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched," that will pant for God; indeed, it is with it, as with the poor hart, a life and death matter.

A sinner born again by the Spirit of God is also taught to read and search the Word of God for direction about salvation. The Lord puts great honour upon His written Word. Peter calls it "the more sure word of prophecy; whereunto we do well to take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place." Seeking is panting, and the promise is, "They that seek shall find." Hungering and thirsting is panting, and the promise is, such "shall be filled."

S.

THE VALUE OF CHRIST'S BLOOD.

It is but little, while on earth, that we know of the value of the precious blood of Jesus Christ, but each fresh discovery of our need of it, and the sweetness of feeling it applied, makes it increasingly dear and precious to every sensible sinner. It is indeed rich, rich blood, and its real value and preciousness can never be told. It is precious and dear to God, as well as to the sinner. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son" to live and die for them—to shed His blood for sinners. This was love indeed; and we may well exclaim, in adoring gratitude—

"Great God the Father, we adore
The love that made Thee part
With Jesus Christ, Thine only Son,
The Darling of Thy heart."

From this amazing act of love we may conceive, in some measure, how dear God's people are to Him.

The love of God the Son was no less, in that He willingly gave Himself for His people: It was voluntary love, for He says, "No man taketh it [His life] from Me."

"Great God the Son, we would adore
The love that made Thee die;
That made Thee give Thy own heart's blood
For sinners vile as I."

And then the love of God the Holy Ghost is equally precious, in that He makes us feel our need of this sin-cleansing blood—

"Great God the Spirit, we adore
The love that makes Thee show
Sinners their need of Jesus' blood,
And then that blood bestow."

This precious blood reconciles an unholy sinner to a holy God (Col. i. 20; 2 Cor. v. 18). The barrier between God and the sinner must ever have remained, had it not been for this. God's people are spoken of as a purchased people (1 Peter ii. 9, *margin*), and they are purchased with the blood of Jesus (Acts xx. 28); and if we value an article by what it costs, how great a value has the Lord put upon His people, since He thought the cost—His own blood—not too much to give for them! Precious, adorable Saviour, would that our hearts could love Thee more for Thy condescending and amazing love!

We are also redeemed by the blood of Jesus (1 Peter i. 19); and what are we redeemed from? Eternal misery. "Thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell." This, as sinners out of

Christ, is our just desert, but thanks, eternal thanks, be unto God for His precious blood, whereby we are saved from so awful a condition ; but, while here, we can never know what we are *really* saved from—the depth of misery and woe—or what we are saved to know and enjoy.

Again, this precious blood purges our consciences from dead works (Heb. ix. 14), and by it we obtain forgiveness of sins (Eph. i. 7), and remission (Matt. xxvi. 28). It is also cleansing blood (1 John i. 7) ; it “cleanseth us from *all* sin” every day and every hour.

In a little book, entitled, “Companion to the Revised Version,” the author says, in reference to John xiii. 13, “He that is bathed, needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit” (Revised Version),* that, as a person just bathed would only need to wash his feet, from the defilement he had contracted since leaving the bath, so the believer in Christ, who was cleansed from his guilt by faith, only needed to be washed, day by day, from the fresh guilt contracted while passing through the world. This seems quite to agree with other parts of the sacred Word, and would imply that Christ's precious blood is of that divine and cleansing nature that, when once washed in it, those sins never appear before God again. In Isaiah xliii. 25, we read that God blots out our transgressions, and will not remember our sins—those sins that have been washed away in the blood of Jesus Christ ; and again, in Jeremiah xxxi. 34, and l. 20, we read that, when “the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, there shall be none ; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found ;” for when the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ has been applied, it completely hides them from view, and we feel the truth of Psalm xxxii. 1.

It is, indeed, a happy and never to be forgotten time with every child of God, when he has long been mourning over his felt sins and corruptions—the sins of his whole life, and the sins of his nature—to have the blood of Jesus Christ applied, and to realize, by faith, the sweetness and substance of the words (if not the *very* words themselves), “Thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven ;” and, if forgiven then, forgiven for ever. God has cast them behind His back, and, if sought for, they shall not be found. But so far from such an one not needing the blood of Christ, he will feel to need it more than ever. He will discover sin to be sin where, perhaps, before he passed it over. He will need constant washing, and feel, at times, most thankful that the fountain for sin and uncleanness is ever open. His feet, or daily

* We give this in the same way as we mention a marginal reading, not as approving the New Version as a whole.

walk, will need continually the blood to wash them ; and, too, he will feel the need of *inward* washing. His every-day thoughts and desires will not be pure in his sight, but will need the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ, for Jesus said to Peter, " If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me ;" and surely it is to be feared that one who professes to be pardoned from all his sins, and yet never after feels sin to be a burden, or the need of *daily* washing, has no part with a sin-hating God, or, at least, gives but little evidence of it ; but, on the other hand, " he that is bathed, needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." Past sins, passing through the Saviour's blood, are forgiven and forgotten by God, and we read that, " if we confess our sins " (our present every-day sins), " He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins," for " the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth " (not only hath cleansed) " us from all sin."

" Lord, sprinkle all our consciences
Each day—nay, every hour—
With this sin-cleansing precious blood,
This blood of saving power."

We have also liberty or boldness to come before God through the blood of Jesus (Heb. x. 9). Yes, a vile, polluted sinner, sprinkled with the blood of Jesus, may actually come boldly to the throne of grace, to the exalted Majesty of heaven, and speak out all his mind, laying his desires, infirmities, and wants before the Lord, and then believe he will be heard and answered, so far as for his good. Surely we ought more and more to love and value this precious blood, which obtains for us so great a privilege, bringing vile sinners nigh unto the mighty God (Eph. ii. 13), and justifying them in His sight (Rom. v. 9).

Oh, what inestimable blessings are procured to the people of God through the blood of Jesus ! Every drop of His blood is valuable. But, though we receive so much through this blood, we would never forget what it cost our dear Lord and Saviour when He gave Himself for our sins. May the Holy Spirit often lead us by faith to the sacred garden of Gethsemane and to the cross at Calvary ; for, " though grief may o'er us steal " while contemplating the scenes once witnessed there, yet we would hold those places most dear, and often desire to creep to the foot of the cross, and feel the cleansing efficacy of the Saviour's blood. Oh, precious, precious blood ! It is indeed dear, exceedingly dear, to every feelingly polluted sinner ; and the remembrance from whence it flowed, and the agony of the dying Sufferer, all tend to make it increasingly valuable. But is not the thought very comforting, and does it not, at times, cause heartfelt gratitude to God, that our great High Priest has not, like those gone before,

to offer Himself often? (Heb. ix. 25) for then must He often have suffered; but, being the true and mighty God, His one offering of Himself for ever put away sin, so that He is now exempt from all Personal suffering; for, though "He feels each tempted member's pains," yet we would rejoice that His own dear sacred Person is no longer on earth, subject to all the ignominy and scorn of sinful men, or to the many privations He once endured, when a "Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief," but is now exalted at the right hand of God in heaven, where every tongue confesses He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

"Lord, make us value more and more,
This precious, precious blood,
Which thoroughly cleanses from all sin,
Because the blood of God!"

A READER.

"THE SECRET PLACE OF THE MOST HIGH."

(PSALM xci.)

[The following excellent hymn was found some years since in the Parish Church hymn-book, Islington, and was inserted by the late Mr. Abrahams in his Appendix to Hart's Hymns.]

THERE is a safe and secret place,
Beneath the wings divine,
Reserved for all the heirs of grace;
Oh, be that refuge mine!

The feeblest saint may there abide
Uninjured and unawed;
While thousands fall on every side,
He rests secure in God.

The angels watch him on his way,
And aid with friendly arm;
And Satan, roaring for his prey,
May hate, but cannot harm.

He feeds in pastures, large and fair,
Of love and truth divine;
Oh, child of God! oh, glory's heir!
How rich a lot is thine!

A hand almighty to defend,
An ear for every call;
An honoured life, a peaceful end,
And heaven to crown it all!

—Author Unknown.

A LITTLE regard for others' burdens often tends to lighten our own.

MEMOIR OF THE LATE MR. ROBERT COLLINS, OF
BATH.

How sovereignly the Lord works among the fallen sons and daughters of Adam! Whole families, from generation to generation, may seem to pass away without any being called by grace; while in others, grace may seem to descend from father to son, or from mother to daughter, as if it were a family heirloom. Now, we know that grace is not hereditary (John i. 13). Every heaven-bound soul must be born again (John iii. 5), be brought to repentance (2 Peter iii. 9), have the inward witness of the Spirit (1 John v. 10), and know the Lord for himself (Heb. viii. 11). Yet we cannot but admire the loving-kindness of the Lord in taking several out of one family, and making them the subjects of divine grace, while others are left to reap the just reward of their own sin.

Robert Collins, the subject of this memoir, was one of a gracious chain. His father appears to have been a good man, and Eliza Hopkins was his daughter, as noticed on page 73 of our last month's issue. From a few notes written by himself we gather the following facts concerning his life. He was born October 19th, 1807, and, at the age of thirteen or fourteen, he was apprenticed to his father's business, and then he went to a respectable hairdresser in Bath for improvement, and afterwards to London. When he arrived in the Metropolis, his thirst for pleasure induced him to visit various places of amusement, and led him to the theatre, to see the renowned Kean. On entering, a pressure was made by some evil-disposed persons for the sake of pocket-picking, which nearly suffocated him; but a companion managed to lift him above the crowd, so that he regained his breath. He paid no regard at that time to the Lord's day, but would often profane it by going out boating. Once, when he was returning from a trip with his companions, and they were about to land at London Bridge, the boat was nearly capsized, and, but for the protecting care of the "Preserver of men," they had been plunged into the water. But he went on, regardless of the voice which spake by these providences, until, as he says, the Lord convinced him of his sin. Then all came before him in vivid colours, and he could see how near he had been to the very gates of destruction, and yet had been spared. Upon this he often reflected, and felt grateful to God that he was not cut down in the midst of his sins.

In October, 1831, he married, and commenced business on his own account, and used to have worldly company to visit him on the Lord's day. But, on one occasion, nearly all the party were taken unwell, and though not seriously, yet sufficiently so as to mar

their pleasure ; and during the time they were there, these words were on Mr. Collins' mind—

“ No music's like Thy charming name,
Nor half so sweet can be.”

After this he seems to have resolved to give no more invitations on Sundays.

He also mentions going to hear a celebrated singer, and was much shocked by hearing these solemn words profaned—

“ Did I not own Jehovah's power,
How vain were all I knew !”

This, it appears, was at the time when conviction for sin was taking hold of him, for, being fond of music, he thought he would be present at a performance of instrumental music, for, as no words were uttered, it was suggested it would be less sinful than listening to oratorios. But having duly weighed it in his mind, as in the light of eternity, he decided against attending, on the ground that he would not like to die there.

After this, he says, he began to have more serious thoughts about religion, and a desire was manifested after the pure truth of God. He went at this time to Queen Square Chapel to hear the late Mr. Wallinger, but after the removal of the latter from Bath, he felt he had not for a time any spiritual home, and so wandered about, sometimes hearing legal preachers, who spoke of the terrors of the law, which filled him with dread alarm, but yielded no comfort. Occasionally he would go, in company with his father, to visit a good old Christian friend on a Sunday evening. Eventually he was led to a little chapel in Bath, which the people used before Providence Chapel was finished, where the late Mr. Beard, of Wiltshire, was supplying. His text was Psalm xxxiv. 6, and he felt, under that discourse, that he was delivered from all his trouble. He went home to his wife rejoicing in what he had found. She could hardly believe it, but he felt he had the inward witness and the precious love of God which casts out fear.

After the new chapel, “ Providence,” was built, it was opened by Mr. Warburton and Mr. Beard, but the ministry of the stated pastor was not profitable to many of the tried and exercised family of God, so they hired a large room and met together for some years, where, amongst many others, they were favoured to hear the late Mr. Philpot, Mr. Isbell, Mr. Hiscox, and Mr. Beard.

At length, through a sad circumstance, “ Providence ” became free to men of known experimental truth, so that the room was

given up, and the friends returned to the chapel, which up to the present day remains a cause of truth. Here he had many blessings. He mentions going there one Sunday evening, when a great drowsiness came over him. He told the Lord He could quicken both body and soul, which He did, so that he says he scarcely ever had such a hearing-time before. The text was John vii. 37, and he says he felt he was the very character described in the text. Then these words came with power, "I love the Lord because He hath heard my voice and my supplications;" also, at another time, these words, "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." He remarks that once, while at the dressing-table, these words came to him with great power—

"The Gospel bears my spirits up;
A faithful and unchanging God
Lays the foundation for my hope
In oaths, and promises, and blood."

When his eldest daughter was about three years old, she met with an accident which marked all her future life with suffering. About this time he had been inwardly rebellious because the work of grace in his own soul had not been at the outset so deep as in the case of some others. He therefore felt that the Lord had sent him this trial because he had dictated to Him. Added to this, in July, 1851, he had an attack of bronchitis, and he was reduced almost to a skeleton, and was considered to be near the house appointed for all living; but his soul was so blest that he had no wish to recover. He had a severe conflict respecting his daughter, for the enemy suggested to him that she would be lost. While wrestling with the Lord respecting her, the enemy tried him much by insinuating that the Lord had brought her to the birth, but would not bring her forth; but the Lord eventually disproved the enemy's lie by making it plain that she was a vessel of mercy. She suffered much without a murmur escaping her lips, and made a most peaceful end, July 10th, 1851, in her eighteenth year. Almost the last words she was heard to utter were, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly; but I am such an unworthy sinner." A friend who sat near her said, "If it is well with you, hold up your hand," which she did without hesitation, and her happy spirit took its flight, to be "for ever with the Lord."

Once, after her death, the enemy thrust a sore dart at him, telling him his child was not saved; when his mind was set at rest by these lines, and he did not doubt her safety afterwards—

"Happy songsters,
When shall I your chorus join?"

By this sore affliction our friend was so humbled at the Lord's feet that, to use his own words, he was "like a little child ; every rebellious feeling was removed," and he could say, "Sweet affliction !" and felt that the Lord had done all things well.

Shortly after this, he was again physically reduced to a very weak condition, when the Lord sweetly revived his hope with the following verse—

"Thou art coming to a King,
Large petitions with thee bring ;
For His grace and power are such
None can ever ask too much."

This made him very bold, and gave him liberty to ask much, all of which, he says, the Lord granted him. Such freedom, he says, he never had felt before.

On September 19th, 1852, Mr. Collins was, with eight others, baptized in the river Avon, one of the number being his own father, at the advanced age of seventy-six. They then joined the Church at Bath, where, as well as at some other places, he had many blessings under the preached Word. Once in particular, he heard Mr. Philpot very sweetly at Calne anniversary from Hebrews xi. 13, 14, and the late Mr. Warburton from Psalm cxix. 76. This was to him a never to be forgotten day. Often, too, the Lord instructed and comforted him by verses of hymns, several of which were, at different times, made special blessings to him.

During his long life he had many exercises respecting his worldly circumstances. One severe trial so distressed him that it affected his health, but, when he felt that he could not bear it any longer, the Lord gave him these words : "Commit thy way unto the Lord ; trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass," and the Lord brought him honourably through all.

On one occasion, when the Lord had given him an answer to prayer, he said, "I have been thinking of a remark in either the *LITTLE GLEANER* or the *SOWER* : 'There is nothing too small for His love, and nothing too great for His power.'"

From the fast declining state of his health, he felt convinced that he had not long to live. Being concerned about his dear wife, with whom he had lived happily for forty-nine years, this promise was given him, "The Lord will provide."

The following is contributed by his son-in-law, Mr. Hopkins. One morning, when it seemed as if he would soon be going, and his mind was lifted above, he spoke of all being put under the feet of Jesus, and referred to this line, "He conquered when He fell." He often spoke of Him as his dear Jesus ; and he once said, "How wonderful to think all fear of death is taken away !"

and he was never moved from that peace. Often did his dear wife and I hear him, when he thought he was alone, hold sweet converse with his "dear Jesus;" and at one time she heard him speaking to Him as though he had failed to talk to Him as much as usual, and asking forgiveness for his apparent neglect.

At one time I said to him, "Weary of earth, myself, and sin," &c. This, he said, he felt was his mind—longing to go, yet desiring not to be impatient. At another time, he told his dear wife, "I have had such a visit from the Lord!" The following words were so sweet to him, but he sobbed with emotion, so as to be unable to give expression to them—

" 'Twas Jesus, my Friend, when He hung on the tree,
That opened this channel of mercy for me."

The Lord's day previous to his death, he said to his dear wife, "I have had such sweet words—

" 'How can I sink with such a prop
As bears the world and all things up?'

"But don't you think, if He is able to bear the world and all things up, He can bear me up?"

A day or two before his death, I said to him, "You would like to say—

" 'Yes, I shall soon be landed
On yonder shores of bliss.' "

He took it up and said—

" With all my powers expanded,
And sing where Jesus is."

The day previous to his death, I asked him, "You do not feel any doubt as to the foundation on which you have been resting?" He replied, "None whatever." "Nor any as to the home to which you are going?" He replied, "No; I have not." His dear wife said, "Is Jesus as precious as ever?" He replied, "More, more!"

His kind doctor saw him a few hours before his death, and, almost as soon as he came into the room, he put out his hand for him to feel his pulse, as he usually did when the doctor came, when he asked him how long he thought it would be, because, he said, if he thought him weaker, he was nearer having his desire, which was to reach home. He was told it would not be long. He remained conscious nearly to the last, though at the close we were unable to understand his words. He died in peace, and arrived at his heavenly home March 25th, 1881.

JESUS VEILING HIS DEALINGS.

THROW back a glance upon the past, and see how little you have ever understood of all the way God has led you. What a mystery—perhaps now better explained—has enveloped His whole proceedings! When Joseph, for example, was torn from the homestead of his father, sold, and borne a slave into Egypt, not a syllable of that eventful page of his history could be spelt; and yet God's way with this His servant was perfect; and could Joseph have seen, at the moment that he descended into the pit whither he was cast by his envious brethren, all the future of his history as vividly and as palpably as he beheld it in after years, while there would have been the conviction that all was well, we doubt not that faith would have lost much of its vigour, and God much of His glory. And so with good old Jacob. The famine, the parting with Benjamin, the menacing conduct of Pharaoh's Prime Minister, wrung the mournful expression from his lips, "All these things are against me." All was veiled in deep and mournful mystery. Thus was it with Job, to whom God spake from the whirlwind that swept every vestige of affluence and domestic comfort from his dwelling. And thus, too, with Naomi, when she exclaimed, "Call me not Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty."

How easy were it to multiply cases of veiled, and yet all-wise dispensations! And is this the way of the Lord with you? Are you bewildered at the mazes through which you are threading your steps? No mystery has lighted upon your path but what is common to the one family of God. "This honour have all His saints." The Shepherd is leading you, as all the flock are led, with a skilful hand and in a right way. It is yours to stand if He bids you, or to follow if He leads. "He giveth no account of any of His matters," assuming that His children have such confidence in His wisdom, and love, and uprightness as, in all the wonder-working of His dealings with them, to "be still, and know that He is God." That it is the glory of God to conceal should, in our view, be sufficient to justify all His painful and humiliating procedure with us. It is the glory of God to conceal a thing, as it will be for His endless glory, by-and-by, fully to reveal it all.

But there is one thing, Christian sufferer, which He cannot conceal. He cannot conceal the *love* that forms the spring and foundation of all His conduct with His saints. Do what He will, conceal as He may; be His chariot the thick clouds, and His way in the deep sea; still His love betrays itself, disguised

though it may be in dark and impenetrable providences. There are undertones, gentle and tender, in the roughest accents of our Joseph's voice ; and he who has an ear ever hearkening to the Lord, and delicately attuned to the gentlest whisper, shall often exclaim, "Speak, Lord, how, and when, and where Thou mayest. It is the voice of my Beloved !"

"BRING MY SOUL OUT OF PRISON."

O LORD, "bring my soul out of prison,"
Where lower and lower I sink !
Within me I feel is a legion,
And hell is my portion I think.

Oh, bring Thou my soul out of prison !
Lord Jesus, attend to my prayer !
My spirit is low and desponding,
My heart is the seat of despair.

Dark, dark is this terrible dungeon !
There's nothing but death appears here ;
Oh, for a sweet look of salvation,
Or some gracious answer to prayer !

Oft sad and alone I am musing
On times and on things that are past ;
Am I sure they were not a delusion ?
Shall I, Lord, be deceived at the last ?

Thus night after night full of groaning,
While tears of distress have been shed ;
With a heart that has seemed to be rending,
I've tossed to and fro on my bed.

'Midst agonies great, I in feeling
Companion have been with the dead ;
And though on the Lord have been calling,
No comforting word has He said.

While down in deep waters I'm sinking,
With only my tears for my bread ;
Self-pity steps in and I'm thinking
'Twere better that I should be dead !

Oh, bring Thou my soul out of prison !
Speak to me and wash me once more !
Let me feel I am freely forgiven !
Then, Jesus, I'll sing of Thy power !

J. S. (altered.)

LETTER BY A LATELY DEPARTED FRIEND.

MY very dear and much-esteemed friend and servant of the Lord,—You are aware the Lord has, in His unerring wisdom, brought me under His chastening rod by removing from me my dear wife. For her I cannot grieve, feeling in my own soul such a sweet satisfaction that she is now in the full enjoyment of His ever-blessed presence, which she was sometimes favoured with a sip of while here below.

When we were together and conversing on death, we felt it must fall to the lot of one or the other to be the survivor, which made us desire that the Lord would strengthen and support whichever the lot would fall to, and give submission to His heavenly will; and, blessed be God, now that I am in the trial, He has been graciously pleased to strengthen me in this my time of need; and how true it is, we need not the strength until we come into the trial! I have truly experienced the fulfilment of this promise, “As thy days, so shall thy strength be;” and I trust the Lord has kept me from a murmuring spirit thus far, and given me resignation to His heavenly will under the rod, so that I can feelingly say, “It is well,” and bless Him for His chastening hand. I view it a great mercy that He does not let me alone in my sins, but follows me up with His rod, for I do think the worst place we can be in is to be let alone. If I know my heart, rather than to be left in this state I would be under His chastening hand continually, the Lord strengthening me to endure it, and sanctifying the same for my good and His glory.

What friend is there like our heavenly Friend, who has their souls’ prosperity in view in all the trials and afflictions He brings His people under? His bowels yearn while He mingles the bitter cup. And how true what Hart says—

“At most we do but taste the cup,
For He alone hath drunk it up.”

He is, indeed, a “Brother born for adversity,” and “a Friend that loveth at all times.”

Dear sir, I understand from Mrs. Reeves that you wished me to send a few particulars respecting the death of my dear wife; but, as I did not note down anything that passed, and my memory being treacherous, I cannot give you full particulars, but, as far as I am able, I will give you some account of the Lord’s gracious dealings with her. First, I will just name, with regard to her life, dear sir, you were no stranger to it, having known her so many years, and she highly esteemed you in love for the truth’s sake. Many times she was much blessed while hearing

the Word ; and often have I heard her say, " Had Mr. Fenner known the whole exercise of my soul, he could not have more clearly set it forth," when you have been thus describing the various exercises of soul the Lord brought His people under from time to time ; and the Lord, applying the same with power to her heart, it so exactly suited her case that she was often greatly comforted while hearing. These things made her greatly prize the means of grace, because she found it good to be there, and never would she lose an opportunity, if possibly she could go. Her love to you as a servant of Christ, and also as her spiritual father, was very strong, and ever the same.

A short time before her confinement, the Lord was graciously pleased to favour her with a comfortable hope in His love and mercy to her soul. She saw the Lord's goodness to her in every dispensation—how that in infinite wisdom He had ordered everything, both in providence and in grace, for her good, and she felt that, whatever the Lord's will was respecting her, that was right, and that only.

In this sweet frame of mind she continued until after her confinement, when the Lord was graciously pleased to give her such a blessed assurance of her interest in Christ, and so to realize, by faith, the efficacy of His most precious atoning blood, as shed for the redemption and salvation of her soul, as to make her long that others, with herself, might bless and praise His holy name for His great goodness to the vilest of sinners, which she truly saw herself to be ; and she begged of me not to flatter her memory, but to abase her as the vilest of the vile, and to exalt the Saviour.

A Sunday or two before her death, when I left to go to chapel, she said to me, " Sing of the Lord's great goodness to me." On this day she was greatly favoured with the Lord's presence, and did most sensibly feel His everlasting arms to be underneath her. After this the Lord hid His face, and for nearly two days she sank under a heavy cloud. But the Lord again stayed her mind on Himself, gave her peace, but not that measure of enjoyment she had before. She said to me, " Although I feel not His comforting presence, I feel that His everlasting arms are underneath," and quoted the following words—

" How can I sink with such a prop
As holds the world and all things up ? "

The following hymns from Gadsby's Selection were very sweet to her : 274 and three following ; 346, and one of Newton's in the Olney Hymns, 225, and also Job v. 17, and following verses.

At last her death was rather sudden. I left her about ten o'clock in the morning, to go into the shop, and about

twelve o'clock my niece came down to say that her aunt was worse, and the doctor was there and wished me to come up. I immediately did so, and saw her end was very near. She looked at me, and said "Look up," and soon afterwards breathed her last, and sweetly fell asleep in Jesus. I have no doubt but she meant by so speaking to me to try and encourage me to look to Christ in my time of need ; for, the day before, seeing me overcome in my feelings, she said, "Don't weep ; cast all your care upon Him, for He careth for you."

My dear friend, do try and remember me before the Lord, for I long to feel this affliction sanctified to my soul's good, and to find that it is also blessed to the good of others, that it may thus bring glory to the Lord's great name. May the Lord bless, strengthen, and support you in every trial, is the prayer of

Yours very affectionately,

January 23rd, 1861.

SAMSON FUNNELL.

To Mr. D. Fenner.

[Our beloved and much-valued friend who wrote the above letter has now also entered his everlasting rest. He had been connected with the Church of Christ at Ebenezer, Hastings, nearly forty years, and an honourable and useful deacon of the same for twenty-five years, and his death has made a gap among us which fills many hearts with sadness, for a godly, faithful, and affectionate friend like him cannot be removed without being greatly missed. He was only laid aside ten days, and, at the last, death somewhat suddenly separated him from all below, and, leaning on the precious blood of Christ, he entered into the joy of his Lord, February 10th, in the sixty-second year of his age. We hope to give further particulars of our late dear friend in a future number of the SOWER.—ED.]

DEEPLY impress our hearts, O Lord, with a sense that Thine eye is ever upon us, and Thine ear listening to our words, so that our conversation may be as becometh Thy Gospel.—*Dr. Sibbes.*

CHRIST may have an interest in us, though we may not, at the time, be able to see our interest in Him. The child of God may be cast down, but can never be cast off ; for, though God may lay His hand upon him, He never removes His hand from beneath him. In the same fire whereby the dross is consumed, the precious gold is purified. The bitterest medicine is more to be valued than the sweetest poison. Better to be preserved in brine than to perish in honey. There is no room in hell for one who loves Christ ; for, though it may seem but a desire to love Him, it shall be well, the desire itself being grace begun.—*From an old Author.*

CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY IN TROUBLE.

I HOPE, through the mercy and goodness of the Lord, that my dear friend Mrs. Russell is more comfortable in her mind, and that she has been enabled to cast herself at the Redeemer's feet, come life, come death.

I know that Satan and unbelief are powerful foes, too strong for any but the Lord. In His hands they are like tow. May He be pleased to speak the word, rebuke Satan, and break the power of unbelief! Faith, that precious gift of grace, is His work, and so it is to break the power of unbelief—

“Through Him we shall conquer
The mightiest foes;
Our Captain is stronger
Than all that oppose.”

The Lord help you to go to Him, though dark as midnight, cold as ice, dead as a stone in your feelings. He is a God that doeth wonders. His ways are in the deep—hidden, mysterious, and marvellous. Never give it up—cry, groan, sigh, beg, keep on calling, though He answer not; though He frown, persevere; though He turn a deaf ear, importune. There is every encouragement in His blessed Word for the poor, the needy, the destitute, the lost, the perishing. He will not always chide, neither bear anger for ever. In a little wrath He hides His face; but in great mercies He reveals His love, shows His face, turns again, and manifests compassion.

Please give my love to Mr. and Mrs. C——, and other friends, including your sister. Reading a short note of your late husband's put me in mind of my afflicted friend.

Yours, with best wishes,

October 2nd, 1872.

A. HAMMOND.

It is the wisdom of a Christian not to be angry when reprov'd, nor to be proud when praised. This is the remedy against both—
“Be clothed with humility.”—*Dr. Sibbes*.

Now, if damnation for sin be such a misery as is expressed in Scripture by the most violent figures and words of the heaviest signification—if all the possible tortures suffered here are but a lenitive to the preparations of wrath in hell—how miserable shall those be who, as if a single damnation were a light matter, do not only commit sin in their own persons, but are in combination with Satan to corrupt and destroy others, and multiply curses against themselves! These treasure up wrath against the day of wrath.—*Bates*.

PSALM CVII. VIEWED AS THE BELIEVER'S
PROGRESSIVE EXPERIENCE.

SECOND STAGE.

(Continued from page 84.)

Verse 10 : Nursed at the breast, dandled upon the knees, just as long as the Lord, the Nurse, sees fit, and until the night draws near ; for evening and morning (or the dawn of light) are the first day, but the next night will swiftly come in experience as in nature. And what will bring it ? The withdrawing of the sun. In that sweet posture of rest or satisfaction (Song ii. 7) the daughters of Jerusalem were charged not to stir till He pleased. He will please to depart for a season, for weaning-time must come ; the life of faith and not of sense must be known, for herein and hereby is the Lord chiefly glorified. It was all light and warmth just now, while the sun was above the horizon. It is dark now, and worse than that—there is thunder and storm and tempest (Heb. xii. 18). As the light departed the soul could not be still, and rest by faith for the morning, but she must be doing something according to her nature ; and, in wandering, she takes a wrong direction. True to her innate instincts, she may find herself again about Sinai. She wanders and labours in the mire and mud of this desperately rough and dangerous road until quite exhausted, and sits ("such as sit") ; she dare not lie down, for there is no rest here. Wearied and worn, she sits, full of self-pity and hard thoughts of Him who has seemed to change His behaviour towards her. She is not alone, for, being outside of the promised land and in an enemy's country, the lord of that country finds her, and binds her with chains. She is already wounded, but he wounds her still more deeply, taunting her with her Lord's indifference, and pointing to the filthy and ruined state of her dress and person. He strikes the dying dead with his cruel insinuations and daring accusations. The iron bonds with which she is held fast enter into her very soul. They are far too strong for her to break, and too heavy for her to carry, and so she sits bemoaning her misery.

Verse 11 : "Because they rebelled." Her first act was disobedience to His command to wait for Him ; her next, turning to law and Sinai instead of to grace and Sion ; and these steps led to further rebellion—fretting, evil surmising, suspicion, and many other evil thoughts and feelings filling the breast. The chief cause of her trouble is, that she can do nothing to please. The more she tries—and she tries her utmost—the further she is from acceptance, and this stirs up sad rebellion. She works, and she will work, for the mainspring of grace is run down, and

nature acts after its kind. Because she will work, the Lord lets her work, and the spirit within her is a spirit of bondage again to fear. Anything but the one (verse 13) only right thing will she do in this legal mind, and so she toils until all her strength to work is gone. She is spent, and neither can nor will do more work of this kind. If He will have mercy upon her, there is hope ; if not, she must perish. Now she begins to do the chief work of God (John vi.), "believe on Him," and so she cries as at first, and is heard again, and delivered from her distresses.

Verse 14 : "He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death"—blackness, darkness, and tempest, with sound of words and law, killing them. "The law came, sin revived, and I died." The shadow of death, death within and round about. It is not a temporal only, but a double, eternal death that is feared. It is the region of the shadow of death in which they sit, where the Lord finds them, and brings them out by a fresh view of the blood of the everlasting covenant. As at first, He said, "Let there be light," so again He speaks and it is done. Light breaks in, and the prison doors fly open ; the chains fall off, as with Peter in prison. "He brought ;" *not* they came merely. "Ye are saved by grace, through *faith* ; and *that* not of yourselves ; it is the gift of God."

Verse 16 : "He hath broken." The gates of this legal dungeon are of strongest metal, and cannot be forced by the poor prisoner. In the soul's feelings the threatenings and wrath are riveted ; the irreversible decree of the Almighty is stronger than brass or iron. The justice and holiness of God's character, and His righteous indignation against sin, are felt to be as iron bars that can never be broken. But the Almighty Hand which thus imprisons and kills with such an iron grasp, can, and will in due time, break these bonds and open these brazen doors. This takes place by a fresh discovery of what the Lord Jesus has done in His humiliation, life, death, and suffering in the place of the guilty one. The substitution of the Lord Jesus—how He was made sin for us that we might be made righteous in His righteousness—is revealed by the Holy Spirit, and immediately the bars are broken and the doors fly open.

(*To be continued.*)

"ALL is not gold that glitters." Trees may blossom fairly in spring, on which no fruit is to be found in the harvest ; and some have sharp soul exercises which are nothing but a foretaste of hell.—*Boston.*

LETTERS FOR THE YOUNG.—No. XXIII.

TO FANNY, my own daughter in the faith, grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father, and Jesus Christ our Lord,—I will now try and answer your most welcome letter, as I have for some time felt a sweet hope that you will be the Lord's in that day when He makes up His jewels; and it has been a great comfort to me many times in my sorrows and trials to hope and believe He has owned and blessed the labours of one so every way unworthy to your precious soul. May the Lord enable us to give the glory and honour to Him to whom it is due.

Oh, my dear, we do indeed come short in giving Him the glory due to His holy name; but what a very great mercy to have our heart filled with desire to love and praise Him for delivering power in time of need, and to feel constrained to call upon our souls and all our powers to bless and praise His holy name!

He has indeed been better to us than all our fears; yet, my dear, our fears often make way for His "Fear nots;" and as sure as we are led to His blessed feet to tell Him our fears, and seek His strength to help in our time of need, so sure shall we find Him faithful to His precious promise—"Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out."

It is a very great mercy to be well exercised about those things that concern our everlasting peace, and our pathway through this sin-polluted world, that we may in some measure walk worthy of our vocation wherewith we are called. I am thankful to hope and believe it is not a light thing with you to make a profession of the name of our blessed Jesus. May the Lord still keep you concerned to walk out your profession!

My dear, you were not alone in your exercises and fears at the time you name, for on the Thursday night when I felt so ill, my soul went out to the Lord in earnest heartfelt prayer for a measure of health and strength sufficient for the solemn occasion, so that we met together at the throne of grace, and were agreed, I trust, to ask the dear Lord for what we felt so much to need, and we have once more proved Him to be a prayer hearing and answering God. May this encourage us still to trust in Him for the future. "The Lord is good, a stronghold in the time of trouble, and He knoweth them that trust in Him." The 428th hymn (Gadsby's) is very much to the purpose. No, my dear, we need

"Dread no ills that may befall us,
While we make His ways our choice."

The path of duty, it is often said, is the path of safety. "All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as love

Him, and desire to walk in His commandments," the doing of which will in the end bring the answer of a good conscience before God, which is a very great blessing indeed. My earnest desire and prayer is, that He who implanted those living desires and cries in your soul will again and again put forth His gracious power in renewing, strengthening, and building you up in the truth as it is in Jesus. May the Lord keep us deeply sensible of our weakness and sinfulness, and bless us with godly sorrow on account of it; for this is the path that leads to that blest world where sorrow is unknown; but sin in ourselves, and sin in others, will be a source of grief and trouble to all that fear the Lord.

Many thanks for your good wishes and prayers on my account. I value the prayers of those that fear the Lord, especially of one I feel such soul union to. You have my best wishes, and my poor imperfect prayers from time to time. My dear, if Jesus smiles we can bear the frowns of mortals; if He is our help, we need not fear what man can do unto us. May we be helped to consider Him who was a "Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief," that we may not be weary or faint in our mind. All our times are in His hand. Through mercy He has brought us to bow to the sceptre of His grace. He rules and reigns over our enemies, and has promised to make all things work together for good to those that love and fear Him, so that we are encouraged to commit all things into His hands. May He help us so to do!

May the Lord help us to be much in prayer for His dear people, and for those near and dear to us in nature's ties; and may the Lord bless you and keep you, lead you and teach you. So prays your soul's well-wisher,

Reading, June 16th, 1877.

WILLIAM MATTINGLY.

[The writer of the above letter was well known to us, both as a deacon of the late Mr. Tiptaft's Church at Abingdon, and as a preacher of the Word of life. We, as well as many others, highly esteemed him as a godly man, whose consistent walk and humble spirit adorned his profession, and, with the testimony of the Lord, commended his services among the Churches of Christ. He endured a long and painful illness, in which he was sustained and consoled by the Word and grace of Jehovah, and at last entered his eternal rest in the sweet confidence of faith, December 14th, 1881, aged sixty-eight years.]

THE Christian, when fullest of divine communications, is but a glass without a foot—he cannot stand, or hold what he has received, any longer than God holds him in His strong hand.—*Gurnall.*

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THE SOWER.

NOTES OF A SERMON BY MR. POPHAM,
PREACHED AT GALEED CHAPEL, BRIGHTON, ON LORD'S DAY
MORNING, JANUARY 22ND, 1882.

"When my soul fainted within me I remembered the Lord : and my prayer came in unto Thee, into Thine holy temple."—JONAH ii. 7.

NONE but God's people know, in this world, what an evil thing and bitter it is to sin against God. Others He leaves alone, these He chastens. He never rebukes a reprobate conscience with a loving, gracious rebuke for sin. The table of the wicked often becomes a trap to them, and their blessings are a snare. But when His children go astray—when they seek to flee from Him, and to shun the cross by going into another place—God goes after them, hedges up their way with thorns, rebukes with divine severity their guilty consciences, strips them, lays them in darkness, in the deeps, and makes them know the solemn truth of the Scripture, "The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways" (Prov. xiv. 14). Then we think He is going to make an end of us altogether. Whenever the Lord meets a poor child of His, as a lion or as a bear bereaved of her whelps, the poor soul soon begins to think that an utter end will be made of him. "He will make an utter end : affliction shall not rise up the second time" (Nahum i. 9). The guilty creature cannot in any way excuse himself ; he is brought into the dust to cry, "Unclean ! unclean !" and more than that : "From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous. But I said, My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me ! the treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously ; yea, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously" (Isa. xxiv. 16).

Now, this is solemn work. When Jonah fled from the presence of the Lord, the Lord did not allow it to be easy work to him ; and if any of you are going from Him, as respects a tender conscience, liveliness of soul, searching the Word, &c., He will not let it be easy for you. Darkness will come upon your spirit, fears will rise, and there will be a witness for God within. At last there comes a climax, and the backslider goes into some grievous affliction, as Jonah did when the fish swallowed him, and he went to the bottoms of the mountains. Then he began to cry to the Lord. Faintness of soul will arise from the terrors of the Almighty. When God in His dealings seems again to set His justice, His fiery law, against a poor backslider, his refuge is taken away ; he faints. The fear that

the waves and billows will continue to come over him till he is swallowed up, will cause faintness. Hard work will cause faintness, and it is hard work struggling with these waves and billows. What faintness will come upon the soul when there are temptations it cannot withstand—when Satan says, "There is no help for you in God" (Psa. iii. 2); and "God hath forsaken him: persecute and take him; for there is none to deliver him" (Psa. lxxi. 11). The enemy does not come and say, "There is no help in your neighbour for you," because he knows that, if your hope is set upon God, you are right; but he says, "There is no help in God for you," and if he can succeed in making you believe that, how cast down you will feel! Some of us know the poignant grief, the desperate sorrow, such a temptation cast into the heart will cause. Felt distance from the Lord will cause this faintness. What strengthens your soul to go through trouble like the felt presence of God? If you have the Lord with you all is well; if He is absent, nothing can make you happy. Well, when you do not feel the presence of God your soul faints. Sore afflictions of either body or circumstances will, if the Lord permit, cause faintness of soul; and He does permit (nay, sends) them, so to work in a base backslider. If the Lord hide His face in respect of gracious communications, or in respect of His providential dealings, who can behold Him? Oh, what a solemn thing for God to turn to be as an enemy to any child of His (Isa. lxiii. 10). God knows what your present state is; but if any of you have gone, against His fear in your conscience, into a worldly, hard state, the time will come when you will faint, and He will make you acknowledge the truth of that Word, "Hast thou not procured this unto thyself?" But then, the Lord does not leave poor sinners in this sad condition. Underneath all this dealing there is now and again a kind touch whereby the soul is enabled to remember the Lord.

Now, let us look at this branch of the subject. There are two ways in which the Lord's people remember Him. Job said, "For God maketh my heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me." That does not appear to refer to the softness of heart we love, because then we embrace Him; but rather to His dealings, which, like a fire, melt and make us fear. Oh, His severity makes us afraid! The Psalmist said, "I remembered God, and was troubled;" so the child of God will at times remember God.

But there is another way in which the Lord's people are enabled to remember Him—in a gracious, encouraging way. You remember His kindness; how He helped you in trouble. This was one way in which Job thought of Him: "Oh, that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; when His candle shined upon my head, and when by His light

I walked through darkness" (Job xxix. 2, 3). This is a remembrance that encourages the soul once more to look toward His holy temple.

Now, dear afflicted friends, can you not remember God in His kindness in times past? The Psalmist said, "I will meditate also of all Thy work: for Thou, Lord, hast made me glad through Thy work." Now, has not God made some of you glad through His work of redemption—raised you up and caused you to clasp Him in the arms of your affections, and say, "O Lord, I will praise Thee; though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortedst me"? (Isa. xii. 1.) The remembrance of such mercy enables us to say with David—I do like it—"Hide not Thy face far from me; put not Thy servant away in anger: Thou hast been my help, leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation." There is an indescribable feeling of encouragement when you can say before God, "Thou hast been my help." What could we do in our afflictions if the Holy Ghost were not to bring to our remembrance some of His kind dealings with us? This does not encourage backsliding, nor to a continuation in it. God's mercy is more than a match for the heart; it sanctifies the affections, and sets them apart for the living God; and the soul's language is—

"Here's my heart, Lord, take and seal it;
Seal it from Thy courts above."

Thus we remember His kindness, we remember what He has done.

Then, again, how the Spirit helps us to remember that the Lord is merciful. "With the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption;" and nought but mercy, free, undeserved mercy, can suit us. Don't you feel, at times, that, after years of God's favour, what you still need is mercy?

"Mercy is welcome news indeed,
To those who guilty stand."

The Spirit reveals Christ. I was so glad you sang that verse—

"Show us that loving Man
That rules the courts of bliss,"

because once the Lord brought mercy into my heart by it.

You may be saying, "I do wish I knew I loved God." Now, to whom do you go in your troubles? To whom do you direct your prayers? Is it not your soul's desire that He would come and take you up in His kind arms, and enable you to call Him yours? In all our worst afflictions the enemy is not permitted to take the love of Him quite out of our hearts. We read that the two

disciples, who walked to Emmaus, talked of the things which had happened, and were sad. How could they have mourned if their hearts had not been set upon Him? "But we trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel." That was the cause of their sadness—the Lord was gone, and they were not sure that this was the Son of God. But the child of God never wholly loses, as to the vitality of it, the knowledge of the Son of God. Well, then, if you can say you have sought the Lord, I can say you love Him. He has got hold of you, and will never let go. "By night on my bed I sought Him whom my soul loveth; I sought Him, but I found Him not." One may say, "I wish that were as clear to me as it was to the Church." Well, don't you go where He is, where His people are? Don't you sometimes look with longing eyes into His Word? Do you not go to the throne of grace? Does not your heart almost break sometimes with the fear that you will never know Him? Why, you *do* love Him, and when He comes into your heart by faith you will say—

"I love the Lord with mind and heart,
His people and His ways."

Just a word more. How the soul remembers the Lord in His Person—He is Emmanuel. What draws your affections to Him? Why, the view the Spirit gives you of Him. He is the sinner's only plea—his only refuge from the wrath to come. The arms of spiritual affection and faith entwine themselves about the dear and sacred Person of the Son of God as He is made manifest. Do you want Him? Then rest not until you find Him. Let Him know about your case. You will sometimes find a solemn pleasure in telling Him your case, and He will listen to you. I have generally found before the Lord has revealed Himself afresh there has been a gracious ability given to tell Him I could not do without Him—

"Less than Thyself will not suffice
My comfort to restore;
More than Thyself I cannot crave,
And Thou canst give no more."

Do you remember the Lord wherever you are?—at the ends of the earth—the bottoms of the mountains—with the weeds of corruption about your head, the guilt of sin upon your conscience? Do you feel your heart panting to get close to Him, saying, "Lord Jesus, though I am the vilest of all, I cannot do without Thee"? This is talking to Him, and He will never reprove you for it. This is not bold liberty; it is tempered with reverence and godly fear.

There is another thing we remember—that the Lord is almighty. “Is there anything too hard for the Lord?” Have you a case that He cannot manage? Job said, “I know that Thou canst do everything.”

It matters not where we get, so far as the power of God is concerned; though, with respect to our consciences, it matters much. He can cause the sun to shine, the rain to drop down from heaven. “To set up on high those that be low.” Have you a case for Him? Remember that Emmanuel is almighty. God has given Him power over all flesh. Take your case to Him whatever it be—if it be sin’s oppression, Satan’s temptations, or family affliction. There is one thing—if you love the Lord, you will want Him to rule over you. How many can say, “To whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen”? (1 Peter iv. 11.) That will be a test for us; for many say, “Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.” “But,” says a child of God, “I do wish He would reign over me; I do want to feel His hand upon me for good.” Then it is already upon you in fact, and He will make it so as to feeling in His own time. The great thing for a child of God to be concerned about is sin; and what we should seek the Lord much about is that we may not be permitted to sink under its power.

“I remembered the Lord.” What a help it was to Jonah to know God could bring him up again. The Lord said to Abraham, “I am the Almighty God.” When faith is drawn into exercise upon Himself, it knows He can manage all things.

Again, the Lord Jesus says, “Counsel is Mine, and sound wisdom: I am Understanding; I have strength.” He understands us entirely—knows the end from the beginning. Are you perplexed? Remember this—His name is “Counsellor.” Lean for the whole, as well as you can, upon Him. “Blessed is the man that heareth Me,” because He has good counsel, and in His time the word behind is heard, saying, “This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.” It is not easy at all times to get the mind of the Lord; but wait on Him, because He has said, “I will guide thee with Mine eye.” Where should we get to if He said, “I will have nothing to do with you”? There is another word—“And 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 darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.” “Ah! but,” you may say, “these words have never been specially applied to me.” Well, suppose they have not; but is it wrong as you read them to ask God to fulfil them in your experience? “All things are yours;” all promises, all words of guidance and counsel; and in

God's time, if He does not specially apply the words, you will get the substance. It is robbery for a dead soul to take to itself any word or promise; but for a living soul to take the precious promises brought him, and try to plead them, is a totally different case. You will find encouragement in it. The thing is, to have a case—to have something to press you to God about which you must ask Him. Sometimes we forget what the Lord has spoken to us; the disciples seem to have done so, for it is said, "And they remembered His words" (Luke xxiv. 8). We get some good thing from God and cleave to it, but after a time seem to forget it, until we get into fresh trouble.

We remember the Lord in His wisdom, and also in His compassion. Sometimes you are full of trouble, and unable to speak to any one about it; then He makes you feel that He knows all about it and sympathizes with you in it. He is a merciful High Priest; and "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." If you can remember that, it will help you to take your case to Him with a freedom and a degree of confidence which He will not reject.

You may say, "Here is a difficulty I don't know how to manage." Then remember God can, and will, support you as long as is best for you to be in it. We think, when first trouble comes, "Now this will drive me away;" but it is sent to drive you closer to the Burden-Bearer. But you have got to the end of prayer—no utterance—not one word. What do you do then? Why, sigh. Well, "for the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord." Your sighs have a voice God can understand. How pleased you may be sometimes with your prayers, and get no success; at other times how dissatisfied with your prayers, and yet in time get an answer. "And my prayer came in unto Thee, into Thine holy temple." Why, the Lord's people do know at times that He is listening to them. But we are not always to think He is not listening because we cannot feel; yet we do love to feel Him near, to hear Him say, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." That brings us closer and closer until, when we have done, we say, "God *has* listened." Liberty in pleading with the Lord comes from faith's view of the intercession of the Son of God for poor sinners. God regards such pleading, and will not suffer it to go unanswered. Spirit-indited prayers are listened to. You know the blessed feeling of God's presence, when near Him in prayer. A person not quickened by the Spirit cannot believe in the reality of nearness to God in prayer. People think we must be proud if we say we believe God loves us and hears our prayers. Ah! they don't know the secret. If ever we are truly humble, it is when we feel that God is listening to us and will answer us—

“If *dust* and *ashes* might presume,
Great God, to talk to Thee.”

When God talked with Abraham he fell on his face. Oh, the sweetness and the sacredness of the feeling none but God's people know; and it must be known to be believed. “My prayer came in unto Thee, into Thine holy temple”—and it sped well—had good success. Why? Because perfumed with the merits of our great High Priest.

Go on, dear soul, with your confessions; He will allow them all; but the conclusions you draw from a sense of your sins He will not allow. He will not frown you away, but, on the contrary, will come and kiss you with the kisses of His mouth. This will bring tenderness of conscience, and a fleeing from evil in the very appearance of it. If anything makes the soul go softly, it is this kind and merciful dealing of God our Saviour.

May the Lord add His blessing.

LUTHER.

ON one occasion, during the sixteenth century, the principal Reformers having been called together, several of them preached. Luther, though unwell, preached with much energy from the words, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature” (Mark xvi. 15). Myconius wrote to a friend that he had often heard Luther preach, but, on this occasion, he seemed not so much to speak as to thunder forth the name of Christ from heaven itself. After Bucer's sermon, he supped with Luther, who, in the course of conversation, commended the discourse of his guest, but added that he himself was a better preacher. Bucer received this apparently rude remark with his accustomed mildness, and readily declared his assent. Luther then spoke seriously, and said, “Do not think that I mean to boast foolishly. I well know my own deficiencies, and that I am unable to deliver such an ingenious and learned discourse as we have this day heard from you; but when I am in the pulpit, I consider who my hearers are; and, because the greater part are unlearned and simple people, I preach what I think they can understand. But you take a higher flight, so that your discourses suit learned people, but are not understood by our poor people. In this I act like a kind mother who gives her craving infant the breast, thus feeding it with her own milk as well as she is able, and thinks this better for its nourishment than if mixed with the sweetest and choicest syrups and preparations of art.”

THE PUBLICAN'S PRAYER.

God ! great, eternal, holy One,
 Who only oughtest to be feared ;
 Whose piercing eye I cannot shun,
 Who art by all to be revered ;
 To Thee I fear to lift mine eyes,
 But smite my breast, where misery lies.

Be merciful ! I nought can pay,
 No price or ransom can I bring ;
 For full forgiveness, Lord, I pray ;
 Wilt Thou regard so vile a thing ?
 Thou savest souls from deepest woe,
 Canst, wilt Thou, gracious Lord, do so

To me ? great God, a worthless wretch,
 Not worthy favour from a man ;
 Oh, can Thy mercy's arms outstretch
 And save from Thine eternal ban
 One who deserves Thy dreadful ire
 In vengeance of eternal fire ?

A sinner ! 'tis 'gainst Thee alone
 I've sinned, oh, Lord, with much offence ;
 But do not drive me from Thy throne,
 Nor in displeasure spurn me hence ;
 Regard my great, my only plea,
 Be merciful to me—e'en me !

The Pharisee's proud scorn I bear ;
 I'm guilty, helpless, stricken, black ;
 'Tis true I can't with him compare,
 Tithes, duties, offerings, alms I lack ;
 From *merit* I to *mercy* flee ;
 Oh, God, be merciful to me !

Thou hast, in ages past, been good
 To hear the basest sinner's prayer ;
 And hast the avenger's stroke withstood,
 And made the contrite heart Thy care ;
 This yields me hope, I yet shall see
 Thou wilt be merciful to me !

C. J.

HEAVEN is promised to those that love Him, and hell is to be the portion of those that hate Him.—*Dr. Goodwin.*

It is devilish reasoning to say, "I know not if I be elected, and, therefore, I need not come to Christ." It is divine reasoning rather to say, "I know not my election, therefore I will come to Him that I may know it, since it cannot possibly be known otherwise."—*Erskine.*

AN EXCELLENT EXAMPLE.

ONE Sunday afternoon, some few months ago, we were wending our way through the streets of London in order to reach a certain Sunday-school, where we had promised to speak a few words to the scholars. Our route lay through the neighbourhood of Seven Dials—never, under the most cheering aspect, a very delightful locality. On this particular occasion the scene was sad indeed to any one not hardened to it by use. The dog and bird fanciers, as well as shopkeepers of all descriptions, were pursuing their calling; the streets were full of men, women, and children—dirty, ragged, and repulsive. The public-houses were thronged by those anxious to obtain a last drop before they closed at three o'clock; while unwelcome scenes, unwholesome smells, and unholy sounds greeted one on every side. We hurried forward, anxious to reach a purer atmosphere and streets whose surroundings were more in accordance with the solemnities of the Lord's Day; and just as we had accomplished this, and were thankfully leaving the Dials and its disagreeables behind us, we came upon a simple scene, which both interested and pleased us. As we were passing a chapel, several neatly-dressed and respectable-looking women just at that moment came out from thence, each having a packet of tracts in their hands. They immediately turned down into the very locality from which we had escaped with so much eagerness; and we must confess to having looked upon those noble women as they did so with more admiration and thankfulness than we should have looked upon a Nelson or a Wellington, had one of those celebrated men been living and passed us at that moment. By their appearance we could fully believe that each of those women had left a comfortable home, with its Sabbath quiet and rest, in order to spend their time and strength amidst scenes of misery too painful to describe. We can hope that it was their desire to be the means, by their tracts and kindly words, of shedding some ray of light in that dark and ungodly neighbourhood which might benefit their poor fellow-creatures, sunk so low in degradation and misery.

In thinking upon this circumstance we felt some degree of sorrow that, amongst the many Churches of truth scattered up and down our highly-favoured land, there should be so little of this kind of missionary spirit manifest amongst them as a body. How many Christians there are who have received the truth in its purity, who spend both their Sabbaths and their week-days without seeking to be useful in the Lord's vineyard, apparently unwilling to deny themselves of their own personal ease and comfort for the good of others and the glory of God!

We therefore record this simple event, trusting it may be used

by the Lord as a means to stir up others to go and do likewise. We feel assured that if any approach to God with the earnest cry, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me do?" they will not long be found standing idle, but will be commissioned to be about their Father's business. And how certain is the fact that a cup of cold water, given in the name of the Lord, whether in the shape of visiting the poor, relieving the suffering, teaching the young, or warning the ungodly, &c., will bring such a rich reward from heaven into our own souls as will abundantly repay any little sacrifice of personal ease or comfort that may be made by us. "Blessed are they that sow beside all waters;" their labours shall not be lost, for the Word of God shall not return unto Him void. "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."

EBENEZER.

COUPLE HEAVEN WITH IT.

AN aged Christian had paused to rest himself as he trudged along under a heavy load on a hot day. An acquaintance had just accosted him, when a splendid carriage rolled past, in which a haughty man rode, whose whole appearance bespoke a life of luxurious ease. "What do you think of the Providence of which you sometimes speak?" said the acquaintance. "You know that that is a wicked man; yet he 'springs himself like a green bay tree.' His eyes stand out with fatness; he is not plagued as other men; while you, believing that all the silver and gold is the Lord's, serving Him and trusting in His providence, and toiling and sweating in your old age, get little more than bread and water. How can you reconcile this with a just Providence?" The aged saint looked at the questioner with amazement, and, with the greatest earnestness, replied, "*Couple heaven with it! couple heaven with it, and then?*"

Yes, that addition sweetens many a bitter cup, and enriches many a poor lot. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

THE will of God is the only standard of right and good.—*Joseph Hart.*

To live without fear of death, is to die living; to labour not to die, is labour in vain.—*Dr. Goodwin.*

OBITUARY OF MARY WALKER.

MARY WALKER, the daughter of James Honisett, of Stream Farm, Dallington, Sussex, died in the Lord December 11th, 1881.

I have known her about nine years, and from inquiries I have made, I cannot find that her convictions of sin were very deep until after her marriage. Her mother informs me that at the time she lived at a cottage on Rose Hill Estate, Brightling, Mary had a heavy affliction, both of body and mind, and her distress of soul was so great she sank near to the borders of despair. Thoughts of eternity, and of the awful consequences of sin, brought her very low; but the Lord sustained her until, by the use of some portion of His Word, the blessed Spirit wrought deliverance for her; and, when able to walk, she went and heard a sermon preached by the late Mr. Steadman, of Robertsbridge, by which means the Lord's work upon her soul was sweetly confirmed. This was about 1870. In 1872 she came into the neighbourhood of Warbleton, and attended at Mount Hermon Chapel. Here she felt at home, and for her attachment to this place, or rather, for her love to the worship of God, she had to suffer persecution. She appears to have been favoured to live much in sweet communion with the Lord; and heavy crosses followed, of a nature not known to many in the easy times in which we live. She could not carry her religion wrapped up in a napkin, and, although it cost her great privations and sufferings, yet, while greatly tried, and denied a constant attendance at the house of prayer, which she panted after, God maintained His own work and enabled her to give a living testimony that the new life she had received was eternal life.

January 27th, 1877.—When writing to a friend with reference to the chequered path she was treading, and deeply lamenting the loss of former comforts, she says, "I know I need ballast, and the Lord knows I would rather be as I am than have a smooth path and be left to fall and bring disgrace upon the cause of God. I hope I may never be left to myself. I want the Lord to help me in everything. I do hope I may be kept humble. I should be light and vain—more so than I am—if I had not a cross to carry; and at times I can bless God for it, because that haughty monster pride would rear its head more than it does now, if I had not the cross to carry. You say, if I wish to hear from you again, I must remember you in the closet. I hope not a day passes without that. I think they are poor friends who do not pray for each other; and sometimes I have hoped the Lord would answer my poor petitions for my poor husband, and, in His mercy, save his precious soul from hell. Some people imagine that we who go to

chapel think ourselves better than any one else ; but, if they felt as we do inside at times, they would not think so."

March 26th, 1877.—When writing to the same friend, and referring to a providential trial, she says, "I carried it to the Lord, and He was pleased to make a way for me. The most I could say was, 'The gold and the silver are Thine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. Oh, that Thou wouldst give me a little of it !' This would be uppermost all day long, and, the Lord having helped me so many times, I thought, 'His arm is not shortened that it cannot save, nor His ear heavy that He cannot hear.'"

In another letter to the same friend, she says, "I have had such a sweet time in reading the twenty-fifth Psalm. I shed tears of joy such as I have not shed for a long time. Although I have had to stay at home, yet since the time of joy referred to I have enjoyed much of the Lord's presence ; but I still long to go to hear the Word preached, and I hope to be able to meet with you next Sunday. Oh, that I could feel more thankful to the Lord for His great goodness to me, so unworthy !

" 'Whoever frowns, if Jesus smiles
It makes amends for all.'"

"I long to hear if you were able to go forward and walk in the footsteps of the flock of Jesus. I should have liked to have been one ; and I want to encourage a faint hope respecting my husband. Oh, that the Lord would hear my poor petitions on his behalf ! What a mercy to feel our need of Jesus' supporting grace, and to be enabled to cast our care upon Him who careth for us ! Oh, how much better to live a life of trial and care, and be enabled to cast our care upon Him, than to live in ease and go to hell at last !"

May 5th, 1877.—Referring in a letter to her own baptism the month before, at the Dicker, she says, "I felt unfit, yet I trust I felt a longing, loving heart. They sang the hymn beginning, 'Ashamed of Jesus,' &c. The opposition moved me but very little, as I felt such a sweet peace in my soul. I was looking to the Lord, and not to man. If the Lord had not been on my side, I could not have endured. 'Oh,' I thought, 'what is man, vain man ?' How I do wish you could feel such love as I do to the Lord's ordinances ! I felt I could encourage every believer to be baptized. I said to myself, 'Now I have the answer of a good conscience toward God.' I have felt much refreshed, and have often longed to depart to be with Christ, which is far better."

Again, in October, she writes :—

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I hope you have cause to feel thankful to the Lord for His many mercies bestowed upon you. His com-

passions fail not ; they are new every morning ; and great is His faithfulness. I feel I have great cause to be thankful for what I have received at His hand. On Lord's Day I felt it good to be there. What a mercy we are favoured with the Gospel, which bringeth joy to our heart at times, and strengthens and refreshes both soul and body ! I hardly knew yesterday morning if I should be able to go to chapel, but the Lord gave me strength equal to my day. I felt better than I often do ; in fact, I feel better for the journey, so there is the goodness of the Lord again to me, who am so undeserving."

Again, in 1878, she writes to her friend, when in great weakness of body : " You would hardly think how I feel—everything seems a burden to me, but it will make rest all the sweeter. I have been reading to-day where it says Dives had all his good things in this life, and Lazarus his evil things. The rich man had in this world the whole of his portion that he was to enjoy, and Lazarus all the sorrow and misery he was ever to endure ; and in the other world we have Lazarus in Abraham's bosom—a place of rest—entered into peace, and Dives lifting up his eyes in hell, being in torment. I believe all the children of God have their cup of sorrows, some in one way and some in another. I have thought in this affliction, ' What a mercy I have not my religion to seek now ! ' I often long to be gone. I have felt such a sweet, comfortable resting on the Lord most of the time, though sometimes I am cast down ; yet I have no desire to get better. A minister once prayed that I might get better, but what a cold heart I felt during his prayer ! I wanted him to pray the Lord to prepare me for death."

Much more might be written, but I will now refer to her last illness. Her husband took her to her father's house, where she received every comfort she could enjoy. She was taken to the Hastings Infirmary, and had the advice of various doctors, but her case was incurable. At her asylum—I mean her father's house—I had the opportunity of visiting her several times. *I consider her case the most extraordinary I have ever met with, although I have been accustomed to visit sick-beds over fifty years. She was blessed with a stable peace in her soul, and was kept in such an even frame of mind that it almost staggered some of her friends, who expected to hear of doubts and fears. The measure of faith expressed by Mr. Hart, in the original of one of his hymns, seemed to be her portion—

" By a fixed habitual faith,
Jesus Christ to keep in view ;
Trusting wholly in His death
In all we say or do."

She was not much for conversation during the last few weeks of her life, her extraordinary weakness preventing it. After a few words, I generally read a portion of Scripture, and tried to pray with and for her.

But, to be brief, I was leaving her one day, and repeated a line of a hymn—"A few more rolling suns at most." She at once followed on by repeating the next—"Will land me on fair Canaan's coast," &c.

On one occasion I asked her if she had a portion for me to read. "Well," she said, "I have been meditating on the ~~first~~ of Ephesians;" and this being a favourite portion with me, I ventured to speak a little on it, but I found she could not bear it, so after this I took care to make a short stay.

The last time I saw her was Thursday, December 8th. I found her very composed, though so weak. I thought it would not do to say or read much, so I read the 115th Psalm. She lay with her eyes closed, but when we reached the end of the Psalm she opened her eyes and said, "Read another," in a very cheerful mood, saying, "I can bear it when I close my eyes."

She enjoyed these Psalms very much, and we conversed together of the Lord's great goodness in dealing so gently with her poor skeleton body. I said to her, "The Lord knows your strength is small, so He has not permitted the great adversary to torture your poor mind; and, as He has enabled you to give a lifetime testimony of His goodness to you, it is my earnest desire and prayer that He will enable you, if His blessed will, to leave a dying testimony. I am satisfied if I hear no more; but, for the satisfaction of others, and to confirm such as sometimes waver, I hope that even in death you may speak of His goodness to your soul." I bade her farewell about noon, not expecting to see her again alive. From this time till Friday evening she lay very quiet and said but very little. But when her sister gave me information of her death, she wrote as follows:—

"DEAR FRIEND,—You will not be surprised to hear of the death of my dear sister Mary. She said a great deal to us on Friday night, but I cannot state particulars now. She wished her mother to be with her, that she might die in her arms. On Sunday night she became very restless, and wished to be set up in the bed, but was too weak to sit up. She was raised several times, and begged her mother not to leave her, and about midnight her last words were: 'I am going to heaven. Good-bye, good-bye! Happy! happy! happy! I am going to heaven!' She then fell back and breathed her last."

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."

W. C.

THE RIGHT WAY.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—How quickly time runs on! What a vapour is our little span of life! Very early in this century I was born, and it is now far advanced. I am becoming old; and, if you live a few more years, you will be following hard after. This consideration will be painful, or otherwise, according to our hope in Christ. There is nothing here worth living for, except that it is a time for God, if He, in His infinite mercy, be so pleased, to reveal to us His love; and if He will at this time so favour us, it will then indeed be a happy and blessed beginning of a New Year to us, and such a happy New Year I desire for you, myself, and all my friends. But while I say this, I do not think that, at all times when God is blessing us, it must be a *joyous* time. There are times of ploughing, sowing, weeding, &c., before we see the golden corn waving in the wind on the bright summer day. Trouble comes before the joy, but there are blessings in both.

I was speaking with a friend the other day, and, among other things, said I wanted to see myself what I truly am—so wholly defiled and lost as to utterly despair of self ever being anything better than a polluted lost thing—and then to see Christ as my covenant Head, presenting me in Himself before God, washed in His own blood, freed from all stain, and clothed in His righteousness; thus to see myself no longer *in* myself, but *in Another*, even in that One in whom God is well pleased. But this we only know by God revealing it to us; otherwise we cannot attain to it. While we were thus talking, it struck me that this was the very act of “washing their robes and making them white in the blood of the Lamb;” and though it says “they have washed their robes,” &c., it is all the Lord’s doing. He makes them see themselves defiled from head to foot, and He constrains them to look to Christ as their Head, their righteousness, their wisdom, their life, their all; and thus, being emptied of self, they receive the rays of Christ, the “Sun of Righteousness,” and reflect all the glory back unto Him, saying, “Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Thy name be all the glory.”

I also had a few thoughts afterwards. It seemed to be set forth by the leper, who, when the leprosy had completely covered him from head to foot, was pronounced to be clean by the priest. Thus it is with sinners; while they see but little of their sinful state, there will be a cleaving to a hope (though false) of somehow being healed; but when the extent of the malady is seen and felt, then comes despair and death (as to any hope in self). Then such souls are thankful to have a sight of another life, another Person embodying a perfect atone-

ment, righteousness, and all that the soul can need to make him perfect before God, and to fill him with perfect happiness. Now, if God is leading us down to this death to self, there is a blessing in it, though for the present it is not joyous, but grievous. Faith is needed here, to enable us to accept what God chooses for us. It was said to the Israelites, when they were about to pass over Jordan, "Ye have not passed this way heretofore;" and the Lord says, "I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not" (Isaiah xlii. 16). May our hearts be enabled to say—

"Choose Thou the way, but still lead on,
Nor leave us till we say, 'Father, Thy will be done.'"

Another thought I had, in considering the corruption of the natural mind; I thought of the words of the Lord Jesus, "Out of the heart of man proceed evil thoughts," &c.; but out of the heart of the God-Man, or the Second Adam, proceed pure thoughts, thoughts of mercy and love; "good will towards men;" nothing defiling there, no spot or taint of sin. This is the greatest of all blessings. If there had been any spot of sin in Him, where would have been the righteousness to justify poor sinners? No—

"His life was pure, without a spot,
And all His nature clean."

But this way from Egypt to Canaan through the wilderness is indeed a trying and wearisome way, not only in what we meet with from without us, but what we have within us that opposes our way to Christ. It is only made easy when our own strength is gone, and we are made willing to cast ourselves as weak children upon Christ without reserve for strength, wisdom, righteousness, redemption, and all grace, and, like Paul, to glory in our infirmity, that the power of Christ may rest on us.

I am, dear friend, with love,

Yours affectionately,

January 2nd, 1879.

E. MORGAN.

MEN are afraid to die in such and such sins, but not afraid to live in such and such sins.—*Dr. Goodwin.*

IF any one profess to be a disciple of Christ, to follow the example of His life, to obey His doctrine, to express the efficacy of His death, and yet continue in an unholy life, he is a false traitor to Him, and gives his testimony on the side of the world against Him; and, indeed, it is the flagitious lives of professed Christians which have brought the doctrine and Person of Christ into contempt.—*Dr. Owen.*

PSALM CVII. VIEWED AS THE BELIEVER'S
PROGRESSIVE EXPERIENCE.

THIRD STAGE.

(Continued from page 118.)

Verse 17: "Fools." "He will speak peace to His people and His saints; but let them not turn again to folly." Yet this is what they will be sure to do, having inherited the disposition from Adam. He spilt the cup of his happiness and goodness, and so do we; for folly is bound up in the heart of the child, and the rod of discipline must be used to drive it out. "Fools." How suitable the word they only know who feel the plague of the heart and know the power and madness of indwelling sin. "Fool—never surely such another in the world!" is the feeling expression of the believer, as he is being humbled and proved by all things around him. He feels his heart like tinder, to catch any spark of evil that may touch it. He thought, he hoped, he was more thoroughly changed in the whole man, and that the old nature within him was crippled for ever, although not destroyed. But when, to his astonishment, he feels the old man has lost neither legs nor arms, much less the head, as he hoped, he begins to fear his spot or mark cannot be that of the Lord's saints. Surely none of these can be what he is! Thus listening to the suggestions of Satan and the reasonings of his own heart, down he goes lower than ever. He misinterprets the use of the rod he now feels for "his iniquity and transgressions," for the Lord does thus deal with His children in chastisement. He does not use the same rod as the one prepared for the wicked, but the rod of His covenant and His love, not of wrath and vengeance. "You only have I known," &c. (Amos iii. 2). "If his children forsake My law . . . and keep not My commandments, then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless My loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him" (Psalm lxxxix.). Thus, misunderstanding the use of the rod, he argues against himself, and, guided by feelings instead of by faith and the Word, he is prepared to accept as true the bold insinuation of his enemy that he has been deceived all along and is but a hypocrite. He has been enlightened, it is true; he has tasted also and felt; but what say Hebrews vi. and x. of such? also 1 Corinthians x. 1—11? All these Scriptures come rushing in with seven-fold testimony, and, backed by his experience of the illusory light and power of Satan and his own conscience, he feels sure it is right, and is confirmed in the fear that he has been deceived. This is most dreadful to the now-born soul, whose life and hope are in heaven, and to whom sin and its consequences are as

hateful as they are to the Lord. The thought of banishment from God's presence and separation from His people is crushing. It must be true, he argues, for he has all the symptoms of a reprobate. He already feels "fiery indignation" and "fearful looking for" further judgments. Like Esau, he cries, but is not heard. His soul, once so joyous and fertile of good thoughts and feelings, has become like the ground which is cursed, and produces nothing but thorns and briers. He never felt as now he feels—such rebellion, hard thoughts of God; such infidelity, stupidity, and recklessness. He is astonished at the stoical indifference he sometimes feels on the very verge of perdition. He is in Satan's sieve, where all the good of grace is out of sight, and all the evil of sin is seen on the surface. He can see nothing of the Lord but through the devil's medium, and this represents Him as tyrannical, unjust, and full of wrath and vengeance against poor helpless creatures who could not help being born in sin, nor prevent the sad consequences. Self-pity, self-justification take the place of self-condemnation and confession. "I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed" (Psalm lxxvii.). The sad end of all this is despair. He has committed the unpardonable sin. It is quite plain; the Scripture proves it; he feels it, and God Himself, as he believes, confirms it. Now it is "their soul abhorreth all manner of meat." As to the food the people of this world feed upon, it is loathsome. As to going back to Egypt, never! If he must be lost, the company he has kept shall still be his. "All manner of meat." What! the bread of life? Yes; but not with the loathing as of the world's garbage. This is like the squeamishness of disease. The man would faint eat, but the stomach refuses, and nausea is felt at the sight of the most tempting food. As in nature, so spiritually, just now. Thus pining, he draws "near unto the gates of death." "My soul refused to be comforted." "I said in my haste, All men are liars;" and even God Himself scarcely escapes this charge, as with Jeremiah, "Wilt Thou be altogether unto me as a liar, and as waters that fail?" (Jer. xv.) This is desperate; a horrible pit indeed; a worse condition than before, because now beyond all hope, "twice dead, plucked up by the roots." But out of these depths (Psa. cxxx.), with Jonah, "out of the belly of hell," there is a cry: "Then they cry." It is but the sigh of the despairing soul, but it is a cry which reaches heaven. It comes from a child, from divine life (2 Pet. i. 4), an undying life—

"Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
The falling of a tear."

"Then they cry" out of anguish of heart, "Is His mercy clean gone for ever?" "Hath God forgotten to be gracious?" "For the

oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord." "And He saveth them out of their distresses." But how is this done? What a distance now is the soul from God! Further off than the ends of the earth, for it has been in the very belly of hell. With the Lord, as with a parent, when the child cannot come, help is sent to him. So here, "He sent His Word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions." So the Lord Jesus healed John the Baptist's unbelief, not by saying, "I am indeed the Christ," but by performing the work which it was foretold should be done by the Messiah, and then reminding him of what was written. So the Bible, the Word, is sent with better spectacles, so to speak; and now he sees how wrongly he read it before. He now sees quite plainly that, if his backsliding was the unpardonable sin, then both David and Peter must have committed it, and one iron chain is snapped asunder. Then he perceives that the sin never forgiven is one that can be seen by others: "If any man see," &c. (1 John v. 16); that it is the sin of apostasy, and not of backsliding, that is meant, and another chain is broken. And then it is shown him that underneath all there was a right estimate of the blood of Christ; for his conscience bears witness that all along, even when floods of unbelief and blasphemy were deluging his soul, he longed to be a sharer in the virtue of that precious blood, and how he envied those who felt its power, and now he sees this was of God. His cleaving to the brethren and the ordinances is another proof, and now the nature of grace and mercy that endureth for ever is shown him, and his interest in this marvellous mercy is assured. So he is healed, and Satan slinks off like one ashamed, and the soul is like a bird escaped from the snare of the fowler.

Verse 22: "And let them sacrifice," &c. In addition to the praise called for before, something more is required now. The deep indebtedness of the soul for this marvellous deliverance calls for unusual and prolonged thanksgiving; and now, understanding better the Gospel scheme of redemption, none of his sacrifices have any more of the legal mixture, but they are all praise for free grace. This kind of sacrifice is always acceptable. "He that offereth praise glorifieth Me." Yet something more is required of the believer—that the communication of his faith may be effectual (Philem. 6). He was young, timid, and doubting of his standing before; he did well not to say much to others; but, now he has experienced something to speak of to the glory of grace, let him not eat his morsel alone, for the whole Church is interested, the whole body is moved by the pulsation of any part. The good done for him and in him is to be acknowledged for the encouragement of others, and that his own

faith may be increased. Let him "declare His works with rejoicing." "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Let him tell what God has done for his soul with joy, and others shall share it and increase it, both in his own soul and in the Church.

(To be continued.)

GOSPEL PORTIONS FOR TRUE BELIEVERS.

"Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."—MATTHEW xi. 28.

THIS is Christ's invitation to those who "groan, being burdened" with the guilt and power of sin, as the publican was who cried out, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" which is the case with those who have been taught to know how great their sins and miseries are, and which is necessary to experience before we can know of deliverance, pardon, and peace. The whole, who feel no pain, and are not burdened with sin, need not a physician; but they that are sick of sin, weary of its service, and contrite in soul for it, do need one; and such are the characters invited and encouraged to come to Christ, the Great Physician. He says, "'Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden,' and lay down your burdens at My feet. Look unto Me, believe in Me, and do not trust in your own righteousness; but in My Person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, 'and I will give you rest,' " which none can give you but Christ Himself.

What is that rest which Christ gives? He gives (1) *a spiritual rest*, which believers do enter into here (Heb. iv. 3), which does not consist in an entire freedom from sin and trouble. This we are not promised in this life (John xvi. 33), but in that spiritual peace and joy which proceeds from an application of His atoning blood, and a view of that perfect righteousness which He has wrought out. When these things are viewed by faith, and we can believe that we have an interest in them, oh, what joy and peace is felt within! To use the words of Newton—

"It makes the wounded spirit whole,
And calms the troubled breast;
'Tis manna to the hungry soul,
And to the weary rest."

Christ will also give (2) *eternal rest* hereafter: "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God" (Heb. iv. 9); a perfect rest from sin and all remaining corruptions; a rest from the temptations of Satan; a rest from all the labours, sorrows, and afflictions of this life; and a rest from all unsatisfied desires.

Here the desires of a believing soul are never satisfied ; but not so hereafter. David says, "As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness : I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness" (Psa. xvii. 15).

Dear reader, are you burdened with sin ? Do you cry out with Paul, "Oh, wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from this body of death ?" Come unto Christ, cast your all upon Him, for He will in no wise cast you out, but freely give you rest.—*From "The Banner of Truth."*

"MY TIMES ARE IN THY HAND."

(PSALM xxxi. 15.)

"My times are in Thy hand,"
I'd wish them to be there ;
Leave all at Thy command,
And cast on Thee my care :
Trust not to erring reason's eye,
But look by faith beyond the sky.

"My times are in Thy hand ;"
What if my path appear
Too dark to understand ?
True faith can hush my fear :
Help me to trust with Thee my soul
When furious billows round me roll.

"My times are in Thy hand,"
Let faith behold them there ;
And cast, at Thy command,
Myself and all my care
Low at the feet of Thee, my God,
Trusting that all shall work for good.

"My times are in Thy hand ;"
My journey and its end
I'd leave to Thy command,
Thou never-changing Friend :
Clouds are around to reason's eye ;
All's bright to faith above the sky.

Thy precepts be my guide,
Thy promises my stay ;
Oh, keep me near Thy side,
And help me every day,
Through grace, Thy precepts to fulfil,
And leave to Thee Thy sovereign will !

1861.

S. SEARS.

OH, the sore moans and heavy groans of a deserted soul that has had the experience of the sweetness of Christ !—*Erskine.*

A LETTER BY THE LATE J. C. PHILPOT, M.A.

MY DEAR L—,—I hope you will excuse my delay in replying to your interesting and affectionate letter ; but my time, as you know, is not my own, and it has lately been occupied with selecting and bringing out a new supplement to Mr. Gadsby's hymn-book, in addition to my ordinary work.

I read the account which you give of your exercises with interest and pleasure. It may be said of spiritual exercises as the Apostle speaks of chastening generally—of which indeed they form a component part—that “for the present they are not joyous, but grievous ; but afterward they yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby.” *Why* the Lord suffers so many of His people to be so long and deeply tried about their interest in Christ—why He does not more speedily and fully manifest His pardoning love to their souls—is a mystery which we cannot fathom. But I have observed that, where the first work was not attended with deep and powerful convictions of sin, it is usually the case—as if what was wanting in depth has to be made up in length, and a slow, continuous work compensates, as it were, for a shorter and more intense one.

I consider it, however, a great mercy where there are these exercises, for I am well convinced that exercise is as much needed for the health of the soul as of the body. Without movement the air becomes pestilential and water putrescent. Motion is the life of the natural, and equally so of the supernatural, creation ; and what are exercises, doubts, and fears, accompanied as they always are by desires and prayers, but means by which the soul is kept alive and healthy ? Here I think I may appeal to my dear friend's own experience. Does he not often find his soul cold, barren, and dead—a prey, as it were, to sin and folly ? And do not exercises seem to stir his soul up and instrumentally arouse it out of this carnal, stupid, indifferent state ? Let him cast his eye along the whole path that he has trod from the beginning, and does he not find that exercises have been leading means whereby his soul has been kept alive ? As Hezekiah said, “O Lord, by these things men live, and in these things is the life of my spirit.”

But if you cannot see what good exercises have done you, can you not see what evil they have kept you from ? They mainly kept you from being entangled in a worldly system ; they have preserved you from resting in the form without the power, and kept you from that notional dead-letter faith which has ruined so many thousands. Without exercises you could do without a revealed Christ—without manifested pardon of sin—without the love of God being shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Ghost.

And here most are who are not exercised—resting in “a

name to live," and in the doctrine without the experience. But, being sick, you need a physician; being guilty, you need mercy; and, being a sinner, you need salvation; and all this, not in word and name, but in reality, and divine revelation and application. Your exercises give you errands to the throne of mercy, and make you see in Christ and His precious Gospel what otherwise would neither be seen nor cared for. At the same time, it would be wrong to rest in exercises as marks and evidences of grace. Thirst is good as preparatory for water; hunger is good as antecedent to food; but who can rest in thirst or hunger? Without them, water and food are not desired; so, without exercises, Christ, the Water and Bread of Life, is not desired nor longed for. But these exercises are meant to quicken longing desires after Christ, and eventually make Him very precious.

But I am glad to find that the Lord has kindly and mercifully encouraged your soul from time to time with some openings up of His Word of truth. These are highly to be prized as tokens for good, as the day-star before the Sun of Righteousness. Sin and Satan will often seek to dispute you out of them; but it will be your wisdom and mercy to hold them fast, and not let them go, seeing they are your life, but rather plead them with the Lord and seek their complete fulfilment (Psa. cxix. 49).

I can say but little on the subject of baptism. Its mode and intention you need not be instructed into. The question with you is, "Am I a fit subject?" You appropriately quote the faith of the eunuch; but his believing with all his heart was not necessarily his own interest in Christ, but that He was the Son of God. This a person may do with a divine faith, and thus be a fit subject for baptism, who is not equally persuaded that Christ is his. Nor can we well believe that all the three thousand baptized on the day of Pentecost had the full assurance of faith. But, though not necessary, I have long felt that a certain degree of assurance, amounting to a good hope through grace, is desirable, and that for all parties—desirable for the candidate, and for the minister that baptizes him, as well as for the Church that receives him. There should be, I think, in a candidate, a death and a resurrection—a death to the law, and a raising up to a lively hope in the Gospel. More than this hardly seems requisite, and less not sufficient.

As to the question proposed about John's baptism, I hardly see its bearing or importance. The Redeemer's baptism is our example, and we follow Christ in baptism when baptized under the Gospel. Christ taught His disciples verbal prayer, after the example of John (Luke xi. 1—4), but that form of prayer is no more binding on us than John's baptism. Still, prayer remains

as a Gospel ordinance. Apply this analogy to the two baptisms. The main point is this, "Is baptism Christ's ordinance, and was it practised by His disciples?" Of these two points there is not the slightest doubt.

I cannot now add more, but write again when you feel disposed. I hope (D.V.) to be at Allington in May, if health and strength be given. I am, through mercy, pretty well. Remember me kindly to your sister.

Yours affectionately,

Oakham, December 31st, 1849.

J. C. PHILPOT.

MEMOIR OF THE LATE MRS. ELLEN LOWE.

THE following account of the Lord's dealings with Mrs. Ellen Lowe, of Golborne, Lancashire—born June 13th, 1851, died July 21st, 1881—is mostly copied from what was written by herself:—

"I cannot state the exact period when, I trust, divine life was first imparted to my soul. I had the great privilege of having good Christian parents, who loved and valued a searching and discriminating ministry; thus I was from childhood brought up under the sound of the Gospel, and so was made acquainted with the letter of divine truth. From early childhood I was the subject of strong convictions of sin, of my vileness and transgressions, and of what a hell-deserving wretch I must be in the sight of God. I remember once being very solemnly impressed with the fourth hymn (Gadsby's Selection), which Mr. Taylor, of Manchester, gave out. My soul shuddered within me while he (Mr. Taylor) proceeded with this deep, this blessed hymn on the sovereignty of God. I seemed to see what a great, holy, and terrible God we have to do with, and what a vile sinner I was, and I seemed this night, for the first time, to see for myself that there must be a great change take place. What this change was I could not tell, but I felt solemnly convinced that in my then present condition I could not face a holy God and live. I knew that the Scripture declared that none can reach heaven unless they are born again; but how such a change was effected I could not tell. One thing I knew, and that was, that I had not had such a change. This was when I was very young indeed. Another time, when hearing a sermon preached from the 106th Psalm, and fourth verse: 'Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that Thou barest unto Thy people,' &c., I was led to see that I was out of the secret, and oh, how earnestly I tried to pray that the Lord would show me I was one of His, and that He would visit me with His salvation! But I seemed to forget these things, and to run into sin with alacrity and delight. Oh, what sin I have gone into, in

thought, word, and deed! I have indeed gone 'as far from God as sheep could run,' and, in my own feelings, I have often thought it impossible for a sheep ever to run to such a length as I have. What a depraved nature I had (and have, to my sorrow, still)! What a wicked heart is mine! There is not a sin which fallen mankind is liable to but I have within, and it is all owing to God's rich preventing mercy that those base sins, which were only thought of, did not come out into open action! No thanks to me for this; no, I loved sin too well; it seemed to be my very element. I delighted in it, and drunk it in greedily, and, if almighty grace had not stopped me in my mad career, I should long since have been in hell, reaping the reward of my doings—

“ ‘ Oh, to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be!
Let that grace, Lord, like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to Thee.’ ”

“ Thus I went on till I was about seventeen years of age, when I was made deeply to feel my sinful, lost, ruined, and helpless state, and to see that salvation was a personal matter—a reality I must have, or be lost; and these feelings did not wear away, as all previous convictions had done. I knew well that Jesus Christ was a Saviour—One who was “able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him.” Yet I could not see how He could save such a wretch as I felt myself to be. I could not take Him or believe on Him; no, I felt that I could not go a step toward Him, and that if ever I was saved He must come and do it—come and lift me, by free, unmerited favour, out of the helpless condition I was in. Thus I was led on, till the blessed Spirit was pleased to show me Jesus as I had never viewed Him before. He showed Him to me as the Lamb for sinners slain; as the Fountain opened for sin and all uncleanness; and as the one Way to heaven. But, though I was led to have a blessed view of a precious and glorious Christ, yet I could not feel sure of my interest in Him as my Redeemer; I could not call Him *my Lord and my God*. Still I felt a ‘*Who can tell?*’ rise up, and a hope that He who had by His own power taught me to feel the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and to abhor myself on account of it, and shown me also that all hope of ever saving myself by anything that I could do was for ever cut off, and that nothing but free grace could reach me—I had, I say, a strong hope spring up that He who was such a kind, loving, forgiving Saviour, would at length appear as mine, and I never sank as low again as I had done before. What a blessed thing is a hope in His mercy! When the devil told me that it was not possible for me ever to be one of the Lord's, I could not

give up, but felt compelled to hope on, even if I died in despair. What could I do? Return to the love and practice of sin I could not, and, lost or saved, I could do no more to help myself. Here, then, was my last refuge—at the foot of the cross. Here I **must** lie till Jesus bade me rise and live—

“ ‘Resolved—for that's my last defence—
If I must die, to perish there.’ ”

“And how often I was favoured of the Lord while in a waiting position! What encouragement I got under the ministry; and what a nearness I seemed to have at a throne of grace, when I went there to pour out my many wants! How many times, while under the ministry, has my heart felt ready to burst under a sense of Christ's preciousness and suitability to me in my wretched condition; and I have had hard work to keep from shouting out that He was worth more than a thousand worlds to a self-despairing, sin-sick soul. Here I saw a fulness for His people's varied wants; but was I one of them? I trusted that I was, and I could not help feeling myself solemnly persuaded, on Scriptural grounds, that this precious Christ would at length appear for me; and, in my foolishness, I then thought that my life would be one continual scene of praise and rejoicing; but I have had to learn, by painful experience, that it is ‘through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom.’ Well, strange to say, after this I fell into a cold, dead, and indifferent state, in which I remained for some time (until the beginning of 1870). Oh, what a dark night this was for my poor soul! What a wretched time! What a sleepy, unconcerned state I was in! And—to my shame I confess it—I seemed to enjoy the world and the things of it more than I had ever done in my life before, but in spiritual matters there was an icy coldness that nothing but divine grace could reach. Oh, Lord, do grant I may never get into the same state again—

“ ‘For more the treacherous calm I dread
Than tempests bursting o'er my head.’ ”

“I am truly a mystery to myself. To think that God should, in His infinite mercy, not leave me to fill up the measure of my iniquity, and then send me to that place where hope and mercy can never come—this is a mystery that I think I shall never be able to fathom here below, and I trust this feeling will ever keep me humbled in the dust. Well, here I was, in this unconcerned state, where none but an almighty hand could reach me. But the Lord knows best how to manage such a

case, and what means will be most effectual for His people's good and His own glory ; and so, in this case, He brought on a severe illness. My health for some time rapidly declined, until, to all appearance, my time on earth was short. Oh, bless the Lord for this affliction, for 'before I was afflicted I went astray.'

"One day, while thinking on the things of God, these words came powerfully to my mind : 'The time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land ;' and truly the time had come. What a view I had by faith of a crucified Saviour, suffering for *my* sins, and these words were impressed powerfully on my heart : 'I have loved *thee* with an everlasting love ;' 'I have called *thee* by thy name ; *thou art Mine.*' Oh, what rich, free, eternal, everlasting love was this, and to be poured out on one so vile ! For several weeks I had a most blessed time—a rich foretaste of heaven—

" 'If such the sweetness of the streams,
What must the fountain be,
Where saints and angels draw their bliss
Immediately from Thee ?'

"What a happy time I had ! Jesus was with me of a truth, and His everlasting arms were underneath. I was truly fixed on the Rock of Ages, and was willing for anything—for life or death, whichever should be the most for the glory of Him who had done so much for the vilest sinner out of hell. Oh, what sweet and glorious promises were brought home to my poor soul ! The Bible seemed unsealed, and all its promises were mine. Never did I think God would condescend to bless such a worm as I in a glorious way like this. I expected every hour to be my last ; and oh, what an abundant entrance I thought I was going to have into the kingdom ! I felt I had done with earth ; there was nothing I wanted to stay for. All my work was prayer and praise. Christ was my 'All and in all ;' and sometimes I felt that my soul could no longer remain in the body, but longed most earnestly for the time when I should see a precious Christ without a veil between, and when I should, with all the ransomed throng—

" 'Cast my crown before the throne,
And shout free grace, free grace alone.'

"How truly I felt that 'for me to live was Christ, but *to die was gain.*' Now I know how He *will* be with His people in a dying hour, for I, that had been so afraid of death, when the time seemed near, could meet it as a conquered foe, and felt that he was but 'a *porter* at the heavenly gate to let the pilgrims in.' God's people don't need dying grace in a living hour ; it is needed

in a dying hour, and then He *will* give it, and abundantly too. I had given up all hopes of getting better; and what a trial it was when I began to improve! What a trial to go down the mount into the world again, to be harassed by sin and Satan, doubts and fears, unbelief, and a hard heart! These I felt I should have to endure; but how I begged that, if I was to be in the world, I might not be *of* it!"

(*To be continued.*)

A BRIEF MEDITATION ON GENESIS XXII.

How full of blessed instruction the types in the Old Testament are, when any degree of spiritual light and understanding is given! The touching account of Abraham so promptly obeying God's command to offer up his son Isaac sets before us more than one glorious Gospel truth, the leading one being the substitution of the innocent for the guilty. It is recorded, "God did tempt Abraham"—i.e., proved his faith and obedience by the command, "Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, and offer him up," &c. (Gen. xxii. 2.) Abraham's ready and willing obedience sets forth the infinite love of God the eternal Father, who did, in the councils of eternity, plan, and in the fulness of time carry out that plan, of giving His only-begotten and well-beloved Son to be a redemption-price for guilty sinners. "Herein is love" (1 John iv. 10).

"And Abraham rose up early," &c. No parleying, no excuse. He took the wood of the burnt offering, the fire, and the knife. The Apostle, in Hebrews xi. 19, tells us that "Abraham accounted that God was able to raise Isaac again from the dead," so sure was he that God would fulfil His promise respecting his seed (Gen. xvii. 7, 16). Abraham was "strong in faith, giving glory to God" (Rom. iv. 20). Isaac goes forth, patiently submitting himself to his father's will. This gives us one aspect of the willingness of the Lord Jesus to obey His righteous Father's will in becoming the sinner's Substitute; but Isaac more fully types out the Church, and thereby represents the guilty, for he was one of the fallen sons of Adam (though a saved one), and therefore his life was a forfeited life. He had doubtless been taught by his father, Abraham, the need of a sacrifice for sin, and to look forward for that great sacrifice which should finally supersede all the "blood of bulls and of goats;" therefore he said, "Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"

Yes, Isaac as truly needed the great atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ as any of us poor sinners do, and, as such, fitly represents the Church, which is composed of a company of ruined, guilty sinners, who are amenable to the holy law of God, bound

by the cords of divine justice to be consumed thereby. God literally provided a substitute for Isaac, in the ram caught in the thicket; but what unfathomable depths of love and grace are revealed to us in the ram's Antitype—He who came to lay down His life for His sheep (John x. 15).

Our lot is cast in times when Abraham's prophecy, "God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering," has been fully accomplished. God has "sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law" (Gal. iv. 4, 5); and He has been led as "a lamb to the slaughter" (Isaiah liii. 7); and now one part of our blessedness consists in being taught by the Holy Spirit our need of just such a Saviour and Surety as the Lord Jesus Christ is revealed in the Word to be. For instance, "we are born in sin, and shapen in iniquity" (Psalm li. 5). He was that holy thing that was born of the Virgin and "called the Son of God" (Luke i. 35). This is a needful part of our salvation. We, by nature, have gone astray from our birth, "speaking lies," manifesting our evil nature by evil passions and deeds. The infancy of the Lord Jesus, as well as all the life of His humanity, was one continued stream of purity, issuing from a pure untainted fountain within: "Holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Heb. vii. 26). He could say to God His Father, "I delight to do Thy will; yea, Thy law is within My heart" (Psalm xl.); while those He came to redeem are described by the Word of God (Jer. xvii. 9) as having a heart "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;" and every convinced sinner proves this is a true description of his case, and that that corrupt fountain is the source of all his inward trouble and grief; and, as years roll on, and his knowledge of himself increases, he can adopt the Apostle's language, "I find a law in my members warring against the law of my mind; when I would do good, evil is present with me;" also, "In my flesh dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. vii. 18). This teaching of the blessed Spirit makes the doctrine of Christ's suretyship so exceedingly precious to exercised souls. His was a pure and spotless life, such as an infinitely holy God can accept, and be well pleased with; and that spotless life, put to the account (or made over) to the convinced sinner, is the only ground such souls can hope upon for acceptance with God. And when this great truth is realized by a divine power in the soul, it becomes the Gospel's "joyful sound" to that soul, and blessed are all they who thus hear and know it (Psalm lxxxix. 15).

A

THERE cannot be a better being for us than to be with the Best of Beings.—*Dr. Goodwin.*

LETTERS FOR THE YOUNG.—No. XXIV.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,—I am very pleased to hear that you arrived safely at your uncle's. I hope, dear, that the change will do you good ; and, if the Lord will, I shall be pleased to see you return home quite restored to health. But, my dear girl, remember that it is the blessing of God upon the means used which alone will benefit you ; and, while I hope the blessing will be granted in restoring you again to health, I pray God to bless the affliction to your soul's eternal good. This is the most important matter. You know, dear, that the Bible says, "Ye must be born again ;" and without this great change no one can enter heaven. Do *you* ever feel concerned about these things ? If not, I hope the Holy Spirit will lead you to think earnestly about your soul, which can never die. I often think about these things for you, and for the other dear girls in my class, and I try to ask the Lord to teach you, for without His teaching, mine will profit you nothing. But, my dear girl, my prayer for you is not enough. You must be brought to feel your need of a Saviour, each one for yourselves, and cry to God for mercy, or you will never enter heaven. How is it with you, dear ? You know our short lives will soon be ended, and then where shall we be ? Shall we live for ever with Jesus, or shall we be for ever banished from His presence ? Do not think me unkind ; I write thus in love to your soul.

Yesterday poor Lizzie M—— was buried by Mr. G——, and he spoke about her at night. His text was, 1 Peter i. and last two verses. You will like to read it, I know. He spoke very solemnly to the young, and he said he believed dear Lizzie was gone to heaven. What a mercy if we should have to say so of others in our Sunday-school !

I hope you will write to me soon, as I shall be anxious to know how you are, and I shall be pleased to receive a letter from you. Before I conclude, I have one request to make. It is that you will try and read a portion of God's holy Word every day ; but do not forget that the Holy Spirit alone can bless it to your soul's good. I pray that He will do so, for Jesus Christ's sake. With kindest love, dear,

I am, your affectionate friend and teacher,
Coventry, May, 1867. M. B.

I WOULD not wish to be without feeling of my sins, and think that I have no need then of remission ; for, if that were the case, all the treasure of Christ were lost on me, seeing He saith Himself, "He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."—*Luther.*

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THE SOWER.

AN EVER-LIVING JESUS.*

"And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye : for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here : for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay."—MATTHEW xxviii. 5, 6.

FULL often have the enemies of our Lord Jesus Christ rejoiced while His friends have mourned, but frequently He has appeared suddenly, and reversed the state of both parties. He did so on the morning of His resurrection. He also manifested His power that Easter time, when Herod the king killed James the brother of John with the sword ; and, because he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also and put him in prison. But the Lord sent an angel to deliver Peter, and soon afterwards the angel of the Lord smote Herod, and he died a horrible death (Acts xii.).

It is not unusual for the Lord's people to meet with painful disappointments which turn to their advantage. We should endeavour to do the right and be always found in the ways of the Lord, whatever our state of mind may be, whether dark or bright, confident or doubtful, for only the paths of the Lord lead to peace. Our safety does not depend upon our perfect knowledge of all His ways, nor upon our steadfast faith in the accomplishment of all His purposes, although our peace of mind is connected with both. The women who were early at the sepulchre neither understood nor believed that Christ would rise again on the third day after His crucifixion, notwithstanding that their salvation depended on His victory over death and the grave. It is certain they acknowledged Him as their Lord and Master, and loved Him as such, but they had forgotten very much which He had taught them ; for He had told them that on the third day He would rise again. The adversaries of the Lord seem to have retained some of His sayings which His friends had let slip ; they said, " We remember that that deceiver said, while He was yet alive, After three days I will rise again " (Matt. xxvii. 63).

However, if Mary did not realize the resurrection of her Lord before the event, she did soon after it. She could not forget the power and grace by which He had cast seven devils out of her ; this fact had remained engraven in her heart. Her attachment to Him who had done such great things for her led her to

* Notes of a Sermon preached on Easter Sunday, 1882, at Sibble Heddingham, by Walter Brown, of Colchester.

the sepulchre before it was day ; and, not being overwhelmed by the impediments—the great stone and the guard—in the way of her service of love, she came to the grave bearing the spices, but only to find it *empty*, and thereby to have her grief augmented and the flame of her love increased. Surely, “love and grief her heart divided.” And, truly, if the friends of Jesus were made sad by the forsaken tomb, so were His foes. These had a guard at the sepulchre to make it as sure as they could. Well, what can they do to keep Jesus there? Let them do all they can, they are but men. It only needed a messenger from God to overturn their purpose and cause their watch to become as dead men. One angel from heaven is enough to destroy all their power. The unbeliever is often afraid, like these men, lest, after all, the words of Christ should turn out to be true. But His gracious promise is the word on which His followers hope. How is it with us here to-day? Are you glad Christ is alive? Do you wish and hope to prove that there is an everlasting home for you with Him in glory? If so, you may with pleasure listen to the glad tidings contained in our text. It is the sinner’s only ground of hope.

First, let us consider the important fact, Christ is alive. The resurrection of Christ was revealed to the Old Testament saints. It was preached to the Israelites in the types—in the offering of the two birds—after one had been slain the other was set at liberty in the open field (Lev. xiv. 7); the angel which wondrously ascended in the flame which rose from off the altar (Judges xiii. 20); and David said, “Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captivity captive” (Psa. lxxviii. 18). The resurrection of Christ was at once the proof of His divine Sonship, and the evidence that His self-sacrifice on behalf of His people was accepted; and it was, as well, the strongest demonstration that He held the keys of hell and of death. He is daily giving fresh testimonies that He is still alive, and invested with universal power. Every time a soul is quickened into spiritual life, every instance of a foe being turned into a friend, as was Saul of Tarsus, a declaration is made that Christ is alive; as is also the case in the comforting of the mourners in Zion, and the answers to the prayers of His believing people. Yes, Christ is risen; and this is the guarantee of His people’s eternal salvation, and of the certain defeat of His enemies. His ascension must have produced joy in heaven and terror in hell. What, then, have His followers to fear? Nothing, surely nothing.

Secondly, we will notice the act of seeking Jesus. The women spoken to in the text sought Him *early*; their faith wrought by love—a love which made them restless and anxious to see even the dead body of their Lord. Theirs was a religion of

realities. Their grief was real, their love was real, and their joy became real. It is neither an easy nor a vain thing to seek Jesus. He had said, "Every one that seeketh findeth," and every true seeker finds more in Christ than he expected, although not just what he may expect, as did those early visitors to the tomb. They expected to find Him still dead, but they discovered that He was alive. But observe what was the object of their attendance at the sepulchre. It was to pay a tribute of love to Jesus. They had attended to His wants previous to His death, and they will continue their labour of love to Him even in the grave. The service they intended to render to His body was quite needless, and was never performed. Jesus alive needed not their spices to preserve His body. However, as it was to be a mark of respect, and was in keeping with the custom of the people, we do not read that they were reprov'd for their mistaken zeal. Their *hearts* were right with the Lord, and this is what He noticed. They were seeking *Him*. It was the Jesus which was crucified, the Jesus who had suffered; whose teaching had been resisted by the Jews; whose miracles had been ascribed to His connection with Beelzebub; whose holy life had been traduced, and His death brought about as a vile blasphemer by lying witnesses. The Jesus thus set at nought by the world was the one these seeking ones desired to find.

Now, are we seeking this same Jesus—this Jesus who "bore the contradiction of sinners against Himself," and yet died for these very opposers? He died for the ungodly; He shed His blood for the remission of their sins, and prayed for their forgiveness with His latest breath. These women desired that Jesus who said, "I lay down My life for My sheep," and "They shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand." This Jesus never was the chosen Christ of the world. No, He was rejected of men; and many who followed Him for a time afterwards went back, and walked no more with Him. But these women went forth seeking Him, even though He had died the shameful death of the cross, and when they believed He was still numbered with the dead. Their love to Him surmounted the fear of men and the gloom of the locality of graves. They were not alone when there. Angels, who have sometimes attended visibly, but who always, though unseen, attend the saints, were at the sepulchre; and soon a word of encouragement was spoken by the angel, who mentioned the name they revered, and whose presence caused the keepers at the tomb to fear and shake, while the seekers of Jesus were made glad, and told to fear not.

No one can be a seeker after Christ without being interested in the knowledge and approbation of God, and each shall be

encouraged by Him. Had not the angel been there, the women would have returned home with sad hearts. However, they were made the happy messengers of good tidings to His disconsolate disciples; and the same words are spoken for every seeker to-day, "Fear not ye;" but to His foes His is a voice producing fear, shaking, and shame. What are your thoughts respecting Christ alive? All are not public messengers for Him, but all His disciples think about Him and seek Him, and "a book of remembrance is written before the Lord for those who fear Him and *think upon His name*" (Mal. iii. 16).

The text suggests many things for profitable meditation. We see that no power, not even death and the grave, can hinder the work of Christ for the salvation of His people; all the efforts of men fail before Him, too. We are directed to contemplate the empty grave. This we can do with delight, because we know that Jesus is alive. Nevertheless, it was a *real grave*. He died and was buried. We here see what our sin brought the Lord of life to. Yes, our Jesus passed through death and the grave on His way to glory. We, too, are hastening to fill a grave—

"Yes, we shall soon be dying,
Time swiftly glides away."

Can we say—

"But on the Lord relying,
I hail the happy day"?

The grave is not to be our eternal prison-house; it is to be our resting-place for a season. *Our* grave also will be forsaken when He who is our life shall appear. Look then at the grave as the proof of sin's reign, and at the *empty grave* as the declaration of Christ's triumph over it, and the pledge of your future glorious exaltation and perfect happiness, if you by faith are resting upon the atoning work and blood of Jesus.

In conclusion, bear in mind that it is the same Jesus who was led as a lamb to the slaughter that John saw in the midst of the throne, still bearing the marks of His suffering, "a Lamb as it had been slain." Jesus remembers Calvary. He can say—

"The palms of My hands when I look on I see
The wounds I received while suffering for thee."

Yes, we have the same Jesus, to whom we may come to-day, with the same reasons for seeking Him, and with the same hope of finding healing virtue in Him, as had those who sought to touch the hem of His garment in days of old. He is "able to save to the uttermost." Yea, He is still "mighty to save." Do you feel your need of Him? Are you also seeking Him? Then fear not. He knows what you want and where you are.

He will send a word to you, a soul-healing and heart-cheering word. This same Jesus will quickly come again and receive you who love Him to Himself, to His own home.

"There you will see His face,
And never, never sin ;
There, from the river of His grace,
Drink endless pleasure in."

"MY THOUGHTS ARE NOT YOUR THOUGHTS."

(1 PETER i. 3.)

ALTHOUGH we are in Christ new creatures made,
How subject still to bondage, doubt, and fear !
Sin lurks within and rears its haughty head,
Scarce doth one ray of hope, at times, appear.

One time I vainly thought that I should be,
While in this world of sin, and guilt, and woe,
From every sin and sorrow quite set free,
And happy to the end should onward go.

But oh, how vain, I since have lived to prove,
Are all such foolish, human thoughts as these !
For He who dwells in heaven, a God of love,
Ere time began, determined otherwise.

Like Peter, James, and John, and others too, *
I quite mistook the work of Jesus Christ ;
'Tis certain they but very little knew,
Nor I, of what the kingdom did consist.

The hope I had, like theirs, was very quickly lost ;
It would not, could not, stand temptation's fire ;
So very soon it yielded up the ghost, †
And buried was in despond's quaggy mire. ‡

But in the doubting Christian's darkest hour,
The light breaks through the clouds, the soul looks up,
And Christ's almighty resurrection power
Begets within the soul a living hope.

And though, through trial, sharp and lasting long,
This hope is often damped, yet still it lives ;
And live it must, for Jesus Christ is strong,
And needful strength He daily, hourly gives.

Then may we cry to Him, "Increase our faith !"
That so we may in Him alone believe ;
And prove Him precious now, and down to death,
Then rest in Him, and He the praise receive.

Brighton.

R. G.

* Luke xxiv. 21.

† John xxi. 3.

‡ Psalm xl. 2.

A FRIENDLY EPISTLE.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Grace, mercy, and peace be with you and those that love and fear God at C——. It gave me pleasure to receive your letter, from which I trust I may gather that my labour among you has not been in vain in the Lord. God is my Witness how at times my soul wrestles with cries and tears that the Lord would bless His Word to poor sinners, and it rejoices my heart to hear that the Lord answers my petitions; but oh, how much do I need the prayers of the Lord's people! What a help they have been to me at C——, and at other places! How mysteriously the Lord works! I told you the appearance of those two collegians somewhat daunted me; and yet it must be one of those whom the Lord intended I should speak to, not in the words that man's wisdom teacheth, but as the Holy Ghost teacheth; and how evident it is that they that are joined to the Lord are of one spirit, and that they who are brought to know the voice of the Lord shall be sought out, reclaimed from every mountain of sin, ignorance, darkness, and error, and be at last gathered home, where there shall be one fold and one Shepherd! What a mercy the Lord is pleased to give any food to His sheep while passing through this wilderness, for such cannot be satisfied with the husks (mere external forms and ceremonies) which the swine feed upon. Nothing short of pure grain—clean provender that has been winnowed by the shovel and the fan—will do for them; and for this to be found in the ministry of the Word, it is necessary that both minister and people be well exercised in both sides of a real religion, the partakers of which will not speak half Hebrew and half Ashdod, but will have a pure language turned unto them, which will be understood by the living family.

But what or who is the Person spoken of? Ah! my friend, it is none but Jesus—His lovely name, His precious blood and glorious righteousness. He must be All in all to our poor sin-bitten souls. In Him is health, pardon, cleansing, food; in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; and when the dear Lord is pleased to turn to us as He did to Thomas, showing us His hands and His dear side, then we see the greatness of our salvation, and think it cannot be for such as we are; but, as we are led again and again to discover that it is all of grace, and dispensed in a free and unmerited manner, we see that the vilest sinner may be saved, and, being brought to feel ourselves the vilest of all, which is only really known as mercy is felt flowing from Jesus to our poor souls, we loathe ourselves under a felt persuasion that the Lord is pacified towards us. Here we are made to feel ashamed of our prayers, our songs, our sermons, finding so much sin is mixed with them, and we can glory in nothing but a

crucified and risen Saviour. And what matchless mercy that He who has won our heart and engaged our affections will one day say, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," to the joy of our heart, but to the confusion of millions of our fellow-creatures who have not been such sinners as we have. And here the final gathering in will take place, and we shall no longer need the light of the sun and of the moon, but the Lord will be our everlasting light, and the days of our mourning shall be ended. A prospect of this should reconcile us to pains, afflictions, and sorrows here, seeing the time is short, and, in a little while, "He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." Oh, to be ready for the heavenly Bridegroom, and to be enabled to say, "Come, Lord Jesus!" It is my earnest desire to live every day as though it were my last; but, alas! how far I come short. What cause there is constantly to confess that we are unprofitable servants, and to cry, "My leanness, my leanness! woe unto me!"

Thus far I wrote last week; ever since then our dear little boy has been very ill, and the doctor has been attending him daily. This has so put everything out of my head that, at times, I seem at my wits' end; but the Lord is good, and, whatever may be the result with our dear child, we shall have to say, "Not in anger, but from His dear covenant love," although, as parents, we feel the stroke keenly. With love to the friends,

I remain, yours to serve in the truth,

Deptford, January 18th, 1870.

J. BOORNE.

Mr. T. Porter.

WHAT some call providential openings are often powerful temptations. The heart, in wandering, cries, "Here is a way opened before me," but perhaps not to be trodden in, but rejected.—*Newton*.

It is God's goodness to men to blast all things in the world to them, to break their fairest hopes, that they may be constrained to look above to Himself. He beats them from all shores, that He may bring them to the Rock that is higher than they.—*Leighton*.

GOD'S presence is not to banish evils from us, but comfort and support us under evils, and to moderate and order them as a father is present with a sick child. All the presence of God is not in deliverance, but He is present also in His assistance and in His comforts. Though you be not delivered from your evils, yet you are enabled to bear, and you are comforted under them, and this is a gracious presence of God with you.—*Sedgwick*.

PSALM CVII. VIEWED AS THE BELIEVER'S PROGRESSIVE EXPERIENCE.

FOURTH STAGE.

(Continued from page 140.)

Verse 23: "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters." A new kind of experience, for faith, patience, and all other graces have to be tried in various ways for the glory of God—

"My soul through many changes goes ;
His love no variation knows."

"They that go down." Not all are called to this, but very many. The sea represents troubles, and its waves a succession of them, as in Job's case, or Psalm xlii. 7 : "Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of Thy waterspouts ; all Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over me." As the Captain of salvation was made perfect through suffering, so these are led into deep waters that they may have fellowship with Him. But they have their reward. It is worth going down thus to see "the works of the Lord and His wonders in the deep." "Count it all joy," says James (i. 2) ; and Peter : "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you" (1 Peter iv. 12). This stage represents to us those strange and mysterious dealings, both in providence and within, which now meet the soul. They were not sent when his faith was weaker, but now he must "do business in deep waters." Everything wrong in providence, even to poverty, it may be ; every door of help shut ; coldness from the world, and even from the Church, with respect to help and sympathy ; the heavens as brass and the earth as iron. Prayer, instead of being answered, only seems to increase trouble : "For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Thy name, he hath done evil to this people ; neither hast Thou delivered Thy people at all" (Exod. v. 23) ; "When I cry and shout, He shutteth out my prayer" (Lam. iii. 8) ; "Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away ; all these things are against me" (Gen. xlii. 36). Joseph in prison, under promise of rule ; Moses keeping sheep, without prospect of delivering his brethren, as promised ; David saying, "I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul," even though anointed to the kingdom—this is the nature of the present experience. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone ; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John xii. 24). A death seems to come upon the promise, upon the prospect, the probability, the possibility of fulfilment, as with Abraham and Sarah before the birth of Isaac.

Verse 25: "For He commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind." All this is from the Lord, appointed that they may see His works. He commandeth, He lifteth up; and though, as in Job's case, Satan might do it, the Lord appointed and gave him leave so to do. Joseph's brethren sold him into slavery, but when he is in power he says, "Be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life" (Gen. xlv. 5); "He sent a man before them" (Psa. cv. 17). The waves mount up and again they sink, until the "soul is melted because of trouble," but not bound in iron and brass as before. Melted with heaviness, heart-sick through hope deferred, it is crushed, humbled, broken, like David under Absalom's insurrection, when he said, "Carry back the ark of God into the city; if I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, He will bring me again, and show me both it and His habitation. But if He thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I; let Him do to me as seemeth good unto Him." Like Job, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

Verse 27: "They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man." The wine of astonishment (Psa. lx. 3) causes this. Were there ever such troubles, such repeated troubles—wave upon wave, one messenger of evil after another—no time to swallow, as Job says? "And are at their wits' end," the end of human endurance—no help on any side—all must go to ruin, all perish, if the Lord do not help. The olive is now being crushed, the pomegranate squeezed. Out of these new depths again they cry, and are rescued. But what have they *seen*, what learned, in these storms? Would Abraham have so blessedly seen the day of Christ if he had not been called upon to sacrifice his son? Would either Joseph or Moses have so seen that day (and doubtless they did, as well as Abraham), or would they have been fitted for the places they were afterwards to occupy, had they not been thus disciplined? After all, Moses had not meekness sufficient to bear perfectly his burden, nor Joseph to keep him from swearing "by the life of Pharaoh." None of these, nor David after them, would wish they had missed the troubles they went through, since the revelations then made to them were an ample recompense.

Verse 29: "He maketh . . . a calm;" as before He commanded the waves to be lifted up. Both storm and calm are the Lord's doing. "Let patience have her perfect work." There is a set time when the Refiner sees the transforming of the melting metal, and hears the filial cry, "Not my will, but Thine be done." Then, the Son of Man being on board, He arises, and says to the angry waves, "Be still!" The waves are still;

the troubles are over. Strength has held out as the day, grace has prevailed. A sweet calm, the yielding of the peaceable fruits of tribulation. This is a mighty change, and as surprising as the storm. "The Lord's way is in the sea, His path in the mighty waters, His footsteps not known," but as learned in this way.

Verse 30: "Then are they glad because . . . quiet." How sweet is rest to the weary, and calm to the shipwrecked! This quiet rest of faith and peace is most enjoyable after such storms. None but those who have sailed on these seas can know fully the sweetness of this heaven-made calm. "So He bringeth." They would have liked to find the haven some other way, just as Israel would have liked to reach and possess Canaan at once, and not be worn with forty years' travail in the wilderness. But then where would be the humbling and proving to prepare for the good promised? This desired haven is God in Christ—the knowledge of both—and how can this be without the knowledge of self? How can the value of a remedy be known without the knowledge of the malady? How else can we have fellowship with Christ and know Him, and what it cost Him to purchase pardon for us? They all find the desired haven, but not by the desired way; yet in the footsteps of the flock, and by the *right way*.

Verse 32: "Let them exalt Him," &c. Beyond the former praise and sacrifice, let it be done now in a more public way. This deeper experience both fits the soul to magnify the Lord from the fresh discoveries made in these troubles, and also fits and encourages them to do it more boldly and profitably. Let them first be proved, then purchase a further degree and boldness (1 Tim. iii. 10, 13). Let be it done publicly, "in the congregation," and "among the assembly of the elders." This shows the duty and privilege of those who have such experiences to be teachers of others, and not hide their light, or keep back part of the price. The Lord does not light a candle to put it under a bushel, and He fills not one member with such knowledge and experience for himself alone, but for the benefit of the whole body. So let them exalt Him as righteous and holy in all His works and ways; faithful and true in all His dealings and promises; and let it be done with open lips, as if not ashamed; for it is not our goodness or grace that has done all this, or made us what we are; but the grace is His, and the glory should be His. There is a wrong shrinking from the *open* declaration of the Lord's doings within us which is but "voluntary humility," and has its root in nature's self-righteousness. If it be the work of the Lord, and all of grace, what right have we to conceal it, or to think of it as in any way connected with our deserving? Why should we

keep it back, or shyly notice it, as if it were an offshoot of our own, or produced by any effort or goodness in us? The very manner of telling out experience betrays too often a mixture of self, as if it were not purely the work of grace in us poor earthen vessels. Let them exalt Him, for they ought and shall do so.

FIFTH STAGE.

Verse 33: "He turneth rivers into a wilderness," &c. He "doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number." This is the stage of miracles and wonders, as it is that of steady faith. Former teachings and discipline have produced stability in the soul: "But the God of all grace, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you" (1 Peter v. 10); and the soul can say, with Paul, "He that hath delivered will again deliver, although I have the sentence of death in myself." What has faith to do with impossibilities? Its chart, its warrant, is the written Word alone. The child of God thus far advanced begins to understand the design of his God in such repeated trials of his faith and patience. One lesson he has learned from Scripture—that all the Lord does is for His own glory; and he begins to see what glory is brought to God, and what confusion to his great foe, by these conflicts and triumphs of his faith. It is not himself, but the grace and power of God in him, that gives the victory each time, and, with his God, he can triumph over his mighty foe. He has reached the contemplative stage, and, accustomed to trace things to their source, he sees that the beginning of sin was man's disputing the word of his Creator—a doubt, a suspicion, that what was told him of the tree of knowledge of good and evil was not quite true. Unbelief was the first, and is now the root sin. It is righteous and wise in God to appoint a way of recovery for man, which shall both bruise the head of Satan, and vindicate the character of God for truthfulness. Could any other way be found to mortify and humble the arch-foe, who threw Adam down when in his full strength, than that Adam's prostrate and crippled offspring should be too strong for him, and that on his own ground? Adam had everything within and without to steady his faith in his Creator; we have everything within and without to shake it to the utmost. Full of wounds from head to foot; in the dust and in the dark; the foe ten thousand times stronger than we, and having allies in us; the citadel taken, the walls tottering; with, at times, the only help we have out of sight, or *seemingly* joining with our foes against us; yet to stand firm and steady, and at length come off victorious—this, this is the deepest wound Satan knows. He cares not half so much for the wounds he gets directly from God, or from angels, once his

beloved companions, as for those from the withered arm of a prostrate victim. It is a glorious battle in which we are engaged ; and it brings great glory to our God, and great shame to His and our foe. Let us be willing, then, to fight the good fight of faith, to live by faith, walk by faith, fight by faith ; for we are more than conquerors while in the conflict, inasmuch as we have the assurance of victory in every engagement.

All the lessons in life are on this subject, faith. Much instruction has been needed and given us, and very slow to learn have we been hitherto. Well may our Lord say to us, "O fools and slow of heart to believe !" As in nature many acts produce habit, so often the child of God becomes habituated to trial, disappointment, opposition, darkness, desertion, temptation, and "deaths oft ;" but, with Paul, can say, "None of these things move me ;" and "I have learned in every state to be content." An advanced stage this to reach, but necessary for the strange scenes he has now to behold.

(To be continued.)

ABIDING INSTRUCTION.

THE Holy Ghost, with the witness that He bears, follows the convinced sinner through every stage of his experience, from his first awakening until his translation into the kingdom of God takes place ; so that the convinced sinner who comes to the light, who waits upon God and waits for Him, has the witness of the Spirit in his own heart to the truth of what he feels and of what he seeks. The Spirit bears His witness to the reality of his wants ; to the deep sense he has of his sins ; to the honesty and integrity of his soul ; to his fervent cries and earnest searches ; to his real grief on account of his sins, and his earnest desire of deliverance from them. Nor can such a soul look either God or conscience in the face, and say, "I am neither awakened nor quickened. I am neither in earnest, honest, nor sincere." Nor dare he to say that he has neither hope nor expectation of better days and better tidings ; nor dare he say that there is no truth in him, nor that God has done nothing for him ; nor would he change states (miserable as he is) with the most secure Pharisee, nor with the most gifted professor in the world ; nor would he part with his most dreadful feelings, the chastisements, the reproofs of God, the bitter sense he has of his sins, nor the intolerable burden of them, for all the treasures of Egypt, unless he could get rid of them the right way, namely, by an application of the blood of Christ.

HUNTINGTON.

MEMOIR OF THE LATE MRS. ELLEN LOWE.

(Concluded from page 148.)

My dear wife was a Baptist in heart, though she had never gone through the ordinance. Like all God's people, she was subject to many changes; and, for fear of being deceived, or found a hypocrite in Zion, and also, I believe, for the want of some one to take her by the hand, she never followed her blessed Lord through that ordinance. But I will now give an extract from a paper written by her:—

*May 25th, 1870.**—After hearing the late Mr. Garner at Haydock, Lancashire (the place she regularly attended, and where she heard many of the Lord's sent servants), from the following words recorded in Deut. xxxiii. 23: "And of Naphtali he said, O Naphtali, satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the Lord, possess thou the west and the south," she writes, "Oh, what a refreshing time was this! Mr. Garner begged that the Lord would give some poor soul a good feed that night. I felt satisfied that I was one of God's people, and that I should finally land safe in heaven, as sure as God is in heaven. After he had in some measure spoken of Jesus as being always present with His people, and as Naphtali has his portion in the west, as it says, 'and the outgoings thereof were at Jordan,' even so would our all-conquering Jesus be with us through the swellings of Jordan, and land us safe in the heavenly Canaan. There would our heavenly Sun rise upon us, never more to go down; even as Naphtali, besides having his portion in the west, also had it in the south towards the sun-rising. I never had a sweeter time under the ministry; but how soon it was gone! How oft an absent God I mourn! With me it is little else but night. But everlasting glory and honour crown my precious Jesus for a drop now and then by the way to one not deserving of anything but damnation! 'Oh, could I know and love Him more!' Hail, blessed time when I shall see Him face to face, without a veil between; when I shall be rid of this wicked heart, these dreadful doubts and fears, and be for ever rid of a tempting devil! Oh, if He would but give me another taste of His love, brighten my evidences, and give me strength, for I have not a grain of strength but what He gives me! I feel I would rather give worlds than deceive one of God's people. What an awful thing to be a deceiver and a deceived one! Lord, do keep me from deception! Rather would I go through seas of trouble, and

* This, with other papers written by her, form a kind of diary; but our limited space prevents us giving more than a few brief extracts from what has been sent.—Ed.

be right at last, than to die and find myself deceived. Every line of that hymn (427, Gadsby's Selection), 'Jesus, and shall it ever be?' &c., used to be so precious to my soul. I used to think that, if I was called to it, I could willingly lay down my life for Christ; and now I have not strength to go through water, when, a few months ago, I thought I would have gone through fire. What poor things we are in and of ourselves! Oh, for that communion of saints I so long for! But they all seem so reserved with me; yet, Lord, Thou knowest I do love Thy dear children, for I do hope—sincerely so—that I shall, with them, spend a long eternity in sounding forth Thy praise."

On the 8th March, 1871, she heard the late Mr. Forster blessedly from those words recorded in Matthew xii. 20: "A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench, till He send forth judgment unto victory." (Hymns 286, 202, and 200, Gadsby's Selection, were sung at the time.) She writes, "Truly this was a blessed time. I got another help by the way. How barren I have felt for some time! Oh, what a sweet moment I have had with my dear Jesus! My soul had hard work to keep in my body. Oh, I did want my dear Lord to come and fetch me home! I felt I could have sat and sung myself away to everlasting day.

*"Hail, blessed time! Lord, bid me come,
And enter my celestial home,
And drown the sorrows of my breast
In seas of unmolested rest."*

"If I had mentioned the state of my feelings to any, I should have thought that they had told Mr. Forster. He seemed to preach expressly for me. He seemed to know the secret feelings of my heart. I felt myself to be that poor bruised reed that God has promised never to break—a poor, useless, helpless, lifeless, offensive thing—and yet it pleases God to take notice of me. Oh, what a glorious time it was! Truly I had the Lord's sensible presence with me. I could once more 'read my title clear to mansions in the skies.' Mr. Forster spoke about the Lord's people trying to hide their feelings from others. Indeed, there was scarcely a thing that I had been troubled about but Mr. Forster spoke of it. He said, 'Poor thing, thou wilt have to come, and tell the people what the Lord has done for thy soul.' Lord, do give me strength to come! I am not ashamed of my dear Lord; but I would not deceive the Lord's people for a thousand worlds. What a thing if I should ever do anything that would bring disgrace on the Lord's Church! I know that He that has kept me thus far is able to lead me safely home. Bless His dear name! But what

a fearful, timid thing I am ! Lord, do still be my strength, my righteousness, and my All in all !

“ ‘ A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On Thy kind arms I fall ;
Be Thou my strength and righteousness,
My Jesus, and my All.’ ”

“ *March 19th, 1871.*—Heard Mr. Chandler from Hosea ii. 14, 15 : ‘ Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope ; and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt.’ This was a blessed time. It seemed as if we had a little heaven begun below. ‘ What must it be to be above,’ when a drop from the fountain above gives such happiness here below ? ”

In November of the same year (1871) she had a remarkable dream. She writes :—“ I am not one that believes in dreams, but this one I could not get rid of. The more I thought of it, the more I felt it, and was sure some great trial awaited me ; but I little thought that I should meet with such a fiery one as I did. The devil did his utmost to smother the life of God in my soul (for I have a hope sometimes that I do possess a little of that life), and attacked me on the doctrine of the Trinity. He laid his vile insinuations down in such a way that he got me into such a state which, I hope, if it be the Lord’s will, I may never be in again. From doubting the Trinity, he wanted to make me believe there was no God, and that all I had known and felt of a *dear Emmanuel* was nothing but a delusion, and that the sooner I made an end of myself the better. I really felt that I should lose my senses, but when I felt at the worst, and when he had gone as far as he was allowed to go, my ever-blessed Jesus broke through the gloom, and I had one of the sweetest visits that ever I had in my life. I felt that a Triune Jehovah was mine for ever, and, come what might, I should in a short time see Him as He is. I felt then that I could wade through seas of temptations, trials, sins, doubts, and fears, for I was persuaded, feelingly so, that God was with me. Oh, that I could always feel so ! Lord, do give me fresh strength ! ”

The following date is not in order with the foregoing, I having overlooked it :—

“ *May 15th, 1870.*—Heard Mr. Vaughan from Solomon’s Song ii. 10—12 : ‘ My Beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, My love, My fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone : the flowers appear on the earth : the

time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.' Had a most blessed time under the two sermons preached from this text. Was very ill indeed, and was daily expecting death, but had had such a manifestation of Christ's love to my heart that I was completely resigned, and was, from my inmost heart, longing for the time when He would say, 'Rise up, My love, and come away from all below.' Oh, how thoroughly happy I was! I felt that I had Christ in my heart, heaven in near prospect, and a willing mind to leave all on earth. How blessed to hear a free grace sermon under such feelings as these, and with the idea that, to all probability, it would be the last sermon one would hear on earth!

"*February 10th, 1872.*—Read a sermon by Mr. Sears, called 'The Divine Betrothal'—text, Hosea ii. 19, 20: 'And I will betroth thee unto Me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto Me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the Lord.' Had a most blessed visit from the Lord; have not had such nearness to Him for eleven months. Truly I am from this time doubly engaged to Him, and I desire from this time forth to live only for His honour and glory, and to walk worthy of my divine Lord, Husband, and Master. I am His now, and His for ever, for He has said He will betroth me unto Him *for ever*. 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly,' and fetch Thy waiting pilgrim home!

"*May 15th, 1872.*—Dear Mr. Clough preached from 1 Peter i. and part of eighth verse: 'Whom having not seen, ye love.' This was one of the happiest nights I ever passed on earth. 'What must it be to be above!' Hail, blessed time when I shall see my blessed Jesus without a veil between! I feel that, without a change, my time here is very short; but my dear Lord has so weaned me from all below that I long to be gone, and have not the slightest wish to live, but wish to wait patiently for the time when He shall say, 'Child, come up higher.'

" 'I am waiting by the river,
And my heart has waited long.'

"Oh, Lord, do give me patience to wait Thy will!

"*April 26th, 1874.*—Dear Mr. Taylor preached at Warrington from Hebrews ii. 10: 'For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.' Mr. Taylor showed first the Captain and His perfections, and the way to those perfections, namely, through sufferings; secondly, the bringing of many sons unto glory; thirdly, who are the many sons, and how they are distinguished from the

rest of the world. Had a very happy time under this sermon, and had a feeling of hope spring up that this all-glorious, perfect Captain was *mine*."

She writes again of a sermon preached by Mr. Oldfield, of Chester, from John iii. 14, 15: "'And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' He (Mr. Oldfield) first gave the history of the serpent being lifted up, then the *needs-be* for the Son of Man to be lifted up, so that He may be 'able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him.' He is lifted up by law and justice on the cross, and, having satisfied fully all their demands, He rose triumphant on the third day; and, to show that He had given full satisfaction, the stone was rolled away from the door of the sepulchre, and He arose all victorious over sin, death, and hell; and it is impossible for any of these to hold any of His chosen family, seeing that He has been lifted up. He is lifted up on the pole of the everlasting Gospel by His dear sent servants; He is lifted up at a throne of grace; He is lifted up in His people's affections; He is lifted up at the right hand of the Father, and will be lifted up to all eternity by all His redeemed family. Lastly, Mr. Oldfield showed the blessings and privileges which flow to His family from His having been lifted up. They have eternal life, and shall never perish, but shall finally be landed safely in glory."

I will give one more quotation, written after hearing Mr. Popham, of Liverpool, from Ephesians ii. 1: "'And you hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins.' He (Mr. Popham) showed how dead *all* are by nature, stone dead; dead in their federal head, Adam; dead in law; dead in actual transgressions; dead in ignorance; dead in desires; in short, so completely dead that nothing short of sovereign grace can reach them; but, when the appointed time comes, light and life are communicated by the ever-blessed Spirit to the chosen family of God, which shows him his darkness, vileness, baseness, and wretchedness, which makes him cry, groan, and plead for the Lord to save and bless him, which in His own time He does, by speaking peace to his troubled soul, and by assuring him that he is indeed His."

She has written many extracts from Hill's "Deep Things of God," Brook's "Mute Christian," "Philpot's Sermons," and others, as Huntington, Toplady, Bunyan, &c. She did indeed love these things, and things that accompany salvation; but I must come to her few remaining days on earth. Her health began to decline some eighteen months ago, and not being able to meet with God's people as she had been wont to do, she felt to grow

cold in the things of God ; but the dear Lord forsook not the work of His own hands, and she was led to seek Him with weeping and supplication. Her great bodily weakness, and the prospect of the coming struggle she had to encounter with nature, made her cry mightily unto God. He was pleased to deliver her safely of a son, and it was thought she was again to be raised up ; but her time was come, and she saw and felt the solemnity of it ; and, as great darkness again prevailed in her soul, she wanted continual prayer to be sent up to the Lord for Him to appear and show her another token of His love. "Do come, Lord, do come ! I cannot take a denial. Will He not be favourable any more ? Do come, and let me have a view of Thy lovely face once more ! Do not disappoint me at last. Give me patience. Oh, if I do get to heaven, then loudest of the crowd I'll sing !"

About three weeks before her death she was visited by Mr. Oldfield, and seemed at this time a little better in body, but very dark in her mind, and exceedingly anxious for the comfortable enjoyment of the light of life. Mr. Oldfield tried to comfort her by saying it was divine light in her soul manifesting her darkness, and causing her soul to seek the light of God's countenance ; and life in her heart, which was mourning over death, and seeking for life more abundantly to triumph over death, and that it would do so before she departed, for "at evening-time it shall be light." He read and prayed with her, and left her, hoping to see her again, but he was not permitted to do so. I tried to read and pray, but she wanted power from on high, and the Lord's manifested presence, which in due time came, and enabled her to view death and speak of it and meet it in a calm, quiet, and solemn manner, which is the triumph of faith.

The last day of her life she was almost in constant prayer for the Lord's manifested presence, as she said she did not want to die in the dark. Her cry was, "'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly !'

" 'Prepare me, gracious God,
To stand before Thy face ;
Thy Spirit must the work perform,
For it is all of grace.' "

The enemy tried her very much, as his time was short. She said to me, "What do you think about that ? The devil says I shall be tired of singing in heaven." As the darkness of the night came on, she said, "There will be no night there." A few hours before she died, I asked her if she had a good hope, and she with emphasis said "Yes," which gladdened my heart. After two hours' sleep she awoke, and with a sweet, composed, and smiling countenance, waving her handkerchief, she bade adieu to

me and to all earthly things; and, though I mourn her loss, yet not without a good hope that she has gone to that place where "the inhabitant shall no more say, 'I am sick,' and where all tears are wiped from off all faces—gone to join the host of virgin souls in that glorious anthem, "Unto Him that hath loved us, and washed us in His own blood," &c. Well might Balaam say, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his," "for the end of that man is peace." Oh, what an unspeakable mercy to be judged here, that we may not hereafter be condemned with the world! May we, through grace, when we hear the Lord saying, "Behold, I come quickly," be able to respond and cry out, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Amen.

W. LOWE.

A WARNING.

WE have often deplored the light manner in which some professors have spoken of the Word of God, and the desire evinced by some writers to explain away some of its most important truths and facts; therefore it is with pleasure we note any bold exposure of sceptical teaching, especially when found in popular works which are read by multitudes of the rising race; and we hope the following warning, which we have taken from the *Baptist*, will be remembered and heeded by all godly parents and teachers:—

"A correspondent of the *Christian* calls attention to a matter that would really seem seriously to demand the attention of all parents desirous of having their children grow up with any reverence for the Bible. We allude to the history of Israel, as set forth in 'Cassell's Universal History.' God is systematically ignored as the Deliverer and Leader of His people, and all is attributed to the human agent. It would almost seem that, in the view of this writer, Moses took the initiative, and that, if Jehovah did anything, it was in carrying out the wishes of His servant. Nor is this all, or even the worst. There is throughout the compilation a tone of impertinent, sarcastic criticism of Jehovah, and His servants, and His Word; while the author's sympathies evidently run not with Israel, but with his enemies, and the Jews are compared unfavourably with the disciples of Mahomet."

The extracts given in confirmation of the above statements are truly appalling, too bad for us to insert.

· God often gives a small measure of faith to a great saint, and great faith to a little Christian, that each may esteem the other above himself.—*Luther*.

"JESUS CHRIST, AND HIM CRUCIFIED."

"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."—GALATIANS vi. 14.

PERISH every human story,
Every system taught or tried ;
God forbid that I should glory
Save in Jesus crucified !

Here let faith repose, and cherish
Jesus crucified for me ;
Should the whole creation perish,
I am safe, beneath the tree.

Here my soul by faith would enter,
Pleased no more with fancy's dreams ;
Here is love's refulgent centre ;
Here are mercy's brightest beams.

Here is wisdom in perfection ;
Here's an end of fleshly strife ;
Lord, be Thou my resurrection ;
Jesus, be my spirit's life !

Thy sweet love to me revealing,
Dwell within this worthless heart ;
Let Thy wounding be my healing ;
Let Thy death new life impart.

Lord, Thy love can ne'er be measured ;
Half Thy mercy can't be told ;
Thou hast more within Thee treasured
Than a sinner's heart can hold.

Oh, that I should ever wander
From the sinner's sweetest theme !
Oh, for grace, that I may ponder
All my steps, and walk in Him !

Earth is old, and time is hoary ;
Systems to confusion slide ;
God forbid that I should glory
Save in Jesus crucified !

W. W.

A MAN'S condition in this life may be honourable, and yet his state as to another life may be damnable.—*Dr. Goodwin.*

HE who seeks a comfortable life should not be a teacher of religion. He who seeks riches, honour, and good days is not suited for the service of truth.—*Luther.*

CHRIST'S SHEEP.

"*His own sheep.*"—JOHN x. 3.

AMONGST the many figures used by the Holy Spirit to describe the people of God, that of a *flock* is more familiar and more often referred to than any other; hence an attempt to write about "Christ's sheep" seems like the "gleaning of grapes when the vintage is done." Nevertheless, one's mind is led to the subject, hoping to pluck a cluster or two which may have escaped others' eyes. If enabled to gather a handful, we would humbly lay our offering before the readers of the SOWER, praying the Lord to make the fruit sweet unto their taste.

But we have wandered from the *fold* to the *vineyard*. Retracing our steps, we would begin by calling attention to the five following facts—

1. Christ's sheep are *bought* with the blood of their Shepherd. They are the flock "which He hath purchased with His own blood" (Acts xx. 28). Purchase, however, implies a previous choice. Literally, the absurdity of sheep choosing their purchaser is evident. The purchaser chooses them. So spiritually; hence the Lord says to His "little flock," "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you" (John xv. 16). The heavenly Shepherd does not, like an earthly shepherd, choose His flock on the ground of any merit either in respect to their condition or the whiteness of their fleece, for when He came to buy them, their condition was as bad as bad could be, and before coming into His fold they were all *black* sheep; still, the "Good Shepherd" *bought* them, and paid a full price.

2. Then the sheep had all wandered to the ends of the earth, and were even lost in the wilderness: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way" (Isa. liii. 6); therefore, when they had been *bought*, they had to be *sought*; hence Jesus came "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke xix. 10). It was this fact which caused one to sing so sweetly—

"Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wandering from the fold of God;
He, to save my soul from danger,
Interposed His precious blood."

Jesus does not seek the purchase of His blood in vain, but finds them wherever they may have wandered; therefore the sheep are also—

3. *Caught*. The Shepherd's crook (divine love) lays hold on them, and they are "*drawn*" by "loving-kindness" out from the desert of sin; and thus separated from the world, they are

drawn to Jesus. In this manner the Good Shepherd takes possession by His blessed Spirit of the property chosen, bought, and sought. When caught they are—

4. *Brought* into the fold, and become manifestly what they were actually from all eternity—the sheep of Christ. In the fold they are—

5. *Taught* many gracious lessons, some of which will be touched upon as we proceed. Having in a simple manner suggested a few brief hints as to the way in which men are made manifest to be the sheep of Christ's fold, let us more fully describe—

I. *Some characteristics of Christ's sheep.*—Unlike other animals the sheep is not provided with any means of defence. It has not claws like the cat, horns like the cow, teeth like the lion, swiftness of foot whereby it may escape its foes by flight like the hart; neither has it a powerful body like the elephant. It cannot *climb* trees to get out of the reach of its enemies, like some animals; it cannot burrow in the ground as others do, and it cannot take to the water and swim from an impending danger. In fact, the sheep is most completely defenceless, and this condition of its nature was a far more serious matter on the hills of Judæa, in the ravines of which many a beast of prey lurked, ready to spring upon and devour the hapless sheep, than in the peaceful meadows of our own dear England; and yet, even where dangers are comparatively so slight, the defenceless condition of the animal is the first thing that strikes us in contemplating a flock. This affords a remarkable picture of the sheep of Christ, who, being indeed defenceless, are dependent wholly upon the Shepherd for protection from every danger, both spiritual and temporal. Others boast of creature-power, and trust to their own ability to preserve themselves from harm, but Christ's sheep are made to feel their helpless state, and they sigh to Him—

“Cover my defenceless head
With the shadow of Thy wing.”

Moreover, the sheep is a *gregarious* animal—it loves the company of its own kind. It is equally true spiritually, for “by this we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.” Christ's sheep seek each other's company even as they did in olden times: “*Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another,*” &c.; hence, there was a frequent “meeting and greeting.”

Again, a sheep feeds best and most comfortably when with its fellows. We have seen sheep refuse to feed altogether when left in a field alone. So the saint finds, as a rule, his most comfortable feeding-times when with the flock of slaughter, as that flock

is led by the Good and Chief Shepherd, through the ministry of the under-shepherds, into the "green pastures" of the Word and "beside the still waters" of salvation. Here he cries, "How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!"

But the sheep is also the most *foolish* animal conceivable; hence the term "*sheepish*" is applied to an excessively foolish person. Surely the parallel holds good here, if anywhere. The Lord's people are emptied of their creature wisdom and made "*fools*" in their own eyes. (See 1 Cor. iii. 18.) The Psalmist likewise complained of his "*foolishness*" (Psalm lxxix. 5) whilst experiencing the effects of it. Yet the sheep has sufficient wisdom (a wisdom derived in an excess of *felt* helplessness) to trust and look to the shepherd for guidance, protection, and provision. Most implicitly does the weak and silly sheep depend upon the shepherd, out of sheer necessity. Thus, if foolish, it is also *dependent*. It cannot find pasturage of itself; if it gets on its back, it cannot recover itself; if attacked, it often succumbs at the first onset; if it finds itself alone, it is overcome with fear. Where to rest it knows not; when or where to go it cannot tell; neither can it get back to the fold of itself if it has wandered. In short, without the shepherd's tender, watchful, and ever-present care it must perish. How truly the saint is depicted in every particular! The Christian reader will perfectly understand the spiritual application of the above description of the sheep's helplessness.

We go on to observe that, though thus dependent upon the presence and care of the shepherd, scarcely any animal is so prone to *wander* from the fold as the sheep. It is often the case amongst Christ's little flock, that some silly sheep will become unduly "puffed up," and in a feeling of spiritual pride will draw farther and farther away from the flock, and perhaps, under the influence of presumption, he may be tempted to go as near to the limits of the fold as possible, trusting to his own wisdom not to step beyond the bounds. Ah! it is a vain trust! Before he is aware, the limits are overstepped, the shelter of the fold left behind, and he has become a wandering sheep, suddenly, ere long, to find himself stumbling unprotected on the dark mountains, unable to find his way back to that Shepherd from whom so heedlessly and recklessly he has strayed. The night closes in, the beasts of the forest come forth, fears innumerable overwhelm his heart, briars and thorns entangle him. At last, wounded, faint, frightened, and ready to die, he hears the Shepherd's voice, calling him to "return," assuring him, "I will heal thy backslidings." When thus "found" by the Shepherd, and borne safely back once more to the fold, that sheep will hope not again to try how far it can get and keep from the Shepherd without being lost. Oh, no!

How closely he will cleave; how dearly he will love that tender, gracious, compassionate Lord Jesus, who will not permit any adversary to finally and fatally pluck His sheep from His arms!

Again, sheep all have the *same kind of covering*—their fleece is *white*. There are black sheep amongst the flock, externally and dispensationally considered, but they are not *Christ's* sheep. The saints of God are one and all covered with the pure white robe of Christ's matchless righteousness.

Now, an old writer quaintly says, "*Sheep are creatures that beasts of prey do look after.*" How true this is! How many "beasts of prey do look after" Christ's sheep, and seek to destroy the lambs! For their comfort Jesus has said, "Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke xii. 32). Sin, Satan, self, and sorrow may sometimes almost worry the life out of a poor sheep, but the only ultimate effect is to drive the sheep closer to the Shepherd. Although one or other of the numerous "bulls of Bashan" that infest the flesh may now and then be permitted to get a poor sheep down into the mire, the Shepherd is powerful enough to "raise up that which is fallen," and there is water enough to wash all stains away. See the Shepherd's kindness and mercy in this respect set forth in Ezekiel xxxiv. We will now notice—

II. *Some of the needs of the sheep.*—Sheep need protecting from the inclemency of the weather. Lambs especially require care in this respect, and it is a fact (though not recorded, as many suppose, in the Bible) that "He tempers the wind to the shorn lamb." The Scriptures do assure us, however, that "He stayeth His rough wind in the day of the east wind" (Isa. xxvii. 8). The dangers of the night are more formidable than those of the day, and the sheep are more easily frightened; hence the protection of a shepherd is more particularly needed *then, when the sheep cannot see him*. Though, by reason of darkness, unable to behold Him, yet He is ever with them. His protecting care preserves them all through the long dark night of spiritual adversity, according to His own promise, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 20). Christ's sheep are sometimes exposed to the fierceness of the wintry blast, and at other times to the scorching rays of the midsummer sun. In the former case they need the shelter of the folds—the means of grace—appropriated by the Good Shepherd to their use; and in the latter, they seek the care of Him who maketh His flock to rest at noon.

Being, as we have before noticed, unable to find food for themselves, the sheep need being guided to suitable pastures. The Good Shepherd leads from pasturage to pasturage, going in and

out, passing on before them, choosing the way Himself and providing food convenient for them.

In respect to *health*, sheep also need great care, for they are peculiarly liable to disease. Of late years our flocks, literally, have suffered much from "*foot-and-mouth disease*." The under-shepherds of Christ's flock, in going from fold to fold, find the very same thing raging amongst the "*flock of slaughter*." Oh, what lame *walking* and worldly *talking* abound on every hand! Much unhealthiness of a spiritual nature exists, which is manifested in inconsistencies in the walk and in the talk. Sheep do not tread firmly in the "*old paths*," and much unhealthy hesitancy of speech is observed both in regard to doctrine and experience. Hence the necessity for a Shepherd who can *heal* as well as *feed*.

On Judæa's hills the sheep are trained to *follow* the shepherd, so, likewise, Christ's sheep are trained to follow *Him*, and "*a stranger will they not follow*." He goes before, chooses a path which is made safe, and leads them therein. Some follow the Shepherd more closely than others, and such enjoy more sensible comfort and most of His presence and blessing. In the course of the long, weary journey along the highways and byeways of life, all the flock prove again and again that their Shepherd possesses and *exercises* marvellous loving-kindness, infinite compassion, and tenderest mercy. Hence He is just such an One as the flock needs. Now, there are "*lambs in Christ's fold*" who not only need great care, but manifest a *sense* of need (as lambs do literally) by piteous bleatings. The longings, desires, sighs, and cries for mercy are the bleatings of the lambs in the "*flock of slaughter*;" and as the sheep know the shepherd's voice, so He knows theirs, and "*waits to be gracious*," for "*He will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry*."

The sheep and lambs are all marked with "*the cross*;" every one who follows Christ wears Christ's own mark—

" Shall Simon bear his cross alone,
And all the rest go free?
No, there's a cross for every one,
And there's a cross for me."

This mark is not a mere *sign*, but a *weight*—an actual, real, spiritual cross, by which the world, and self, and sin are crucified unto us, and we to them. It is this cross which distinguishes the sheep from the goats.

Here we stay our pen, and may the Lord bless those simple tracings to "*His own sheep*."

Steaſford.

E. C.

"THE FULNESS OF THE TIME."

AT the time of the birth of our Lord, the whole Roman world was at peace. The Jews had been brought into subjection to the Romans and were governed by them. "The throne of David had, so to speak, sunk into the dust; the line of Aaron had flourished, but was now fading. The temple still stood, but its ritual service had degenerated into mere ceremony. It was a lamp that had ceased to burn. The sacrifices were duly offered, the priests kept their appointed courses, and the worshippers observed all the old rites; but they did so in the letter only, not in the spirit." Such was the state of things when John the Baptist came, "crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make His paths straight." John was a noble young Jew of about thirty years of age, who appeared in the deserts wearing a rough garment of camels' hair. His message to his nation was, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He wrought no miracle, displayed no supernatural power, yet he seemed to be a most remarkable person, raised up by God for the time, and in harmony with the place, and the words of John set thousands of consciences to work which before were slumbering.

Slothful, luxurious Jerusalem, sleeping in its sins, arose and went out to be baptized of John in the Jordan. God might have sent His prophet into the city, but he was the man for the desert. His ministry exerted its influence there. "Prepare ye the way of the Lord," said he; "make His paths straight." The Jehovah of Sinai—the God who made the worlds—was coming to walk through the cities and villages of Judæa—not as one of the proud rabbins of Jerusalem, with flowing robes and haughty air, but choosing rather the common robe of a carpenter in which to teach the people that truth of which he was Himself the Author.

Now, crowds began to gather round this strange preacher, leaving their customary occupations in Jerusalem to repair to the desert, where they could listen to the voice of him who cried in the wilderness, "Repent ye," &c. It seems that even the hardened conscience of King Herod was touched by the preaching of John. Herod feared John, knowing that he was a good man, and he "observed him; and when he had heard him, he did many things and heard him gladly" (Mark vi. 20).

The proud Pharisees and Sadducees also came to John at the Jordan; but what a fierce reception they met with! "O generation of vipers! who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

Now Jesus appears; and John, seeing Jesus coming, points to Him, "and saith, Behold the Lamb of God!" This announce-

ment was fitted to turn men's thoughts back to the time when God gave the command, "Take ye a lamb" (Exodus xii. 3), and also for what purpose the lamb was taken, even "that it might be in the room of the nation, that it might die in their room, and, by its death, save Israel from the destroying angel, while it opened a way for the overthrow of Pharaoh, the type of him who has the power of death. The Israelites knew at the time that all this was typical—that the lamb of the passover represented a greater Deliverer and a greater redemption than their present deliverance from Egypt." Yet now, when the glorious God-Man appears in humble guise, how few comparatively of that nation realized the blessing that was being given to them! Instead of believing this glorious Person that John announced to be the Messiah, and therefore the Antitype of all their sacrifices, their temple, and its ritual, they rejected Him, and said, "We will not have this Man to reign over us." And as did the Jews of old, so do all mankind now, until One "stronger than the strong man"—even the Holy Spirit—enters the heart, and, taking possession thereof Himself, He casts out the strong man (*i.e.*, the native enmity of the heart), and thus "spoils his goods" by implanting divine life, which will ever contend against sin, both in its outward and inward workings.

Oh, that we may have hearts to pray, "THY KINGDOM COME"!

A.

ONE SPIRIT.

Thames Ditton, 1777.

DEAR FRIENDS,—WHEN MAY A CHILD OF GOD LIE DOWN? When he can get no higher in spirituality; when no lower in humility; when no further in Gospel experience; when there is nothing more new in the Bible; when he seeks Jesus in vain; and when he has attained the full stature of the invisible image of Christ.

WHEN MAY HE LEAVE OFF PRAYER? When corruption is entirely destroyed; when the heart can no longer deceive; when he has left off kicking at the cross; or when he has *no* cross to take up; when the world no more deludes; and when Satan does not resist him.

IN TWO WAYS I DECEIVE MYSELF—when, to feed *pride*, I want to appear more gracious than I am; and when, through *fear*, I hide that grace which I really have.

IN TWO WAYS I AM DECEIVED; when I thought I had strength for a great trial, yet sank at a small one; and when I sank at the thoughts of a great cross, yet, on meeting it, could take up

and carry it boldly. One is strength in weakness; the other is weakness in strength.

I AM ALWAYS IN FEAR. When comfort is gone, I fear it will come no more; when I have it, I fear being robbed. When I am in trouble, I am not easy; and when I walk long easy, I am in trouble.

TWO THINGS I SHOULD LIKE TO PRAY FOR—to be saved from my good works, and to have the sins forgiven of my godly sorrow.

TWO THINGS I DESIRE TO SEE, *but they would strike me dead—to see myself* as a sinner, as I really stand in the sight of God; and *to see Christ* as He is in glory, which is the best sight of all. Terror always hardens my heart; but to taste the love of Christ in a trial, or on coming out of it, breaks it all to pieces.

ONE WAY I GENERALLY GET A BLESSING at chapel. When the preacher has nothing of his own, but deals out what is given in, as it comes hot from the Lord, there is then some dew with the Word. A discourse that has been laid up in the head is mostly dry.

I wish you all to know the blessed Jesus! With Him all is heaven; without Him all is hell and damnation. He is so IMMENSE that the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, and yet my heart holds Him—He is INCOMPREHENSIBLE, and yet I know Him—INVISIBLE, yet I see Him—IMMORTAL, yet dwells with mortal man—ETERNAL, and yet born in time.

Oh, my dear, dear Lord, and God and Saviour Jesus, be Thou my portion for ever! Amen.

WILLIAM HUNTINGTON.

P.S.—Pray let me hear from you, and lisp out something of heart-work, that I may guess whether it is Jesus speaks or not. The devil tells me that I shall be *praised* for this letter; disappoint him and *praise God*, whom I pray may bless and own it for your good.

Thames Ditton, 1776.

My dear Brother and Sister, I hope in the Lord, and dearly beloved of me, and longed for in the spirit of meekness, this comes with the strongest love to your souls. Our friends at Woking give their kind love to you. God seemed to follow the Word with power, some crying under great concern of soul. They lie near my heart; oh, pray that they may lie in the bosom of Christ! Withdraw, I pray you, from all that walk unholy. Let the world hang loose on your back, and follow hard after that spirit of love and meekness in which I found you in my last visit. In that frame no pride nor lightness is found. Beware of vain talk and vain people; watch against Satan, and watch God's hand in answering prayer.

I charge you all, in the presence of God, to try yourselves by Scripture and prayer, whether you be in the faith. Soon, my dear souls, must we all appear before the awful tribunal of God, where there will be no seeing the Judge, nor bribing the jury. Then all hypocrites will be uncased, and the king and the beggar stand both upon a level, while only the poor in spirit receive the kingdom of God, of which happy number may you be, shall be the prayer of

The vilest sinner and the feeblest saint,

WILLIAM HUNTINGTON.

LETTERS FOR THE YOUNG.—No. XXV.

MY DEAR G——,—I was pleased to have your kind letter yesterday morning. It touched my heart with an affectionate sympathy; and I should have written to you at once, in the warmth of my feelings, had I not felt too ill. I learn from your letter that your sister is to be baptized shortly. She is very highly favoured in thus being enabled to make a public profession of her faith in the Lord Jesus; and you, my dear G——, are also favoured in that you have the desire in your heart to be like her—a desire which never grew in the cold soil of nature. You feel a holy jealousy of your sister, which is quite consistent with a quickened soul; but you have to wait for the blessing, whilst your sister is in the enjoyment of it.

Remember that the Lord says He will “wait that He may be gracious.” There is much sweetness in those words, if He may be pleased to bless them to you. You see, dear G——, the time of the seeking soul is always ready, but the Lord, who is infinite in wisdom, has His own “set time” to favour Zion, and that is invariably the best time. Wait on Him, my dear girl; press forward after a manifestation of His sweet mercy, ever remembering that—

“His Spirit all the motion gives
In springs of fear and love;”

and, in due season, He will reveal Himself to you as the “Chiefest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely.”

Your fear that hell would be your portion if you were to die now, is a proof to my mind that the Lord will never send you there. Let me observe that many young persons among the Lord’s people in the present day are troubled because they have not trouble enough. They read, perhaps, of some eminent Christians who have been cut down suddenly by the Holy Spirit’s work, and then they have been as remarkably lifted up by a clear manifestation of pardoning mercy; and the weak one feels that,

if he or she had only experienced as much of the power of God, there would be less room to doubt the reality of the work. This is a temptation of the enemy; and, if you should be labouring under it, may the Lord enable you to resist the adversary.

Remember that it is the quality, rather than the quantity, of your religion that has to be considered. In some cases the Holy Spirit's work upon the soul is as gentle as the breath of a summer eve, but it is none the less effectual. A half-sovereign is made of as good gold as a sovereign, though it be smaller; so the very smallest quantity of faith, hope, or love, of the Lord's own implanting, is as sure to result in the eternal salvation of His elect as if it shone out more transcendently.

I throw out these simple hints in love; may the Lord comfort you by them. The end of a thing is better than the beginning, and presently, I trust, you will see that all the Lord's leadings were right, and bless Him for the ups and downs, the trials and difficulties; yea, for all the way in which He has led you.

Mrs. H— sends her love to you. At the same time I subscribe myself, with very much love,

Your sincere friend,

Brighton, December 1st, 1881.

R. E. H.

WHATEVER constrains the believer to pray tends to his good; and nothing drives a man to pray like deep adversity. It is then he wants help from God. Creatures lose their charm when a man is troubled on every side. He must then have his God to hear and help him, and that right early.—*H. Fowler.*

A CONFESSION.—“I cannot pray but I sin; I cannot hear or preach a sermon but I sin; I cannot give alms or receive the Sacrament but I sin; nay, I cannot so much as confess my sins, but my very confessions are still aggravations of them! My repentance needs to be repented of, my tears want washing, and the very washing of my tears needs still to be washed over again in the blood of my Redeemer. Thus, not only the worst of my sins, but even the best of my duties, speak me a child of Adam, insomuch that, whenever I reflect upon my past actions, methinks I cannot but look upon my whole life, from the time of my conception to this very moment, to be but as one continued act of sin! And whence can such a continued stream of corruption flow but from the corrupt cistern of my heart? And whence can that corrupt cistern be filled but from the corrupt fountain of my nature? To thee, oh, my God, I cry in the bitterness of my soul, ‘Oh, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?’”—*Bishop Beveridge.*

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AT DEVONSHIRE ROAD CHAPEL, GREENWICH, ON THURSDAY
EVENING, OCTOBER 6TH, 1881.

*"The desire of our soul is to Thy name, and to the remembrance of
Thee."*—ISAIAH xxvi. 8.

I DO believe that some of us who are here to-night know what it is to do business with God—what it is at times to seek to be alone with Him. What would the saints do without communion and fellowship with Christ? What would a beggar do if he were not a receiver? And it is my needs, friends, that oftentimes press me to a throne of grace. My spiritual poverty, the badness of my heart, the corruptions of my nature, the burden of my sin, the weight of trouble and the fiery trial—these things press me down oftentimes before God. The way sometimes is felt to be, and is spoken of as rough, by God's people; but oh, were it not for that Friend in heaven you sang of in your first hymn to-night, what should we do?

"One there is above all others,
Well deserves the name of Friend;
His is love beyond a brother's,
Costly, free, and knows no end:
They who once His kindness prove,
Find it everlasting love."

Friends, what would become of us if we had no help in God, if we had no refuge at the throne of grace? If it is hard work now, what would it be without Him? If the way is rough now, what would it be without Him? Oftentimes our soul, like the people of old, is discouraged by reason of the way: but what would it be if we had not a Friend in heaven above? But what a truth it is—

"We, alas! forget too often
What a Friend we have above."

And when our hearts grow forgetful, what a mercy it is that the Lord puts us in remembrance! There is one thing that is my plague, and it has been for years. You will say, "I wonder what it is?" I will tell you; it is self-sufficiency. Pride is at the bottom of it; and how ashamed I am that the poorest wretch on earth should have so much pride and self-sufficiency within! Does not that show up very much the depth of the fall, and

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THE SOWER.

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SERMON PREACHED BY MR. HULL,

AT DEVONSHIRE ROAD CHAPEL, GREENWICH, ON THURSDAY
EVENING, OCTOBER 6TH, 1881.

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does it not show up the desperate wickedness and deceitfulness of the heart? There was one Church spoken of in the Revelation, that God dealt very strong words of reproof unto: "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked." They knew it not; but, blessed be His name, He does make us to know it; and not only to know it, but to feel it, and to desire His promised grace. I hope there is a little of this gracious sensibility in my heart, and in some of yours too.

The Church here, speaking to the Lord, says, "In the way of Thy judgments have we waited for Thee; the desire of our soul is to Thy name, and to the remembrance of Thee." I like to come to the Word of God, and to feel sure that I have a religion that compares with it—an inward and spiritual evidence that compares with the Scriptural evidences recorded there. I am sure I am needy, and I am waiting for the mercy of Christ; and, though I oftentimes feel my heart to be as hard as a stone, and I complain, as one has done before—

"There's nothing moves this heart of mine,"

yet I am also bold to say—

"But something yet can do the deed."

And oh, when the Lord sheds a little of the dew and unction of His blessed favour upon my soul, I find there is then a sweet sensibility of His preciousness. Thus the Lord keeps His people sensibly poor and needy; and He also brings them as such to His mercy-seat. And what for? Why, there is something prepared for them. He has prepared of His goodness for the poor. "Neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside Thee, what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him." And now I find another thing, friends—that He has to prepare my heart for these things He has prepared for me; and, bless His dear name. He does, and thus He makes His salvation sweet, and His Word, name, and Person precious to my soul.

Now, do you know anything of the Lord Jesus Christ thus? Is He in your esteem "the Chiefest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely"? Have you proved Him to be a Friend above all others? If you have proved Him to be a Friend at all, I am sure you have proved Him to be one above all others. If He has been a Friend to you, I am sure you can trust Him with any secret or with any cause. You have confidence in Him for any concern. Some of the Lord's people question whether their path is right, or if their path is the path of God's elect. You ask them if they could trust their souls to any other.

No ; there is none on earth or in heaven that they could. Give them a thousand souls, and ask them if they could trust Christ. Yes, with the fullest confidence and the most blessed satisfaction. Is it not so ? Put the matter as before Him, and ask your conscience the question : “ Dare I not trust in Him ? Dare I not confide in Him ? ” “ Ah ! ” says some poor trembling soul, “ if I could but get near enough to do it, to cast myself upon Him, I would—as Berridge says—

“ ‘ Drop into His sea outright ;
Lose myself in Jesus quite. ’ ”

Well, then, He has been near to you. Thy heart is sincere, because He has affected it towards Himself.

Now, when I get with such a people as this, I am not afraid of the world swallowing them up, or of their being deceived, or destroyed by the “ father of lies.” I will tell you why. The Lord has chosen their heart for His dwelling-place, and He says, “ Here will I dwell, for I have desired it.” Oh, even in that poor soul who complains of spiritual poverty ; that poor thing who lies in the dust ; that poor trembling soul who often comes before Him with, “ God be merciful to me a sinner ! ” for He takes especial pleasure in them that fear Him, and He says, “ To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My Word.”

And then, if the Lord has chosen the heart of such an one as a dwelling-place, that is His rest for ever, for He rests in His love. And I will tell you another thing, friends, you will find no settled rest elsewhere. No ; such may go into the world, be cast among men, be placed where they cannot hear the preached Word, be worried with the things of time and the hustle-bustle of the world ; but they will stand and cry, “ Lord, what a weary world this is ! what a weary life this is ! ” and they will lift their eyes to heaven, and say, “ I want something better than this.” And what is it they seek ? Why, a portion with the Lamb. The portion of a beast cannot content such a heart as that. Take all the goods of the world, all that man esteems and holds most dear, and roll it in the lap of such an one, and they are poor without Christ ; and the language of their soul will be—

“ I hunger now for heavenly food,
And my poor heart cries out for God.”

I hope there are some here that are not strangers to this—who hunger for Jesus Christ ; and He says, “ Blessed are they.” “ Yes,” says some poor sinner, “ I believe it ; but I am a miserable wretch.” Oh, friend, I wish there were more like you ! I wish our chapels were filled with such. Now, is not sin thy

trouble, and the want of Christ thy affliction? And does not this often bring thee to the house of prayer, and cause thee to retire in secret? Oh, what a mercy if the Lord should to-night turn and look upon thee, as He did upon that poor woman who washed His feet with her tears, and to whom He said, "Thy sins are forgiven." He has the same power now in heaven, for He is exalted "a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."

Well, the Church here speaks of something that I trust you and I are acquainted with. She says, "The desire of our soul is to Thy name, and to the remembrance of Thee." The child of God, even in the lowest case, can speak with the greatest confidence concerning the saints, and can say, "Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord?" But to say that they are one of the family, that they are one of the flock, is quite another thing. But there are times when we are low that we have this evidence, "The desire of our soul is to Thy name." You could not call a person a friend of Christ who had no desire after Him. There was a time when you did not bear any love to His people or to His truth. No; you had no desire, no love. But now, through the mercy of God, things are very different, and you love those things you once hated; therefore, you would not take as a companion one who had no desire after Christ, or call such an one a friend of Christ. But I will tell you, you would be willing to walk with the poorest and weakest of all that had a desire in their heart towards the Lord Jesus Christ. You would rather be a companion of such than with the Queen on her throne. You would rather choose a portion with such than with the worldling. You know it will go well with those that fear and love His blessed name. Well, then, it will go well with you. "Oh," say you, "I am not so sure of that! I can read it for others, but I am not so sure about myself." But "let us try for a little season," as Mr. Hart says, to talk this over. "Well," say you, "I want to be right with God. I want to know that my peace is made. I want to be assured that I am adopted into the family, that I am bought with the precious blood of Christ, and redeemed unto God." Then you are assured that there is no salvation out of Christ; no mercy, save through His precious blood. "There is none other name given under heaven wherely we must be saved" but that of Jesus. God has taught you that. Well, the Holy Ghost lays this foundation so deep in the sinner's heart that it can never be erased; and you know that there is no drawing near to God without the atonement; that there is no mercy can flow from God to you but through the wounds and blood of Jesus Christ; therefore you come to the throne of grace, a poor oppressed sinner, your heart burdened

with guilt and full of fears, and you beg of God to be merciful to a wretched sinner like you. Your eyes are directed to Calvary, and you think of Him that hung upon the tree, and you say, "Oh, that I knew that my guilt was laid upon Him; that my sins and transgressions were imputed to Him; and that I could say with the poet—

" ' The Lord, in the day of His anger, did lay
Our sins on the Lamb, and He bore them away.' "

Now, you are sure that, if the Lord ever saves your soul, it must be by the doing and dying of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no mercy for you but through the blood of the Lamb. In Him the Lord draws nigh to the sinner without consuming him, and the sinner can draw nigh to God without being consumed. This is the one great question, the one thing needful, the good part the Lord Jesus Christ spake of; and every heart that is thus affected towards Jesus Christ has that good part. "Why," says some poor seeking one, "is it so?" Yes, it is; and, if you could have your choice, I can speak with all confidence as to what you would choose. "Can you?" says one. Yes; you would choose that better part as sure as Mary did. I am satisfied that every soul that has a desire to His name would be glad for Jesus Christ to enter and fill their heart. I say, I am as satisfied of that as I am that I am a living man.

Oh, my friends, your trouble is often not only because there is so much evil in the world, but in your hearts, and so little love to Jesus Christ, so little affection to the Word, so little right feeling, so little true desire. Oh, we would have it different if we could; but we prove the truth of the Apostle's words, "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) there dwelleth no good thing; for when I would do good, evil is present with me." But I will tell you what you would do. You would give up your heart to the Lord, for Him to cast everything bad out of it, and that nothing should ever rise against Him. Is it not so? The Lord is a Witness to the truth of this, that, if I could live as I list, I would be so swallowed up in Christ as never to sin again. False professors and others will lie concerning us, and circulate it; but what a mercy the Lord sees our hearts; and He knows that all you who love Him would, if you could, sink your name and yourself in His, just as a woman does in marrying a man, for she loses her own name and takes his; and so would you, and hide under His blessed robe, under the skirt of His blessed garment, if you could have your desire. That day is to come, I am sure. The day is coming when the Lord's people will have their desire accorded to them. I do not want to merely look at His image; I want to come up to it: "I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness."

Now, come, poor sinner, is there a little fear in your heart towards Jesus Christ? Is there a little feeling in your soul? "Oh," say you, "my heart is very carnal and unfeeling." So is mine; but, as I said before, there is a little sensibility; but there never would have been if the Lord had not implanted His grace in my heart; but since He has touched my heart, there is a feeling after Him and a desire to His blessed name. Now and again He feeds that desire, and draws forth those affections more than ever. And why? That He may fulfil His own Word, and it is this: "The desire of the righteous shall be granted." "But," say you, "I have not had mine granted yet." Neither have I, my friends, to the full; but the Lord does as we do to keep the fire up—He puts a little on now and then, and keeps it ascending upwards, and thus He encourages and strengthens it. He drops a little of the savour of His precious name, as He says, "Thy name is as ointment poured forth." Has He broken up that alabaster box for you? Well, then, this is something the world could not give you. Why, there is nothing in the world could draw forth thy affection towards Jesus Christ, and yet it is done; and He does it with one of His secret touches; and oh, they are the sweetest moments that you have! If you get five minutes in a day, that is five minutes' enjoyment of His love. It is a mark of divine favour; and, if you have a good day on the Lord's day, I do not mind how successful you have been in business, or how much money you have made, and how many great things you have accomplished, I know that one day will satisfy your heart more than all the six of prosperity that have gone before; and you will say with the poet that it is "the best of all the seven." You would rather hear His name than any other, and rather enjoy His love than any other; for there is something in your heart towards Jesus Christ that you esteem Him more than all on earth or in heaven beside.

Well, there is no man can love God but with His own love—he must receive it before he can give it. No love will ever go up to Him but that which comes down from Him. It is the work of the blessed Spirit to move the hearts of His saints to desire Christ above all others, to choose Him before all others, and to love Him more than all others—

"Rather than not my Saviour love,
Oh, let me cease to be!"

"But," says one, "after all, my desires are very poor and very feeble. Sometimes, when I hear the Word preached, it draws forth a little affection to the Lord; there is a little desire goes out unto Him. But oh, when I get out of chapel, it is just as though there was a cold rain came upon me, and chilled my feeling; and perhaps before I get home my heart is as cold as

before, and there is something says, 'That is not the feeling of a child of God, but the feeling of a sluggard, who just rouses when it is morning, and time to get up, but turns himself over, and goes off into slumber again.' " "Ah !" says the poor soul, "that is just like me. I am the slothful one. I desire and have not."

Well, friends, many times when I have been on my knees, it has seemed like mocking God to confess to Him, and the enemy has confounded me with this question, "How many times have you told Him this? Do you think God will notice such a profession of love as this?" But what a mercy it is not always so! Oh, no; blessed be His dear name, there are seasons now and again when my heart is so toward Him that I feel I could leave the body to be with Him, and it would be no cross to lay anything down and take Him up. Everything that is seen and temporal withers before Him. Paul says he counted all things but loss and as dung "for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord;" and oh, friends, it is a mercy that there are, now and then, a few moments when the fire burns upon the altar of our heart, and we can say, as did poor Peter, when the Lord pressed the question home, "Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee." Yea, it is a mercy to be enabled, now and again, to lay our heart open to our God, and ask Him if there is not something that burns towards Him there, and that cannot be satisfied without Him. Now, all such hearts the Lord will encourage. It may be a barren season with you. Well, we do get barren seasons sometimes—a season of famine even—not of bread and of water, but of hearing the Word of the Lord. But God has said that He will keep His people "alive in famine;" and I have wondered sometimes how it could be done. "Well," say you, "and so have I." Friends, it is done by something that is communicated unseen. You and I have many helps from above when we do not see the hand that affords them, nor realize them as heavenly blessings, nor perceive it to be the work of the Spirit; but—

" He lends an unseen hand,
And gives a secret prop,
Which keeps us waiting stand
Till He completes our hope."

And thus the Lord, even in the midst of famine, keeps alive the souls of His people; and we are told that the days of adversity and prosperity are set over against each other, to the end that man might find nothing after Him; and I am certain that the day of adversity is as needful as the day of prosperity is desirable. There is a good deal about us which needs to be consumed, and the day of adversity does it.

We are told that, in the seven years of famine, which came in

the time of Joseph, all the plenty was so exhausted that it seemed as if there had been no years of plenty. I dare say you find it the same in yourself. The ministry is dry. You take up the Bible, and you say, "I am really ashamed to say it, but it seems dry. The Word is not to me as once it was. It does not come to me as once it did, when I realized the truth of that blessed portion, 'My doctrine shall drop as the rain, and My speech distil as the dew;' but alas! now—

" 'I can read each moving line,
And nothing move this heart of mine.' "

"I am like the mountains of Gilboa. There seems no savour in the Word of God to me; and oh, when I go into my closet, I hate myself! There is a form of words; it is a formal act; and I come away disgusted with myself." Is there a poor thing here to-night that has got into such a sad state? Is it a time of famine in thy soul? Well, then, it is a day of adversity. And consider, friends, what could you do without Him who is "mighty to save"? "Well," say you, "I have to do without Him." No, you do not, for that promise is true, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." He sometimes causes a veil to come over His face, which hides the light of the sun, just as we see the dark shadow in an eclipse. The sun is in its right place, and it shines, but the light does not reach to us. And just so with the Lord Jesus Christ. He is near His people; He is with His people. His eye never slumbers nor sleeps. As He says, "And, lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." But when He veils His lovely face, you and I walk in darkness, and we begin to complain, "Hath God forgotten to be gracious?" "Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me."

But what does the Lord say, when He takes up the cause of His people who are walking in darkness? He addresses them thus: "Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God? Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of His understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

Come, now, you talk about darkness, and the Lord talks about light; you talk about adversity, and the Lord talks about prosperity; you talk about poverty, and the Lord

talks about riches; you talk about the day of trouble, and the Lord speaks of a time of help and a time of love. There is sure to be a turn. Some of us have had many a day of adversity, but it has not endured the whole of our journey. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." The Lord will not forget the desire of the humble. No, never! He will not forsake the humble person. No, never! If you can say, "The desire of our soul is to Thy name," I can tell you another thing—the desire of the Lord is toward thee. The Church said, "I am my Beloved's, and His desire is toward me." You will find, in the seventy-seventh Psalm, the Psalmist speaks of his own feelings and suppositions concerning his case—not a very pleasant state of things, nor apparently very encouraging—but after awhile he says, "I said, This is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High."

Now, I hope that some of you have something worth remembering, for when the Holy Ghost becomes a Remembrancer to you, He brings past things to your mind. He brings them up clearly and so forcibly that you find the things which have been questioned by Satan and unbelief stand as a reality. The Lord not only sheds a light upon them, but He gives the enjoyment and savour of them; and it is the same sweet savour you enjoyed in times gone by. It is the same divine power, the same rich grace, the same everlasting love; and thus, when He "kindly makes it o'er again," as Mr. Hart says, it is not a dry well, but it is a well of salvation, a spring of life unto you, and you turn again to the old well, to the old promise, and the waters flow out like they did from the jaw-bone of the ass in Samson's case of extremity. We often find fault with ourselves that we should be so forgetful and so unmindful of the very words that were music in our hearts, that they should seem to have lost all their former charm; but when the voice of the Beloved is heard, there is music again, and the words of His lips drop like honey and the honey-comb. Jeremiah said, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart."

Now some of you, that have had your captivity turned again and again, cannot you testify that you have had all things so dried up, and have been according to your feelings as a dry stump? The Church said, "Our bones are dried, our hope is lost; we are cut off for our parts." But when the Lord has turned your captivity, His words were like a flowing brook, and the means of grace were living streams. Oh, what a blessed change! The face of the earth was renewed, and the Lord confirmed His inheritance when it was weary. You had looked at things, and were so dissatisfied with your experience; it seemed all odds and ends, and your religion seemed broken to pieces like a potter's

vessel dashed to the ground, which cannot be put together again, so you could not make any two parts Scripturally to fit. But when the Lord has come, and gathered up all these fragments, and you have looked at the way He has led you and what He has done for you, you could see wisdom and love divine in all. Then you have turned to the Hill Mizars, to the Ebenezers, and the high heaps; and one encouragement after another that the Lord has given you sprang up, and you could say, "Oh, how good the Lord has been to me, even in a time of darkness, in the night seasons, and in the days of adversity! Why, His good hand has been with me, and upon me, in all! Oh, I hope I shall never forget this! Surely I shall never call this in question. I shall always remember this deliverance." But, friends, if you live long enough, I should not be surprised if the brook were to dry up; and if that is the case, what will you do? Why, you will ask the Lord again to drop something down for you; and the minister will get the benefit of your prayers, as the Lord pours it upon you and upon the minister; and thus, as the Lord causes you to think of these former things, you will come hanging upon the Word on which He has caused you to hope, as you come up to the house of the Lord.

Now, cannot you say with the Church, "The desire of our soul is to Thy name, and to the remembrance of Thee"? "Oh, Lord, I would have Thee always in my thoughts, and Chief in my affections; and I would have my heart so fixed upon Thee as never to wander from Thee." Blessed be His name, if He has given thee this desire, this remembrance of Him, His word to thee is, "I will not forget thee."

May He add His blessing, and He shall bear the glory.

CHRIST has, in His Word, laid before us two ways—one which, by faith, leadeth to salvation; the other, by unbelief, to damnation.—*Luther.*

If the correction of His children here, though allayed, and for their amendment, make "their beauty and strength to consume away as a moth," how insupportable will the vengeance be on His obstinate enemies! Who knows the power of His anger? Who can sound the depths of His displeasure?—*Bates.*

FAITH has a celestial power, a magnetic virtue, to draw up the heart from the earth, and fasten it to things above. It is not imaginable that a clear-sighted soul, that sees a good infinitely great, should reject it for mean things to please a carnal desire. We may as well imagine that a skilful jeweller should part with the richest Oriental pearls for cherry-stones to play with children.—*Bates.*

LETTER TO A NOBLEMAN.

WEAK, unskilful, and unfaithful as I am in practice, the Lord has given me some idea of what a Christian ought to be, and of what is actually attainable in the present life, by those whom He enables earnestly to aspire towards the prize of their high calling. They who are versed in mechanics can, from a knowledge of the combined powers of a complicated machine, make an exact calculation of what it is able to perform, and what resistance it can counteract; but who can compute the possible effects of that combination of principles and motives revealed in the Gospel, upon a heart duly impressed with a sense of their importance and glory?

When I was lately at a museum, and fixing my attention upon some curious movements, imagining that I saw the whole of the artist's design, the person who showed it touched a little spring, and suddenly a thousand new and unexpected movements took place, and the whole piece seemed animated from the top to the bottom. I should have formed but a very imperfect judgment of it, had I seen no more than what I saw at first. I thought it might in some measure illustrate the vast difference that is observable amongst professors, even amongst those who are, it is to be hoped, sincere. There are persons who appear to have a true knowledge in part of the nature of the Gospel religion, but seem not to be apprised of its properties, in their comprehension and extent. If they have attained to some hope of their acceptance, if they find at seasons some communion with God in the means of grace, if they are in measure delivered from the prevailing and corrupt customs of the world, they seem to be satisfied, as if they were possessed of all. These are indeed great things. The profession of too many, whose sincerity, charity would be unwilling to impeach, is greatly blemished, notwithstanding their hopes and their occasional comforts, by the breakings forth of unsanctified tempers, and the indulgence of vain hopes, anxious cares, and selfish pursuits. Far, very far, am I from that unscriptural sentiment of perfection in the flesh. To those who have a due sense of the spirituality and ground of the divine precepts, and of what passes in their own hearts, there will never be wanting causes of humiliation and self-abasement on the account of sin; yet still there is a liberty and privilege attainable by the Gospel, beyond what is ordinarily thought of.

Permit me to mention two or three particulars, in which those who have a holy ambition of aspiring to them shall not be altogether disappointed.

A delight in the Lord's all-sufficiency, to be satisfied in Him as our present and eternal portion. This, in the sense in which I

understand it, is not the effect of a present warm frame, but of a deeply-rooted and abiding principle, the habitual exercise of which is to be estimated by the comparative indifference with which other things are regarded. The soul thus principled is not at leisure to take or to seek satisfaction in anything but what has a known subserviency to this leading taste. Either the Lord is present, and then He is to be rejoiced in; or else He is absent, and then He is to be sought and waited for. They are to be pitied who, if they are at some times happy in the Lord, can at other times be happy without Him, and rejoice in broken cisterns, when their spirits are at a distance from the fountain of living waters. I do not plead for an absolute indifference to temporal blessings. He gives us all things richly to enjoy, and a capability of relishing them is His gift likewise; but then the consideration of His love in bestowing should exceedingly enhance the value, and a regard to His will should regulate their use. Nor can they all supply the want of that which we can only receive immediately from Himself. This principle likewise moderates that inordinate fear and sorrow to which we are liable upon the prospect or occurrence of great trials, for which there is a sure support and resource provided in the all-sufficiency of infinite goodness and grace. What a privilege is this, to possess God in all things, while we have them, and all things in God, when they are taken from us!

An acquiescence in the Lord's will, founded in a persuasion of His wisdom, holiness, sovereignty, and goodness—this is one of the greatest privileges and brightest ornaments of our profession. So far as we attain to this, we are secure from disappointment. Our own limited views and short-sighted purposes and desires may be, and will be, often overruled; but then our main and leading desire, that the will of the Lord may be done, must be accomplished. How highly does it become us, both as creatures and as sinners, to submit to the appointments of our Maker; and how necessary is it to our peace! This great attainment is too often unthought of and overlooked. We are prone to fix our attention upon the second causes and immediate instruments of events, forgetting that whatever befalls us is according to His purpose, and therefore must be right and seasonable in itself, and shall in the issue be productive of good. From hence arises impatience, resentment, and secret repinings, which are not only sinful, but tormenting; whereas, if all things are in His hand—if the very hairs of our head are numbered—if every event, great and small, is under the direction of His providence and purpose—and if He has a wise, holy, and gracious end in view, to which everything that happens is subordinate and subservient—then we have nothing to do but with patience and humility to follow

as He leads, and cheerfully to expect a happy issue. The path of present duty is marked out, and the concerns of the next and every succeeding hour are in His hands. How happy are they who can resign all to Him, see His hand in every dispensation, and believe that He chooses for them better than they possibly could for themselves!

Oh, blessed man, that thus fears the Lord, delights in His Word, and derives his principles, motives, maxims, and consolations from that unfailing source of light and strength! He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, whose leaf is always green and fruit abundant. The wisdom that is from above shall direct his plans, inspire his counsels, and the power of God shall guard him on every side, and prepare his way through every difficulty. He shall see mountains sink into plains, and streams spring up in the dry wilderness. The Lord's enemies will be his, and they may be permitted to fight against him, but they shall not prevail, for the Lord is with him to deliver him.

The conduct of such an one, though in a narrow and retired sphere of life, is of more real excellence and importance than the most splendid actions of kings and conquerors (Proverbs xvi. 32); and, if the God whom he serves is pleased to place him in a more public light, his labours and cares will be amply compensated by the superior opportunities afforded him of manifesting the power and reality of true religion, and promoting the good of mankind.

I hope I may say that I desire to be thus entirely given up to the Lord. I am sure I *must* say that what I have written is far from being my actual experience. Alas! I might be condemned out of my own mouth, were the Lord strict to mark what is amiss. But oh, the comfort—we are not under the law, but under grace! The Gospel is a dispensation for sinners, and “we have an Advocate with the Father.” There is the unshaken ground of hope—a covenant Father, a prevailing Advocate, a powerful Shepherd, a compassionate Friend, a Saviour who is able and willing to save to the uttermost. He knows our frame, He remembers that we are but dust, and has opened for us a new and blood-besprinkled way of access to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in every time of need.

I am, &c.,

JOHN NEWTON.

THE usual way of going to heaven is through much tribulation.—*Joseph Hart.*

NONE can promise us better than Christ can, and none can threaten us worse than Christ can.—*Dr. Goodwin.*

PSALM CVII. VIEWED AS THE BELIEVER'S
PROGRESSIVE EXPERIENCE.

FIFTH STAGE (*continued*).

(*Concluded from page 162.*)

"HE turneth rivers into a wilderness," &c.; and, again, that same wilderness into rivers, and the dry and parched ground into watersprings. It is a place of marvels, and where nothing but faith could live, nor could weak faith survive here. The "bread of adversity" and "the wine of astonishment" are often the only fare set before the soul. A "garden of nuts" (Song vi. 11), a place of dragons and owls, and the region of the shadow of death. Reason must not be heard here; faith alone can help us.

A few examples will best explain the line of experience now taught. We are told to look at Abraham. See him, after oft-repeated and long-protracted trials of faith, with his beloved son Isaac by his side, in full enjoyment of the fruits of his faith and the promise. But hark! there is a call from his God, the voice he knows so well, yet it staggers him. Can it be the voice of God? Could He ask him to commit murder, and to destroy all hope of the fulfilment of the great promise concerning his future? What could short-sighted reason do here? Reason would be heard in him as well as in us; but Faith puts her hand on its mouth, and says, "Be still, and know it is God who speaks, and I must and shall obey." "What! slay thy son, thy only son? What! commit murder?" "Yes, I shall, for it is God who has said it." "But how about the promised seed?" "Did I not receive the child as a root out of the dry ground, from the dead? God can and will fulfil His word to me, though I slay Isaac." By obedience to this command he saw the day of Christ (as we are told), how his God spared not His only Son, but gave Him up for us, and also the resurrection of Christ, and himself with Him. Who can tell what the Holy Spirit then revealed of future truths yet concealed from mortal gaze? Who need fear the trials of faith which issue in such discoveries of hidden mysteries?

Believer, thou hast had many rubs by the way; conquered kings, it may be, for the sake of others, as Abraham for Lot; staggered, and gone down to Egypt; prayed, it may be, and waited long for Isaac; cast out Ishmael; felt the horror of great darkness; but hast thou sacrificed Isaac? Or, as in this passage, has standing water been turned into dry ground, and a fruitful land into barrenness? Have all thy hopes and fair prospects, of fruitfulness and increase been blighted, and the soul once more, apparently, reduced to its native barrenness and nothingness? Think it not strange; there was a "needs-be" for this desolation.

Though Dagon has fallen, his pedestal remains, and thy natural propensity is to idolatry and creature worship. The blossom of thy soul, the effect of implanted grace, was taking the place of thy Lord, and His jealousy has wrought this change. Such is thy weakness and proneness to creature worship, that thou wilt keep on placing this new creature within thee on the throne of the Lord Jesus in thy heart ; and, besides, thy faith is being shored up by sense. Thou forgettest the hole of the pit, and the rock whence thou wast hewn, and that thy fruitfulness is as much a miracle now as if a dry rod should blossom and bear fruit. Thy faith is rusting and needs friction. It also needs another storm to strengthen its roots. "Canst thou not willingly give up Isaac, *i.e.*, look upon the complete destruction of all that My grace has brought forth ? Then the charge against thee is true, and thou hast builded upon him as much as upon My naked promise."

Another example is that of Moses. When sent to speak to Pharaoh about the liberation of Israel, instead of his request being granted, their bondage was made more severe, and their feeling against him bitter. And when they were brought forth, and their escape apparently secured, see them cooped up between rocks, with Pharaoh behind, and the sea in front. What a death upon the promise ! But it led to a triumphant song. Look also at Jeremiah ; assured by Jehovah that Jerusalem shall be destroyed, and the country made desolate, yet told to buy a field. "And Thou hast said unto me, O Lord God, Buy thee the field for money, and take witnesses ; for the city is given into the hand of the Chaldeans." Habakkuk, too, knew this experience. He had said and learned (chapter ii.) that "the just shall live by his faith ;" and then he says, "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines ; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat ; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls : yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." This overturning, this desolation, this winter before harvest, are as necessary as all the other tests of faith ; and as it has stood all before, so it will stand these. Though sorely shaken, and no way of escape or deliverance seems possible, yet the trust is in the Lord who first gave the promise, and then the fruit of promise from the dead. Death and resurrection are the two grand subjects to be studied ; repeated failure of the creature, as in paradise, and a glorious recovery or resurrection through Christ. Is all gone, and the soul in captivity, and the fruitful place a wilderness, and that for the wickedness of thy heart ? For now a new hole is dug (Ezekiel viii.), and new discoveries are made within of spiritual idolatry and wickedness. The knowledge of self and of Christ keep equal pace, and faith and oppo-

sition are about equal in strength. Is it all dark, cold as winter, and barren as a wilderness? Look at the promise (Hosea ii. 21), and compare with what follows here.

Verse 35: "He turneth the wilderness into water;" or, as in Hosea, "I will give her her vineyards from thence," or "out of the wilderness into which I have allured her." This is the way the Lord delights to surprise His poor perishing people—to create, to cause roots to spring out of dry ground, to feed thousands on manna, give drink out of a rock, and send quails by shoals. Our bread, though coming out of the earth and prepared by man, is as much a miracle as when Jesus made it for the five or seven thousand, only the miracle is lost to us because our short sight fixes chiefly on near objects.

Verse 36: "There He maketh to dwell." There, on new creation, on resurrection ground—vineyards from where nothing could grow without a standing miracle. There He maketh the hungry (the same as in verse 5) to abide. He maketh or causeth (as Solomon's Song viii. 13: "Cause me to hear it"). It is the secret of abiding in Christ (John xv.) which is meant. Our tendency is to forsake this high and holy ground for a lower level of sense and creature performance.

Verse 37: "That they may sow the fields," &c. It is only now that increase is obtained—sanctification based on the settled peace and joy of justification. Before this all blossoms fell off, and scarcely any fruit was formed, much less ripened. The Lord often sees fit to keep from view our sanctification, that we may learn better the only mode of justification—Christ alone, without a rag else. We would rest one foot on Christ and one on the work of grace within, which is like one foot on land and one on water. It is only when established in faith—the hole of the pit and the perishing Syrian in view—and all the good in us seen and allowed (hard things to realize) to be of God alone, just as the manna was given daily—only, I say, as these things are realized is fruit obtained. "From Me is thy fruit found." "Without Me ye can do nothing."

"Hungry." In health, hunger or appetite returns regularly, so here the believer is kept alive and with spiritual appetite. On resurrection ground he must and will increase, and his increase is not for himself alone. He plants and cultivates fields for himself and the Church. He plants vineyards with double fruit-bearing vines, not for himself alone, but "his works do follow," and become a blessing to others after him. When dead, he may yet speak. This life of steady faith in God brings peace, and enables the soul to live above the anxious cares and fears he used to be troubled with. "Be careful for nothing." He so lives in God that, though the earth be removed (Psa. xlv.),

or, as in Habakkuk, there be no grape, no olive, no herd in the stall, yet he knows God can and will sustain. The Red Sea and Jordan will dry up, if need be, or ravens may feed, or he can do without, for the Lord alone is his portion, and His Word his staff of life and support. In God he can praise His word. In the face of awful judgments, he can say with the three in Daniel, "We are not careful." This, as aforesaid, is a land of miracles, and to this degree of faith nothing is impossible. Alas ! that the summer and harvest season should be so short !

Verse 38 : "He blesseth also." It is the blessing of the Lord alone that maketh rich ; it is the blessing of paradise, the first pronounced blessing, for he is on restored or resurrection ground. It is now, "Be fruitful and multiply and replenish." It is the view from Pisgah, and, with the telescope of revelation and the eye of faith, clearer in old age, he gets many a peep into the celestial expanse where all is paradise and lasting peace and happiness.

"And suffereth not their cattle to decrease." In the patriarchal life, cattle were the chief means of sustenance and wealth ; so here in the soul there is now to be increase daily. The outer man may decay, but the inner man is renewed day by day. To live in union with Emmanuel—to dwell in God, and have His Word dwell in us richly—this is life. "Multiplied greatly." The blessing of Abraham, the blessing of the Church, and like both of these, very short-lived. See the footsteps of the flock ; you must tread in them more or less. How was it with the seed of Abraham ? how with the Church ever since ? So will it be with thee. There is, to use another metaphor, a new moon every month, and when it comes near the full, there is light at night. There are always fruits on the tree of life, as on the fig tree, but the Church has her chief gatherings once a month. The life of faith is like the seasons, like a tree ; it has day and night, summer and winter. But never spoil the pleasure of the day, nor think of the coming change till it comes. "Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof." Enjoy the day ; use the moonlight ; leave the morrow. This is just what the soul at this stage of experience begins to do.

SIXTH STAGE.

Verse 39 : "Again, they are minished." The wicked may escape these changes, but saints never. The candlestick, though of gold, will get tarnished, and must go into the fire. "Minished." How that word points to the needs-be for this change ! Compare it with the next verse, and the symptoms of the disease are shown. What is the old saint in danger of, who has been favoured as just now ? It is spiritual pride, "that rampant beast," as Hart calls it.

That cursed leaven of the old serpent would mix itself with the graces of the Holy Spirit, and puff the soul up. Unless this proud matter is let out by Paul's thorn, it will swell, and must be treated with a minishing. "Oppression, affliction, and sorrow." Not as stage three, "Fools, because of their transgression," &c. This is not of that kind, though, even at this stage, saints are foolish enough and full enough of sin. It is in part fellowship with Christ, and in part to subdue the bloated swelling. Job could scarcely be righteous as he was without having it; and with nature, to have graces is to be proud of them. It is rather Job's discipline now used than the former rods. There are too many old and foolish kings in Sion, and these, although they will not listen to the Church, shall be admonished by God. Proud of gifts and graces, proud of deep experience and of the advanced stage attained by grace alone, they become lifted up to their damage, and must be minished. "He poureth contempt upon princes." The Lord hates pride everywhere; but in the redeemed, in that poor beggar lifted from the dunghill, it is shameful, and so he shall know and confess when he is humbled. In nature many old men grow conceited; it is a kind of second childhood, and their boastings are too often just those of the little child. It is so, and sad is the sight in grace sometimes. This is a cruel disease, which will have a sharp cure, either by thorns, as in Paul's case, or tempests and siftings, like those of Job.

SEVENTH (LAST) STAGE.

Verse 41: "Yet setteth He the poor." Now, reduced to his own nothingness and creatureship, he is poor as ever; just as dependent, just as much an object of grace and mercy, as at the first. Thus, having been brought down to the dust, he is picked up once more. He is set on high from affliction, even though it remains. Like as with Paul, it may be, the thorn remained, but the sufficient grace of God set him above it. As it was with Job, "families, like a flock," children and goods multiplied beyond all before, the latter end greatly increased; his greatness increased, comfort on all sides (Psa. lxxi. 21).

Verse 42: "The righteous shall see," &c. They understand the discipline and profit by it. They and the Church rejoice at the effects produced on individuals or Churches; while the mouth of the wicked, who said in the minishing, "Aha, aha, so would we have it!" or, "He is only a hypocrite;" or, "Judgment has taken him as a reprobate"—their mouth is stopped by the favour now shown.

Verse 43: "Whoso is wise." The same is said at the end of a somewhat similar experience in Hosea (xiv. ult.) The wise will observe and trace in all these different stages the loving-kind-

ness of the Lord, for loving-kindness is at the bottom of all His dealings with His saints. The rod He uses is never that which is prepared for the wicked, nor does it rest upon them as on the wicked. All discipline is in love. All temptations, afflictions, and tribulations have good in them. "All work together for good," and "work out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" and happiness than might accrue without such dealings.

"THE SIGHING OF THE NEEDY."

"For I am ready to halt, and my sorrow is continually before me."—

PSALM xxxviii. 17.

How can I wait, submissive wait,
Prostrate before His awful feet?
And 'midst the terrors of His rod,
How can I trust a gracious God?
I know He's good to all His own,
But fear, alas! I am not one;
Could I but prove that He's my God,
I think I could endure His rod.

Such heavy crosses on me lie,
Which make me mourn and grieve and sigh;
I feel 'tis more than I can bear,
And yet the Lord rejects my prayer.

For grace to bear my cross I cry,
For grace my cross to sanctify;
Or that my trials He'd remove,
And manifest a Father's love.

Instead of this trials increase,
And strength to bear becomes much less;
Nor can I find the grace of God
To make my sorrows work for good.

I feel I cannot long endure,
I am so helpless, weak, and poor;
And, if the Lord my suit deny,
I must lie down in grief and die.

Oh, that He'd give me strength to wait,
And bow before His awful feet;
And 'midst the terrors of His rod
Assure my heart that He's my God!

E. C.

THE sinner who is drawn to Christ is not he who has learned that he is a sinner by head knowledge, but who feels himself such by heart contrition.—*Joseph Hart.*

OBITUARY OF JAMES CARELESS.

THERE are special lessons to be learned from the lives and deaths of Christians. In some we find an example of zeal and usefulness ; in others, of deep spiritual knowledge ; in others, of patient endurance under affliction ; in others, of humility and love. Others again, as Paul, or in modern times, Joseph Hart, are instances of the exceeding greatness of the grace of God in forgiving aggravated sins.

The case of our departed friend seems to us to particularly show the worth and solidity of a quiet, unassuming religion, and a walk so regulated by the fear of God as to be consistent with the profession of godliness. He was not of those who can talk of a wicked heart, and, at the same time, lead a wicked life ; nor of those who can boast of a deep experience, and practise dishonesty in business, or frame their mouths to utter falsehood. He was an upright man, but not self-righteous ; a perfect man, but not in fleshly holiness ; perfect in the Scriptural sense of the word, that is, sincere and honest in word and deed, as one that feared the Lord ; and his case illustrates the truth of David's words, "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright ; for the end of that man is peace."

James Careless was born near Cambridge, January 4th, 1835, of God-fearing parents. From what we have heard him say, we believe that the beginnings of grace in his heart were imperceptible, though none the less valuable and real. When a child, he liked to listen to the conversation of Christians, and by degrees he grew in the knowledge of himself as a sinner, and of Christ as an all-sufficient and willing Saviour.

While in business as a draper at Haverhill, in Suffolk, he met with severe trials in his family and business, and was himself prostrated by a fever, which left behind it traces of weakness that were never removed. These afflictions were sanctified to his soul's profit, as may be seen from the following lines, penned by him some years afterwards—

- "Thy watchful eye my feet hath led,
And hath from snares and dangers kept ;
Thou hast my life with blessings fed,
While thousands in their graves have slept.
- "Though sore afflictions have me tried,
And pains have pierced my throbbing heart ;
Though in distress I've groaned and sighed,
Yet Thou hast healed the bleeding smart.
- "Though fevers raged with burning might,
And laid me prostrate on my bed—
My worldly prospects seemed to blight,
And threatening clouds hung o'er my head—

- “ Thy power did then my strength maintain,
And saved me from the jaws of death ;
Thy mighty hand did life sustain,
Renewed my strength, revived my breath.
- “ Although, by weary burdens pressed,
My spirit bent with trials sore ;
Thou, as my days, with strength hast blessed,
And brighter years hast given once more.
- “ O Lord my God, help me to praise
Thy holy name for guardian care ;
My soul in gratitude I'll raise,
And all my powers in praise shall share.”

After this season of trial he removed to Cambridge, and in 1870 was baptized at Eden Chapel, where he remained a member for a few years. In January, 1876, he, with his wife, joined the Church at Hope Chapel, Cambridge, and there he abode, a humble and prayerful member to the end. It was evident to us when he first came among us, and afterwards, that he keenly felt, and at the same time truly valued, a faithful and searching ministry. Soon after he joined us the death of an old and valued deacon threw the Church into a good deal of perplexity and trial ; and we well remember the safe and modest course that our friend took at this season. Instead of striving by carnal means to shape events according to his own wishes or judgment, he met with two friends for prayer once a week for some months, and the three laid their common supplications before the Lord that He might order all things for the good of the Church.

Just before the commencement of some heavy and expensive afflictions that fell on our friend in the last two years of his life, he witnessed the outgoing of God's providential mercy in a very remarkable way. An unexpected legacy helped to meet the expenses entailed by affliction, and made such provision for his loved ones as must have freed his mind from anxiety on that score. He received this bounty at the Lord's hand with soberness and meekness, praying that his spirit might not be, as he said, “ clogged with the thick clay ;” and the trials above referred to, which soon after came on him in quick succession, showed the Lord's intention in the matter. It was the kind handiwork of Him who in days of old sent seven years of plenty before seven years of famine.

Mrs. Careless, whose health had been failing for years, grew much worse, and was just recovering from a severe but successful operation when her husband was taken with his last illness. It proved to be a kind of cancer in the liver, and, after a few months, he was so ill that all thought the end was near. It was then that the Lord, who had supplied his temporal needs as

before recorded, drew near to his soul, and met all his spiritual wants by His own divine presence and love. His happy state will be seen from the following account of two visits paid to him at this time :—

May 19th, 1881.—I went to see James Careless this evening, and found him somewhat revived in body, and able to see and converse with me. I said, "I am pleased to hear that it is well with your soul. We heard of your change for the worse just before yesterday's prayer-meeting, and the friends all prayed for you. One of them asked that you might be able to say, 'O death, where is thy sting?'" He said, "I could say that. I have been thinking that, if you took the sting out of a wasp, you might put the wasp on your hand and play with it; and the Lord has shown me that it is just so with death. Its sting is gone." He added, "I have a *whole* shield of faith, and it covers my whole body. If you had a shield the size of a dinner-plate, it would not be of much use to cover the body; and my shield has often appeared to be as little as that. But now it is a whole Christ, and I have a sweet peace in my mind. 'When God gives peace, who then can make trouble?' I have felt quite unable to bring up any trouble. Sometimes I have felt afraid of being wrong. It has seemed too much for me to be so calm, and the enemy has reminded me that 'the wicked have no bands in their death;' but I was enabled to reply, 'No, Satan, I have none of your bands.'" I said, "You are realizing the fulfilment of the promise you mentioned on Sunday, 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee.'" He then went on to say that the wicked one had hurled darts at him, and had tried to persuade him that what he said was but the talk of the lips, that tendeth only to penury; but he felt it was not so. The blessings he enjoyed were real, and if he should hold his peace, the very stones would cry out.

Another trial was this. He had been thinking and saying, "The will of the Lord be done," when the thought came, "What if it is His will to send you to hell?" He replied, "Thou wouldst be just, Lord, and Thy righteous law would approve it well; but that is not Thy will concerning me." He then referred to the case of Hezekiah, and his fall by pride so soon after his affliction, and the lengthening of his days, and said, "It makes me tremble. I have a vile heart, capable of any evil; but there is the precious blood of Christ. We need prayer to keep our souls."

He told me that all terror was gone from death, and that, though he was so weak in body and mind, he felt stronger in his soul than he had ever done in all his life. I said, "You have never so needed it." "No," he answered; "there is a faithful God. I

feel that I can take body, soul, spirit, and all that I possess, roll them into a bundle, and put them all in the Lord's hands, saying, 'They are safer in Thy hands than in mine.' I could not help quoting Hart's hymn to him—

"He'll never leave thee, doubt it not,
In pain, in sickness, or in death.

"Himself shall be thy helping Friend,
Thy kind Physician, yea, thy Nurse ;
To make thy bed shall condescend,
And from the affliction take the curse."

And then I said, "Friend, the Lord is so good to you that it seems to me those about you need our pity and sympathy much more than you do." "Yes," said he, "I do pity them. I think they are the sufferers." His wife answered him, "Ah! my dear, you are so patient." "I wish to be so," was the reply. I took his hand to say "good-bye," and he said, "Now, you know, you are my friend, W——. Come and see me whenever you can." I replied, "Well, during all the time that we have known one another, we cannot look back at a single jar." "No," he said, "we have been very united."

I left my dear friend and brother, feeling that there is a something holy and sanctifying about the grace shed on a dying saint. To commune with the soul of such an one gives us, as it were, a glimpse of the gate of heaven in a mirror.

On Saturday evening, May 21st, I saw James Careless again, and found him in the same calm and happy state of mind. The conversation was somewhat as follows:—

"The Lord is still gracious to you, I hope?" "Yes, and I wonder how He can be so kind to me. I cannot say, with Paul, that I have been 'caught up into heaven; whether in the body or out of the body I cannot tell;' but there is a gracious unfolding of the Scriptures here and there. I have seen that passage as never before: 'If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.' My heart does not condemn me. It is vile and polluted, but then there is the blood of Christ, and what He has done." "Then you find that the things which you have heard are brought to your remembrance, and you are able to feed upon them?" "Yes, it is a feeding on the Scriptures. I have been thinking also of the king of Israel and Benhadad. The latter sent crafty ambassadors to induce the king to make a confederacy with him, and they caught at his words, 'Thy brother Benhadad.' Then, if I mistake not, the king asked Benhadad into his chariot. There is a vein of spiritual instruction in all these things; they are

not written for nothing. Now, I feel that I will not make a confederacy with the Lord's enemies; for I am fully confident that one who is clad with the whole armour of God can not only face Satan, but chase Satan. I have never known so much of victory and conquering as since I have lain here." "Yes," I replied, "we are said to be more than conquerors." "Ah! it is not a mere word; it is real. The Lord has gone with me step by step in this affliction. The change for the worse came suddenly; and it seems that I was not till then low enough to know the greatness of the pity and compassion of God." I again reminded him of Hart's hymn—

"Then, then to have recourse to God,
To pour a prayer in time of need,
To feel the balm of Jesus' blood,
This is to find a Friend indeed."

He said, "Some hymns have been sweet to me. I have thought of that—

"Come, Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove,
With Thy all-quickening powers;
Kindle a flame of sacred love
In these cold hearts of ours."

"My heart is not cold now. It is kindled with the love of a Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." I answered, "We could not do without any one of them. You remember poor Thomas Smith?" He assented. "Well, he said on his death-bed, 'I think He has made my soul three-corner-wise, for nothing will support it but God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.'"

James Careless went on:—"One of my ears is still deaf, and I feel that, if I were to turn my head so as to lie on that ear, I should faint immediately. I told my father when he came that one ear is closed to the world, and Jesus Christ is speaking in the other. I have thought, too, of what Hannah said: 'He raiseth the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the beggar from the dunghill.' The things of this world are a dunghill, and how we grovel in it till the Lord lifts us up! We cannot lift ourselves above it; the Lord lifts us. What a foolish expression is that—'to make one's peace with God'! It is taking what belongs to Jesus Christ. He has made peace by the blood of His cross. If I had to seek God now, what a dreadful thing it would be! You told me," he continued, "that the friends had been praying for me. If they prayed the Lord to be with me, their prayers are answered."

I then read him a short Psalm, and rose to go, saying "The Lord be with you still, and with yours." "The

Lord be with you and yours," he replied. "Give my Christian love to Mrs. W—. May the Lord be with the friends in the house of worship to-morrow, and with all the assemblies of His saints. We are poor cold lovers of Zion. I think about our old friends, and pray the Lord to be with them and comfort them as He comforts me."

Mrs. C— recorded the following remarks made to her about the same time:—

"Who is a God like unto our God, who forgiveth all our iniquity, and cleanseth from all sins? If we go into battle with 'the whole armour of God,' there is not a crack for even a small dart to enter. You know the furnace was heated seven times hotter; but it mattered not, for Christ was there. You are in the furnace with me; and oh, my dear, may you have the comfort of God's supporting grace as I have! Bless His holy name! I have been thinking that, while I was downstairs, my affliction was not deep enough for me to experience the fulness of God's love as I do now. I believe the three Hebrews had on such a dress that the fire could not touch it; so, if we are clothed in the righteousness of Christ, nothing can hurt us."

On Sunday afternoon, May 22nd, 1881, I left him (continues Mrs. C—), thinking he would sleep. When I returned he said, "No, I have not slept, but have been better employed. I have had such good company—Job, David, and Paul. It is said, 'He maketh the dumb to speak.' I have been singing in my heart at the great goodness of God to me, a worthless sinner, in making known His great love to me. I have been by the bedside of Christians, and heard them speak of their experience of these things; but now the Lord has given me a song, and opened my mouth to speak of His wondrous love in talking and communing with me. Oh, the manifestation of His precious love to my soul! Oh, my dear Polly, your time will come! You know Martha was cumbered after many things; she wanted to show her love by caring for and serving her Lord. But she was one of His own; and to you, as to her, comfort will be given in time of need; and may you indeed rejoice as I do now."

Though the end had seemed so near, our dear friend lingered for nearly twelve months after this; and, whilst he never again had such an abundant overflow of joy, yet the establishing effect of this great blessing endured to the end. From the nature of the disease he had a continual heaviness and oppression in the head, which was most wearisome to bear, and the enemy of his soul did not leave him unmolested; but the patience with which he was supplied from above had its perfect work in enabling him to meekly endure the Lord's will, and the seal of divine love upon his heart secured him from being moved by the malice of

the wicked one. It was most remarkable to witness the state of quiet confidence in which he was preserved—a confidence evidently gracious and far from presumption. He would say, “The Lord knows the weakness of my head, and that I could not endure much; therefore, He keeps me thus calm.” This quiet rest in the blood, the righteousness, the love of Jesus had indeed made death to be to him as “a wasp without a sting;” and long before the end came he had requested a minister that he esteemed (Mr. Morriss, of Hitchin) to bury him, and made other arrangements about his funeral. To a friend he said, “You will soon hear that I am gone; but that does not trouble me.” To another, “I do wish to glorify God in this affliction. It is a pleasure to glorify Him; His goodness is so great.” And, again, “The Lord has laid me aside for twelve months to show me that He can manage my affairs better than I can.”

On Friday, March 31st, 1882, Mrs. Careless read to him a chapter (1 Pet. i.), and the hymn, “Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness.” He seemed to enjoy the reading, and made some comments as she read. He was drowsy, however, and said, “It is very kind of you, my dear, to try to keep me awake.” She left, thinking that some sleep might refresh him; but he fell into a heavy slumber, and never woke to consciousness again. He seemed afterwards sufficiently conscious to swallow a little beef-tea, put into his mouth at intervals, but did not recognize those around him. All attempts of doctor, children, or even wife to rouse him were fruitless. Only on Sunday, when his aged father entered the room, he said, “Father!” But it was a momentary flash of consciousness; and thus the end came unexpectedly at last, and his dear ones were spared the pain of the parting word “good-bye.” He lingered in this state till Monday, April 3rd, on which day, at five p.m., he entered into glory, a repentant sinner, saved by Jesus Christ.

The funeral took place on Easter Monday, April 10th, when our dear friend’s remains were laid in the grave by Mr. Morris according to the request above mentioned, in sure and certain hope of a joyful resurrection to eternal life and glory. J. P. W.

Mr. Careless occasionally tried his hand at poetry, but not with any idea of obtruding his humble verses upon the notice of others. The following few lines are taken from some pieces written during the last year of his life, and found in his pockets. The simple and touching lines of farewell to “the little stock of worldly goods,” &c., were written about a fortnight before death—

What love's like Thine, who couldst with thoughts of grace
Look down on one like me, forlorn and base,
Deep sunk in sin and shame ?

What love's like Thine, Thou who, Thy love to show,
Wouldst leave Thy glory and descend so low,
To dwell with one so vile ?

What love's like Thine, Thou who canst call *me* fair
That wove the thorny crown for Thee to wear
With these malicious hands ?

What love's like Thine, that Thou canst see no spot
In sinful me, who am but one dark blot,
Unclean without, within ?

A few lines that present themselves to my mind while glancing at the little stock of worldly goods which God gave me to be enjoyed while in health :—

Why should I longer stay
To see you all decay ?
I now can plainly see
Your charms are lost for me.

Oh, earth-bound soul, shake off thy bands,
And fly to those celestial lands
Where God provides a lasting rest,
And dwell with those for ever blest.

THE SYMPATHY OF CHRIST.

How sensibly I feel my ignorance and want of more spiritual experience of the blessed realities I read in good Dr. Owen's writings ; and yet, blessed be the name of the Lord, my soul's element is in these things, of which he so masterly and blessedly writes, and oftentimes I have found my heart touched powerfully while engaged in reading and meditating on them, for which I would be more thankful. Read the following :—

“The Lord Christ, out of His inexpressible love, willingly submitted Himself unto every condition of the children to be saved by Him, and to everything in every condition of them, sin only excepted. They being of flesh and blood, which must be attended with many infirmities, and exposed unto all sorts of temptations and miseries, He Himself would also partake of the same. His delight was of old in the sons of men (Prov. viii. 13), and His heart was full of thoughts of love towards them ; and that alone put Him on this resolution.

“When God refused sacrifices and burnt-offerings, as insufficient to make the atonement required, and the matter was rolled on His hand alone, it was a joy unto Him that He had a body prepared, wherein He might discharge His work, although He knew what He had to do and suffer therein. He rejoiced to do the will of God in taking the body prepared for Him, because the children were partakers of flesh and blood. Though He was in the form of God, equal unto Him, yet that mind—that love—that affection towards us, was in Him, that to be like unto us, and thereby to save us, He emptied Himself, and took on Him the form of a servant, our form, and became like unto us. He would be like unto us, that He would make us like unto Himself. He would take our flesh, that He might give unto us His Spirit. He would join Himself unto us, and become one flesh with us, that we might be joined unto Him, and become one spirit with Him. And as this was a fruit of His eternal antecedent love, so it is a spring of consequent love. When Eve was brought unto Adam, after she was taken out of him, to manifest the ground of that affection which was to be always between them, he says of her, ‘This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh.’ ‘And by this condescension of Christ,’ saith the Apostle, ‘are we members of His body, and of His flesh, and of His bones;’ whence he infers that He loves and cherisheth His Church as a man doth his own flesh. And how should this inexpressible love of Christ constrain us to love Him, and to live unto Him, and also to labour to be like unto Him, wherein all our blessedness consisteth, seeing for that end He was willing to be like unto us, whence all His troubles and sufferings arose !”

“The Lord Christ suffered under all His temptations, sinned in none. He suffered, being tempted ; sinned not, being tempted. He had the heart of a man, and that in the highest degree of sense and tenderness. Whatever sufferings the soul of a man may be brought under by grief, sorrow, shame, fear, pain, danger, foes, by any afflictive passions within or impressions of force from without, He underwent, He felt it all. Because He was always in the favour of God, and in the assurance of the indissolubility of the union of His Person, we are apt to think that what thus came upon Him was so overbalanced by the blessedness of His relation to God as not to cause any great trouble to Him. But we mistake when we so conceive. No sorrows were like to His, no sufferings like to His. He fortified not Himself against them, but, as they were merely penal, He made bare His breast to their strokes, and laid open His soul that they might soak into the inmost parts of it (Isaiah l. 6). All those reliefs and diversions of this life which we make use of to alleviate our sorrows and sufferings He utterly abandoned. He left nothing in the whole nature

of sorrow or suffering that He tasted not and made experience of. Indeed, in all His sufferings and temptations He was supported with the thoughts of the glory before Him, but our thoughts of His present glory should not divert us from the contemplation of His past real sufferings. All the advantage that He had above us by the excellency of His Person was only that the sorrows of His heart were enlarged thereby, and He was made capable of greater enduring without sin. He bears still in His holy mind the sense He had of the sorrows wherewith He was pressed in the time of His temptations, and thereon seeing His brethren conflicting with the like difficulties, is ready to help them; and because His power is proportioned to His will, it is said, 'He is able.' And, whatever may be the real effects on the mind of Christ from His temptations and sufferings now He is in heaven, I am sure they ought to be great in our faith and consolation, when we consider Him undergoing them for this very end and purpose, that seeing He was constituted our High Priest, to transact all our affairs with God, He would be sensible of that condition in His own Person which He was afterwards to present to God, for relief to be afforded to it."

Oh, for closer fellowship with this Friend of sinners !

A. H.

LETTERS FOR THE YOUNG.—No. XXVI.

TO A YOUNG FRIEND.

MY DEAR L—,—Duty tells me to write to you, and inclination also. I should like to have a feeling of something good to communicate when I write to my friends, but in the absence of that, are we fellow-seekers of the "Pearl of great price" ? If so, we have directions and encouragements to help us in our search ; and, moreover, promises assuring us that "every one that seeks *shall* find." The Lord Jesus says, "Search the Scriptures, for they testify of Me." "In all [this kind of labour] there is profit" (Prov. xiv. 23). It is also good to communicate. The Prophet Malachi tells us, "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened," &c. ; and, although we may each be ready to say, "What good can be derived from my poor attempt to write?" yet the Lord can enable us to "gain by this trading." We are very prone to look into ourselves and away from God, who is our strength. Thus did the spies, when sent to view the land of promise. They looked at the strength of their enemies, and their own weakness, and away from God, their Rock ; so we are apt to look at the narrowness of the way, our corruptions, weakness, ignorance,

&c. ; but are slow to look through the promises to God, who has said, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved" (Isa. xlv. 22). You know, when you have received any encouragement, it has not been by looking within, but at One without : "These all died in faith, not having received the promises"—i.e., they had not received the fulfilment of them, but they believed and embraced them, and held to them as their life—"Looking unto Jesus."

Now, if you are that poor sensibly-ruined sinner, bringing a long list of charges against yourself, as ignorant, unbelieving, &c., yet longing and waiting for the fulfilment of the promise, you have Scriptural warrant for so doing. You can never put self too low ; yet, if God has graciously imparted a spark of life, whereby you feel your state, and are enabled to look out of the dark grave of nature's death to see a beauty in the new heavens of grace, with a desire to come under the influence of the Sun of Righteousness, then seek not for consolation within, but in the beauties without—the promises, which are the beams of the Sun of Righteousness, when accompanied with the voice of Him who is "the Resurrection and the Life," saying, "Lazarus, come forth !"

What is the cause of your thoughts being so often upon the "things that are not seen" ? It is not so with the dead, for, if their natural minds are at times drawn to them, there is nothing to attract in spiritual things ; whereas, where there is life, there is an attraction, although the soul may be much discouraged, and fear because of what is felt within. It is a mercy if God will press groans out of us—if He will in any way deal with us—to draw us to Himself. If He does so, it is all of free mercy. He is not indebted to us, but our debt to Him is beyond our calculation. "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."

We need to get such a view of Christ as to see Him to be everything to us—to see Him as our death, in which He has atoned for our sin ; as our spotless righteousness, in His holy life ; as our life, in whom we live spiritually, and in whom we have eternal life ; as our High Priest, ever living to make intercession for us ; and to see the wondrous love of God in all. From what little glimmerings I have had, I believe there is no sweeter posture than to be laid low at His feet, to be tasting His love, abasing self, and exalting Christ ; looking at Him as the "One lifted up" that sinners might look to Him and live. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

Wishing you every blessing, with love, I am your affectionate friend,

January 6th, 1873.

E. MORGAN.

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THE SOWER.

NOTES OF A SERMON PREACHED BY MR. W. SMITH,
AT TUNBRIDGE WELLS, FEBRUARY 12TH, 1882.

"The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger;" or, as it is in the margin, "shall add strength."—JOB xvii. 9.

It seems to imply that there is much to obstruct the way of the righteous, and all God's righteous people know this to be a truth when they are brought into the way. But there is no knowing anything about the way but by those that have to walk in it. But here is an absolute promise made by God; and oh, what a mercy to know all "the promises of God are yea and amen in Christ Jesus, to the glory of God by us"! Whether we look at the Lord Jesus Christ as "the Righteous" here spoken of, or at His children as united to Him, the promise remains the same. Christ met with a great deal of opposition. He is called the "tried stone;" and while He passed through the wilderness, He was to be made like unto His brethren; and what a thought it is to a soul whose mind is fixed on the Lord Jesus Christ, that "it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God"! Who can sympathize rightly with a friend in trouble but those that really know what trouble is, and who have been in the same spot, under the same trial, and had the same exercise? But oh, what a mercy Christ knows every intricate path! There is not a place that a child of God will be brought into that will be a strange place to Christ. We can tell Him the cause of our troubles—not for His information, but the Eternal Spirit draws the mind of the Lord's people to this work; and it is very sweet work when we can secretly unbosom all our cares and tell Him everything; and at such a time, if a divine light shine into the soul, and the poor child of God can pour out his heart, how he feels for a time to have lost a great burden! He feels he is lightened, and his face is not ashamed. We often lose sight of what God is, of His almighty character, of His faithfulness, and hence are afraid that, after a while, we shall not be able to hold on. What a trial this is to a living soul! Ah! child of God, your holding on does not rest with you. Job, here, for a little, was made to look with different eyes, and say, "The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger." Job's friends did not understand him, nor his complaint, nor his temptations, at this

time; and mark, whether good men or not, they made great mistakes. They treated the good man as a hypocrite—as if those calamities were come for some hidden sin, which he would not confess. How possible it is to wrest the words of a poor soul, and turn them into some baneful thing. How it behoves us to be careful when we see any of the children of God in deep trouble, let it be brought on them in what way it may. Better is it to leave all their wrongs with the Lord. He is a God of judgment, and is sure to make no mistakes. He loveth judgment, and forsaketh not His saints; they are preserved for ever. How many things are said of the righteous! They are to “dwell in the land for ever.” The Lord “loveth the righteous,” and they “shall be had in everlasting remembrance.”

During the week now past I have had such a sight of my own shortcomings, my own sinnership, my own backslidings, and my evil heart of unbelief, that I have appeared as a wretched heathen. What has this produced? A holy longing that the Lord might come and manifest Himself again to me, take away iniquity, and receive me graciously and love me freely, seeing I have nothing to rest on but the free mercy of a covenant God. “If these foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” How different are “*the righteous*” to those who are righteous in themselves, and lean partly to their own righteousness! The troubles of such will be *outward*, and not caused by the rising up of all kinds of evil. This exercise they do not understand, but the child of God has the burden of it, which he has to carry, and none but the Lord can rid him of it. But is it not a blessing that the mercy and love of God are free, and manifested irrespective of anything in the child of God? And the more he is brought to feel this, the stronger and stronger he will become in a holy confidence that salvation is of *grace*. This looks an easy thing to say, and many will let the expression come from their lips; but, friends, *salvation by grace* is a great truth that the children of God have to buy. That they do; and, when they have bought it, they will not sell it at any price. Plenty of men will sell their belief for very little, because they got it cheap, and can afford to part with it cheap. I am learning salvation is of *grace* every day of my life. I hope I am well versed in it thus far, but I have to learn it over and over again. I highly prize *grace*, free mercy, God’s method of saving sinners. None will prize this but lost sinners—lost in themselves, and lost to all intents and purposes if God does not appear for them in a way of free, sovereign, discriminating *grace*.

The Lord Jesus Christ, *the Righteous*, held on His way. Child of God, how weak art thou! But look for a minute or two at thy Lord and mine. He held on His way; but look at His weakness. We find Him “weary with His journey;” no wonder you are

weary. He sits on the well; no wonder at your wanting a resting-place. We find Him meeting with Satan and with professors, all trying to stop up His way, but steadily He pursued it, like Gideon's army, "faint, yet pursuing." Gideon asked bread of the people in the way, and they said, "Why should we give bread to you?" But Gideon's army accomplished what they wished, and then came back and showed they had accomplished it. So Christ Jesus pursued His way. Onward He goes, and no enemies are allowed to put their hands on Him till His hour comes. And so will it be with the child of God. Sometimes he fears that one thing and sometimes that another will stop up his way. But nothing has stopped it yet, and nothing ever will. The day of your death will stop your earthly career, but not stop your entering into heaven. Bless God for that. God's absolute promise stands good to-day, "The righteous also shall hold on his way," and the Lord has brought each of us thus far.

Do we bear the character of "the righteous"? Abraham was made manifest as this character by God calling him out of the land of Ur, and making him promises of coming into another land. Each of us were in the world, gratifying our carnal mind with its lusts, as far as means would allow. Has God called us out? Do we see an emptiness in what before we loved? Is our desire toward the Lord? Do we feel we can sacrifice worldly pleasures, enjoyments, and company, and cast in our lot with these "righteous" that walk that way that scarcely any one seems to know anything about? Do we see something about them to admire? Is there something in your heart says, "I will go with you"? It is a great mercy to have a feeling of that kind.

When at Hastings last time (about three weeks ago), I took tea with one of my best friends there, Mr. Samson Funnell. He was then lively as ever, and is now a corpse. His days were numbered, and I believe God had taught him to number them. He was a choice soul in the things of God, greatly tried in his soul and in his business. Many a time his way seemed hedged up, but God would still make a way. He could not see the way before him, but was led to follow on to the end, and God has brought him now to his desired haven. When I received the news, how it came into my mind about the uncertainty of life; and oh, what a feeling desire it wrought in my mind to keep close to the Lord! The world seemed at once to become of less value than ever. I was led to see that, by nature, "man walketh in a vain show: surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them." But none but the righteous will see these things in their true character, and be willing to suffer in this world.

And you that cannot say much, don't you feel a real desire

to be made like the people of God? Have you not the very feeling of Ruth, "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest I will die, and there will I be buried"? Such an one is a glory-bound soul. These are the souls I love. However little religion they have, they have enough to lead them to the Lord. They see the end of all perfection here, and that makes them ask the Lord for greater manifestations of Himself; and they will have them. They may be exceedingly tried, but, as sure as I stand before you, God has these in reserve for them.

"The righteous shall hold on his way." Perhaps you will say, "I don't think I am in it." Your experience must be your own, and "not another's with thee." If you try to measure yourself by another, you will not come together; but, if led to seek an interest in the Lord, He will work in you of His good pleasure. He will keep you seeking, and the reason of your not giving up is, the Lord has been, and still is, at the root of your profession. Righteous men hold on because they are united to the *Righteous One*; and as Christ, the Head, entered the grave, rose triumphant, and ascended where He was before to prepare a place for His people, so must it be with His body, the Church. If one member could be lost, it would be parting Christ and His spouse; and how could it be said, "Behold I and the children whom the Lord hath given Me"? They are united to Him by ties of covenant love, and they have the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come. Has not the Lord given us more than we could have expected here? Well, then, the world to come is also ours. The Lord is in heaven, and keeps calling for one after another of His people, millions of whom are already there. I can say, the longer I live, the more empty I see this world to be. It clogs us with miry clay, which is a burden to carry. I am quite willing the worldlings should have the world, and professors have their profession; but I want the Spirit of God to witness with my spirit, as He has done, that my life is hid with Christ in God, and, when He shall appear, I shall appear with Him in glory. If feeling this once is enough for some people, it is not enough for me. I soon get troubled if the Lord leaves me. I cannot draw comfort from His former loving-kindnesses unless the Lord the Spirit leads me back, and witnesses to the truth of what I have experienced, and thus makes the thing over again. The Holy Spirit is said to be a *Comforter*, whom the Father was to send in Christ's name; and He did send Him to "dwell in all His saints, and seal them heirs of heaven." This *sealing* may not have yet been felt, but we know that it is contrary to the very nature of God, and to the very nature of Christ, to draw back from the work He undertakes—

“His promise is yea and amen,
And never was forfeited yet.”

You poor things that find you cannot do the things you would, you strive and strive again to keep the evil things from rising, and your heart from wandering; to keep your affections and to lift your thoughts above. Sometimes, for a little while, you do think of Christ's words, and then away go your thoughts, and you are thinking of what you are going to do with this, that, and the other. All in a minute you detect yourself, and it troubles you to think you should be so worldly-minded. To some people this seems nonsense, but to the children of God these things are the cause of many a groan. These are the souls that will hold on their way. The mountain against them seems sometimes to touch the skies, but it shall become a plain.

“And he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger”—hands of faith, clean hands, the hands that the people of God handle Christ with. “Handle Me and see,” saith the dear Redeemer; “for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have.” How the people of God like to be favoured to handle Christ! And they do not “handle the Word of God deceitfully.” It is for want of these hands that people “handle the Word of God deceitfully.” Is it not wonderful that people want to alter the Word of God? I desire to take the whole of it; yet there are many portions that have cut me like a whip. When the Word cuts us, it is a good thing to cleave to it. I will tell you what has cut me over and over again. “Seest thou a man that is hasty with his words? There is more hope of a fool than of him.” It has been a lash to me many a time, and has made me confess my sin many a time. Wherever we find anything we do not understand, it is not for us to erase it, and bring something in we think we do understand. The best thing is to ask the Great Teacher for wisdom, for we shall find ourselves ignorant enough. We shall want the blessed Spirit's teaching all the journey through, and all such will want to have clean hands before the world, and to cleanse their way by taking heed thereto according to the Word of God. What a mercy for a poor soul to be brought to be as clay, and the Lord the Potter, and to be willing for Him to mould him according to His will! I cannot tell you how sweet it is. Jeremiah said, “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.” Another tells us the Word is sweeter than honey or the honeycomb. Yes, the Word of the Lord, dropping into the soul, produces that in the heart which nothing else can. “God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.” And, child of God, could you tell the peculiar sweetness wrought by the little of the love of God you have felt

—the thousandth part of the sweetness you then realized? No, because it was supernatural; it was given you from heaven, and when it thus drops into your soul, it seals you an heir of heaven. “A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven.” Whatever the Lord gives in this way from heaven, it proves that the soul to whom He gives it will go to heaven. I feel at times now that I should like to leave all below, and fly away and be at rest. But, when the Lord withdraws, we sink back again. As we realize these changes, we become stronger and stronger in the faith or grace that is in Christ Jesus, because we know that without Him we can do nothing, and that all good comes from Him, and returns to Him; and the longer you live, the stronger you will be in the belief that, if ever you get to heaven, the Lord must take you there; in the belief that salvation is of grace; in the belief that you still carry about a body of sin and death; in the belief that, if the Lord does not subdue the sins of your nature, they will get the mastery. We get strong in the Lord, leaning on Him, and trusting in Him to work all for us and in us; and so we feel weak in ourselves, and are ready to sing—

“No good in creatures can be found,
But may be found in Thee;
I must have all things and abound
While God is God to me.”

This is getting strong, “stronger and stronger.” Do we really know anything of this? If ever we get to heaven, we must know what it is to be weak in ourselves, and to come from sheer necessity to the Lord Jesus; and then, again, after the Lord has favoured us, we come into spots where we have no strength, wisdom, or righteousness, and go again as real beggars to the mercy-seat, as poor as Lazarus, but with a firm persuasion that the Lord can help us if He will. The blessed Spirit teaches the children of God that the Lord Jesus can help if He will, and they go to try Him, because they know they must go or perish. I wonder how many people in Tunbridge Wells to-day go to their places of worship as real beggars, having felt their poverty in the week. Were we to put all that go in mere form on one side, and real beggars on the other, we should be amazed at the small number of the latter. A form of religion is a thing sought after in the day in which we live, and attended to by most people; but when it comes to *power*, ministers, as well as people, will turn their backs upon it. But their opposition will not stop its progress. God will have His witnesses in all ages, and they shall be so taught by the Spirit their own weakness and God’s power, their own foolishness and Christ’s wisdom, that they will put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. If you are

taught to prize these things in your souls, the Lord has done more for you than for thousands. I must tell you who are seeking souls, that you have a goodly portion. You may say, "I wish I could but prove it." You will prove it, and then, if you live long, you will have to prove it again. "Though we believe not, yet He abideth faithful : He cannot deny Himself." All hinges on the immutability, the unchangeableness of God, who has called you out of darkness into His marvellous light. If God could change His mind, not one sinner would be saved ; but "He is of one mind, and who can turn Him ? And what His soul desireth, even that He doeth. For He performeth the thing that is appointed for me : and many such things are with Him." He desires to save all His people with an everlasting salvation, and what He desires He will do, and that in the way He thinks best. He will not have any to be His counsellor. "The righteous also shall hold on his way ; and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger."

THE HEALING OF THE WATERS.*

(See 2 KINGS ii. 19—22.)

LINES SUGGESTED BY BEREAVEMENT AND CHANGE.

I HAVE read of a spot, very pleasant and fair,
 But the water was naught, and the landscape was bare ;
 Till a messenger came, by the word of the Lord,
 And the good gift of healing spread sweetly abroad.
 "'Tis a picture," said I, "with a voice to my heart,
 While the scene of my lot little joy can impart ;
 Ah ! then, let me arise and go forth all around,
 For it may be the Healer is yet to be found !"
 There are charms in this fine situation, I know ;
 Very pleasant appears all that *Nature* can show ;
 Yet there still is a void to be owned in this place,
 Which can only be filled by the Word of His *grace*.
 To the ear that can hear, let me tell of the dearth,
 Of the blight which has come o'er my blossoming earth ;
 How I pine for the streams which once gladdened my breast,
 And the God of Elisha shall do all the rest.
 With the cruse and the salt came the blessing of yore,
 And for me the new flask may have savour in store ;
 Let the spring but be touched by the covenant sign,
 It will leap forth in life and in blessing divine.
 O'er my desolate waste let the pure waters glide,
 A fresh gladness shall burst by the soft-flowing tide ;
 Neither death nor decay from its pleasures can steal,
 When the power of the Lord has been present to heal.

* By Mrs. JOSEPH FEARN, author of "Plain Rhymes on the Pentateuch," &c.

THE WISE RESOLUTION OF A QUEEN.

WHAT a strait place Queen Esther found herself to be in, when she said, "Go, gather together all the Jews, and fast ye for me, three days and three nights. I also and my maidens will fast likewise, and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish" (Esther iv. 16). There were only two ways for Esther to take—either to go in unto the king, and intercede for her people, or to let things take their own course. In the former, it was against the law, and death was the penalty, except the king should be moved with compassion, and hold out the golden sceptre, which seemed to depend upon how he might feel disposed at the time, making it a precarious venture, especially as she had "not been called in these thirty days." In the latter course, she was told by Mordecai that, if she held her peace, deliverance would come from another quarter, but she, with her father's house, would be destroyed. This prediction of Mordecai was by faith in the mercy of God toward the people of Israel, and it was respected by Esther. She was now in the place of the four lepers, who were ready to starve outside the gate of Samaria. If they sat still there, they would die of famine; if they entered into the city, it would fare the same with them. If they went to the tents of the Syrians, they would most likely put them to death; but they might possibly spare them. Thus there seemed to be only a slight possibility of life in the one case; none in the other. In the case of Esther, should the king be touched with pity; in the case of the lepers, should their enemies have pity on them.

Here is represented the case of a Spirit-convinced sinner before God. How much he finds to discourage him in going to God to seek for mercy from Him! In the first place, it is not "according to the law," and all are under the law by nature; and the law has not a word to say of mercy—it only condemns. God has put a "flaming sword" between Himself and the sinner, which turns every way to guard the way of life (Gen. iii. 24). Thus, if God deals with any sinner to show him his true position and state, he finds himself awfully shut up, as between impassable mountains. But here he has the advantage of Esther, for there is not only the golden sceptre, which is the "glorious Gospel of the grace of God," held out to him, but he has also the promise of Christ, that it shall be held out to every needy sinner: "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." These are the words of Him who is truth, and "cannot lie." But each one who is thus convinced by the Holy Spirit finds a depth of evil in his own heart, and unbelief constantly at work, that, unless He that is "stronger than the strong man armed"

binds this mighty foe (unbelief), these difficulties would never be surmounted. But the Lord Jesus Christ has promised to hear those who call upon Him, and He will set the poor out of the reach of those who puff at them (Psa. xii. 5); so there is great encouragement for all those, thus oppressed, still to wait and call upon the Lord, for the time will surely come when all such waiters will find the promise fulfilled in their case; and, as Esther gained favour with king Ahasuerus, so these shall surely find what they have sought for, even the Lord Jesus Christ, as their Portion, though they may have many weary days of "toiling in rowing, the wind being contrary," the corruptions of the heart continually rising up, causing slips and failings in all the duties of life, making so many lets and hindrances in the way to the desired haven. All this, and far more, makes the soul "weary and heavy laden," yet within the compass of the promise, "I will give you rest" (Matt. xi. 28). In some cases it is a life-long battle before any marked victory is gained; in others, a sealing word is given at an early stage; but in each case the Lord's own glory and the final salvation of His people is the end He has in view by all His varied dealings with them.

E. MORGAN.

THE AWFUL NATURE OF A CHRISTLESS STATE.

1. A CHRISTLESS state is a burdened state. You lie under the burden of all your sins, original and actual; the burden of all the guilt of all your sinful thoughts, words, and actions lies upon your back, because you never come to Christ with your burdens; and, if you never come, the burden will sink you down to the lowest hell.

2. The Christless state you are in is a loathsome state. All your actions, whether natural, civil, or religious, are vile and abominable in the sight of God. The very prayer of the wicked is sin. You are full of nothing but putrifying sores from the crown of your head to the sole of your foot. There is no mire so unclean, no vomit so loathsome, no pestilence so noisome, no carrion so offensive, as thou art, in thy Christless state, in the sight of a holy God, who cannot look upon iniquity but with abhorrence.

3. Thy Christless state is a poor, blind, and naked state. Your soul is naked, and you swarm with the vermin of filthy lusts. You are destitute of a garment to cover you, of eye-salve to enlighten you, and of gold to enrich you. There seems to be an allusion to Christ's three-fold office (Rev. iii. 18), "I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and

white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see." As a Prophet, He hath eye-salve; as a Priest, He hath a garment; and as a King, He hath gold. But now you are destitute of all these while you are without Christ and without faith in Him.

4. Your Christless state is an enslaved state. You are a slave to Satan. He works in your heart, as in a shop (Eph. ii. 2). He says to you, "Go," and you go; "Do this," and ye do it. Your state is worse than the Egyptian bondage, for Israel groaned under theirs; but, alas! you are not sensible of yours, neither do ye believe it. The devil knows that, if you perceived your slavery, you would seek to make your escape from him, therefore he makes all sure. He does with you as the Philistines did with Samson—puts out your eyes, that you may not see your chains, nor look to Christ for liberty.

5. Your Christless state is, therefore, a wrathful state, wherein God's wrath is burning against you. The flaming sword of justice is always over your neck, for "God is angry with the wicked every day" (Psa. vii. 11). Every day of the week and every hour of the day, when you go out and when you come in, when you rise up and lie down, God is still angry with you. He hath bent His bow, and made ready His arrows, and you are the butt of these arrows of His indignation; and, if He let them fly, they will pierce you to the very soul; and who will heal that wound? Who can help you if Christ neglect you? No reconciliation but through Him.

6. Your Christless state is a cursed state. All the curses of the broken law are levelled against you, and a just God is engaged by His oath to ruin you. To whom doth He swear in His wrath that they should not enter into His rest, but to them that believe not? (Heb. iii. 18.) Should not the thoughts of this make you tremble? Were it but the oath of a man, or a company of men, as those forty men that bound themselves with an oath that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul, it would bereave you of your nights' rest and quiet, till you were made friends with your enemies; and will the oath of the great God have no effect upon you, nor move you to fly to Christ for protection?

ERSKINE.

IT is not he that runs the fastest that wins the prize—the race is not to the swift. He that moves slow often treads sure, because he pondereth the path of his feet, and is the less liable to stumble in his walk. He that believes shall not make haste:—
W. Huntington.

NIGHT THOUGHTS BY A WATCHMAN.

NIGHT CRIES.

"In the night season there is no silence to me."—
PSALM xxii. 2 (margin).

TRUE, the Lord giveth songs in the night, but more frequently the night of affliction, either of body or mind, is spent in weeping, although not a tear may fall from the mourner's eyes—indeed, tears would oftentimes be a great relief. Ah! when these safety-valves are blocked up, and the pressure of grief is high, and the fire of temptation burns strong, causing the waters of tribulation to boil, then the little ease obtained by sighing and groaning is most welcome. And there are not a few who have sorrow at high pressure almost continually. They do not find a companion in every person—nay, perhaps not one in a whole town—for not all the children of God are called to tread the same path; and those whose experience is deep and dark are often very slow and backward in opening their case to others, believing as they do that theirs is a most strange and mysterious one. They rather hide their condition and moan in secret. It is not because they *would not* let their fears and sorrows be known, but because they know not a heart moved with compassion which could beat in harmony with theirs; thus they are alone in darkness, and they cry in the night—

1. By reason of their temptation and the uprising of the evil of their heart. Having so much light, which shows up to them their true condition as lost and vile by nature, and practice too, while their conduct in the world and among the family of God is most exemplary, so that others may envy them, and be almost afraid of them on account of their consistency, yet they are constantly saying, "Oh, my sad state! How wretched, ruined, and unhappy I am! My heart is nothing less than hell, at war with heaven in every possible way!" Such characters are passing on rapidly from lesson to lesson in the school of Christ, and soon become pillars in the house of God; and, by their constant attendance, spiritual prayers, and humble carriage, are true helps to the minister, and as salt to the congregation where their lot is cast. These can indeed weep with those who weep; they are tender toward both the feelings and reputation of others. However, notwithstanding all they are, and all the joy and peace which they have felt, they cannot be happy, nor rest in hope while it is dark within. How fully they enter into the words of the poet—

"'Tis midnight with my soul till He,
Bright Morning Star, bids darkness flee."

In this frame, and with the fears which accompany it, they may wish they had never made a profession of faith in the name of the Lord, and may also desire to run from all association with His cause and people; for, as they cannot now speak of Him with faith and joy and love, they would gladly be silent in regard to spiritual matters, unless they find one in a condition much like their own, to whom they may pour out their complaint. Dry unsavoury talk about the eternal covenant and the immutability of God affords them but little, if any, comfort. They do not doubt these truths. Theirs is not a case of ignorance. What these want is close and free communion with Christ, and, until the Day-Star arise in their hearts, they have no rest. While it is night they must cry. There is no silence in them while God is silent to them.

2. Others, because they, in their own eyes, are so useless in the cause of God, are much distressed. Their gift may indeed be small, but not so their grace. Dear reader, learn to distinguish, and that clearly, between gifts and grace. It will be of great use to you through life. Many who have great gifts have no grace, and some who have a peculiar gift for a peculiar office have but little grace. And, moreover, gifts may be, for the good of others, granted us for a time, and then taken away again; and, at the best, they are but for this life; but grace once given is given for ever, both for our own benefit and that of others also. Gifts have oft become a snare to those who have possessed them, but grace never. Be thankful that you have grace given you, and cheerfully leave the matter of gifts to Him who is the Disposer of all things. And should the success of your labour, in the use of such ability as God has given you, be but small, be not filled with grief. You are not responsible for the result of your service. This must be left with the Lord. A farmer will not blame his ploughman should the harvest be light, if he ploughed as he was commanded. Never forget that it is God who giveth the increase; and, should He withhold, it is yours still to plough and sow in the appointed place, and then "be still, and know that *He is God.*" Every man will have his reward according to his faithfulness in the work given him to do, and not in proportion to the results, which are altogether of the Lord. Noah and others were faithful in service, but truly the immediate effects were small. You will observe many defects in labour and much sin mingling with your best and most successful efforts. This will humble you, but you need not repine nor be despondent; and, when you are sadly depressed and unhappy in your assigned work—when God withholds His blessing, and men intrude their censures—yet, even then, still trust in God and "hold fast that which is good." Never be persuaded to lower your testimony;

let it be rather the more clear and bold. If God does not appear to own His own plain truth in its fulness, He will not approve a less clear or an adulterated declaration—

“Let thy courage wax the warmer
As thy foes and fears increase.”

God often tries His servants, as He did Israel of old, to know what is in their hearts. He tried Abraham and Joseph, and then blessed them. “Be thou faithful unto death ;” and, however you may be tempted to give up, and may be constantly thinking you are out of your proper place, or have taken a wrong step, if you are willing to be in the place which God has appointed you, and are desirous of being only what and where He designs, be assured that He will put and keep you in the place He has determined. Think it not strange if you sometimes find your will somewhat contrary to His. Man’s flesh ever dislikes God’s ways. Others have said before you—

“I know what He appoints is best,
But [tremble if not] murmur at it still.”

Should, then, your gift be small, and the result of its use be far below your expectation, yet be thankful for one talent, and do not hide it in the earth because it is small, for it is precious notwithstanding. Look at the Giver, and honourably use the gift for His sake ; then, at His coming to reckon with His servants, you will not be ashamed, but you will give Him His own cheerfully, with the increase, for every used gift will gain more.

Nor is there one of the family quite destitute of some gift as well as grace. Have you light ? Let it shine. Have you understanding ? Walk in wisdom’s ways. Have you faith ? Let it be seen by works. Have you hope ? Let it be seen by your patient submission to His will who gave it. Have you a voice to sing ? See that it be employed only in the praise of God. Have you substance whereby you can help the poor ? See to it that they are not forgotten. Have you not many around you who are witnesses of your daily life ? Have a care that your example be for good, for example is a strong engine ; it draws a long train, and takes the lead of words. Live in deeds, for words usually die quickly, but deeds have life in them.

“Be instant in season.” Though you cry in the night, and complain that your way is hidden, the day will soon break, the sun will again rise, and joy will come in the morning. The night will be gone, and you shall sing—

“The path was rugged to my feet,
Yet still I followed Thee ;
Went often to the mercy-seat
With ‘ God, remember me ! ’

“ At length my Sun’s refulgent beam
 Through the dark cloud appeared ;
 My night of woe was but a dream,
 My soul was blest and cheered.
 “ My God, I felt Thy goodness then ;
 Was sweetly led to see
 That Thou dost rule the fates of men,
 And all things are of Thee.”

Did you cry as really and truly to the Lord when His candle shone about you as you do now you are in a dark place ? Did you go *often* to the mercy-seat when the path was smooth and bright ? Strong crying and tears belong to the night. It is thus God prepares the heart, and He will most surely cause His ear to hear. And does not your soul follow hard after Him, even now while it is dark ? Well, what saith the Lord ? “ I am the Light of the world : he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life ” (John viii. 12). He will again bring you into the light, and your latter end shall be more blessed than the beginning (Job xlii. 12), when you will again sing—

“ I chide my unbelieving heart,
 And blush that I should ever be
 Thus prone to act so base a part,
 Or harbour one hard thought of Thee.
 “ But oh, my Lord, *one look from Thee*
 Subdues the disobedient will,
 Drives doubt and discontent away,
 And Thy rebellious worm is still.”

W. B.

“LEANING UPON THE BELOVED.”

WAS ever a lonely traveller in better company ? How can you be solitary or sorrowful, be in peril or suffer need, while you are journeying homewards in company with and leaning upon Jesus ? But for what are you to lean upon your Beloved ? You are to lean upon Jesus for your entire salvation. He is “ made of God unto you wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption,” and for each one of these inestimable blessings you are to depend daily upon Christ. Where can you lean for pardon but upon the atoning blood of Jesus ? Where can you lean for acceptance but upon the justifying righteousness of Jesus ? And where can you lean for sanctification but upon the sin-subduing grace of Jesus ? This “ leaning upon the Beloved,” then, is a daily coming up out of ourselves, in the great matter of our salvation, and resting in the finished work of Christ—nay, more, in Christ Himself.

CONFORMITY TO CHRIST.

It is now many centuries ago since the patriarch Isaac went out into the fields to meditate at eventide ; yet it is still proverbial that the solitude of evening, accompanied by the beauty of rural landscape, are two desirable requisites to profitable meditation. But how many there are of the Lord's children whose lot is cast in the crowded city, amidst all the bustle and excitement that is so continually going on ! Frequently, too, they are compelled to witness scenes which fill them with sorrow, and cause them to sigh and cry because of the abominations that are done in the land. How different is all this to the quietude of country life ; and how difficult does it seem, under such circumstances, to find the mind profitably engaged in meditating upon spiritual things. There is, however, consolation in the thought that "we have not a High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are." He often paced the hot and crowded streets of Eastern cities, and experienced to the full all that is so uncongenial to His children. It is not, however, His design that they should spend their lives in a hermit's cave, but rather that they should be His witnesses upon earth ; hence His petition on their behalf : "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil" (John xvii. 15). Under what unlikely and peculiar circumstances does the Lord, by the power of His Spirit, frequently come and visit His people, gathering up their scattered thoughts, and leading them into a profitable vein of meditation, so that, ere they are aware, their affections are running after their Beloved, like the chariots of His willing people, and their souls are holding sweet communion with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ—

" Thy sweet communion charms the soul,
And gives true peace and joy,
Which Satan's power cannot control,
Nor all his wiles destroy."

These thoughts have occurred to our mind in connection with a circumstance that came under our notice in the City of London—an incident which conveyed some spiritual teaching to our mind. It so happened that a new house of business was being erected at a spot we frequently had to pass. When it was nearly completed, the hoarding that had been round it was cleared away, and our attention was immediately directed to a column, at the top of which was placed a rather unsightly block of stone, upon which a sculptor was about commencing work, while by his side was fixed a beautifully-finished drawing of sculptured stone,

which, evidently, the artist essayed to copy. Almost day by day we watched the progress of his work. At first he appeared to chip away in such a careless fashion that the stone soon presented a most uncouth appearance, so that to a novice it seemed as if the man did not understand his work, and was only making matters far worse than they were before he began. But gradually there came a change over the scene. The symmetry of the design began to appear, which gradually increased in beauty, till at length, when finished, it appeared to the beholder as perfect in every detail as the drawing hanging by its side.

We felt that a sweet lesson lay couched in this incident, and we have found some profit in meditating thereupon.

The stone upon which the work was performed is a fit emblem of a sinner in his natural state, with his hard, unfeeling heart, so fitly compared to a heart of stone (Ezek. xi. 19). But it is more difficult to make an impression upon the natural heart than it is upon a literal stone, for that is passive in the hands of the sculptor; but such is the rebellion of the natural mind against the dominion of Jesus that sinners boldly declare, "We will not have this Man to reign over us." But the Lord quickens them into life, subdues their rebellion, and makes them willing in the day of His power, so that they become "lively stones," and form a part of His "spiritual house" (1 Peter ii. 5). The Psalmist compares them to "corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace" (Psalm cxliv. 12). Why so beautiful? Because, just as the sun's reflection clothes the dark cloud with the glorious hues of the rainbow, so does the reflection from the Sun of Righteousness clothe a black sinner with such perfection that he appears before God "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing."

The Lord may, with reverence, be compared to *the sculptor*, just as in another figure He is compared to a potter (Rom. ix. 21). The prophet Zechariah sets forth the Lord as an engraver of stone: "Upon one Stone shall be seven eyes; behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zech. iii. 9). This Stone can be none other than the Lord Jesus; and did not God engrave upon Him the names of all His spiritual seed? Aaron had the twelve tribes engraved upon his breast-plate, but Christ bears all His people engraven upon His heart, as well as upon the arms of His power (Solomon's Song viii. 6). But God has not only prepared Christ by suffering to be the Saviour of His Church, but will also prepare His children to become the bride of His Son: "This people have I formed for Myself; they shall show forth My praise" (Isaiah xliii. 21).

The graving tools used by God the Holy Spirit, in His work upon a sinner's soul, is the Word of God, called "a two-edged

sword" (Heb. iv. 12), by which we may understand the law and the Gospel. The law wounds the sinner, stops his mouth, and brings him in guilty before God; and to the poor soul's own apprehension, it seems as though the Lord will make a full end of him. At such a time, the rich provisions of the Gospel, with a sight of God's children walking in sweet liberty, do but seem to aggravate his woe, for he cannot believe he has any part or lot in the matter; and, were it not that the Holy Spirit causes a "Who can tell?" from time to time to spring up in his heart, the poor soul would give up all in despair.

But presently the set time to favour Zion arrives, when the bonds are loosed, and the captive is delivered. The Gospel's joyful sound, like the silver trumpet on the year of jubilee, is heard by the poor prisoner, who, like the prodigal, is surprised and delighted with the compassion of his heavenly Father, as He bestows the kiss of reconciliation, the best robe of imputed righteousness, the gold ring of everlasting love, the shoes of Gospel peace ("that passeth all understanding"), and privileges him to feast upon the precious sacrifice of His dear Son.

The pattern to which the Lord designs His people shall be conformed is the "image of Christ" (Rom. viii. 29). We can only touch very briefly, and we feel feebly, upon this weighty subject.

They are conformed to the image of *His temptations*. After many bitter conflicts with Satan, and just as He was approaching the last fearful contest, Jesus said to His disciples, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me." The poor tempted follower of Jesus cannot say this. He feels to carry within him so many combustibles, ever ready to catch the fire of Satan's tempting suggestions. So keen is the conflict at times, that he is ready to believe that he shall fall to rise no more. The words of the Apostle are a source of consolation at such times: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man" (1 Cor. x. 13).

When Christian was going through the valley of the shadow of death, he was greatly cheered by hearing one going before him singing, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me." This comforted him, feeling that others had trodden this pathway before him. But still more consoling is the thought that our Captain has Himself passed through all these fiery temptations; but, in His case, the furnace was heated seven times hotter than that endured by His people. "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. x. 13)—

"Ye tempted souls, reflect
 Whose name 'tis you profess ;
 Your Master's lot you must expect,
 Temptations more or less.
 "But here's our point of rest—
 Though hard the battle seem,
 Our Captain stood the fiery test,
 And we shall stand through Him."

They are also conformed to the image of *His suffering*. The life of Christ was one not only of self-denial, pain, and sorrow, but also one of ignominy and shame. None but God can fathom the exceeding bitterness of that cup of woe which He drained to its dregs on behalf of His people—

"Oh, what wonders love has done !
 But how little understood !
 God well knows, and God alone,
 What produced that sweat of blood :
 Who can thy deep wonders see,
 Wonderful Gethsemane ?"

"The disciple is not above his Master ; but every one shall be perfected as his Master" (Luke vi. 40, margin) ; therefore, if the Captain of our salvation was made perfect through suffering, His followers also must tread the same pathway. Old Mr. Standfast said, when in the river, "I have loved to hear my Lord spoken of, and wherever I have seen the print of His shoe in the earth, there I have coveted to set my foot too." The trials that come upon the godly are generally hard to endure. They frequently come from unexpected quarters, and sometimes, like Job's messengers, they come from all quarters at once. Then the afflicted soul sometimes feels like one of old, "Surely against me is He turned ; He turneth His hand against me all the day" (Lam. iii. 3) ; and often, when these burdens fall upon the soul, instead of being willing to take up the cross and bear it after the Lord, till He shall see fit to remove it, he is like a restive bullock, unaccustomed to the yoke, and as one has said, "Instead of bearing the cross, he is trying to get round it, or over it, or away from it ; but presently he is brought to see that the Lord designs that he shall be underneath it." Then, and not till then, does he reap the blessing that God means to bestow upon him in the trial, when he is somewhat conformed to the image of Christ, who patiently "endured the cross, despising the shame," and who strengthens His children to do the same—

"I can do all things, or can bear
 All suffering, if my Lord be there ;
 Sweet pleasure mingles with the pains
 While His left hand my head sustains."

They are conformed to the image of *His humility*: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. ii. 5—8). What a wondrous, God-like example of humility is set forth in these verses! How contrary to the natural mind! What man is willing to sink his own reputation, and allow himself to be ranked as a slave? Yea, more, who that is innocent would willingly be led like a malefactor to the gallows? Yet all this Jesus freely did when dwelling here below, and thus left an excellent example for His people to follow. "The desire of a man is his kindness," saith the wise man; and if the child of God truly desires anything, it is that he may be humble. God delights in a broken and a contrite heart, and the saved sinner delights in it too; yet daily and hourly he has to groan over the pride of his heart, which pervades even his holy things, and—

"The heart uplifts with God's own gifts,
And makes even grace a snare."

The Valley of Humiliation is a delightful spot, where the King is pleased to dwell, and reveal more of His secrets than anywhere else beside; and the soul that dwells there is on the very threshold of a throne, for "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory" (1 Sam. ii. 8).

They are conformed to the image of *His righteousness*. "All our righteousnesses are but as filthy rags," therefore totally unfit to appear before God, and yet the sinner dare not come into God's presence without a wedding garment.

"Can sinful souls then stand unclad,
Before God's burning throne
All bare? or, what is quite as bad,
In coverings of their own?"

"Rich garments must be worn to grace
The marriage of the Lamb;
Not nasty rags to stink the place,
Nor nakedness to shame."

"Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth;" "But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption;" therefore we can sum up in the poet's words—

"The best obedience of my hands
 Dares not appear before His throne;
 But faith can answer His demands
 By pleading what my Lord has done."

Not only does the sinner have an imputed righteousness, but at regeneration there is a righteous principle implanted, which keeps up, more or less, a perpetual warfare against the "Canaanites that will dwell in the land," desiring grace to "put them to tribute." Amidst all the conflict, how earnestly does the soul pant for holiness, which he desires more than happiness; and, amongst the anticipated joys of heaven, next to beholding the face of the King in His beauty, is there anything that fills the soul with so much delight as that promise, "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie" ? (Rev. xxi. 27.)

They shall be conformed to the image of *His death and resurrection*. How many, through the fear of death, are all their lifetime subject to bondage; but Jesus has Himself passed through the dark valley, and has lighted up even the lowly grave by His presence; and, although His people have to pass the same way, to them death is but a servant, for Jesus has taken the sting out of death, and the victory away from the grave; and, as the priests stood bearing the ark in the Jordan until all Israel had passed over, so will Jesus fulfil His gracious promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end." The earth shall but receive the body, to hold it till the resurrection morn, when that which was sown in corruption, in dishonour, and in weakness shall be raised in incorruption, in glory, and in power. "As we have borne the image of the earthy, so shall we also bear the image of the heavenly."

They shall be conformed to the image of *His glorified body*. The image of God, given to our first parents at their creation, was lost in Eden's garden; and although it is, in a spiritual sense, restored in the children of God at regeneration, and from time to time so bursts forth in their life that men can but take knowledge of them "that they have been with Jesus," yet, owing to their body of sin and death, the temptations of Satan, and the many afflictions that come upon them by the way (oftentimes the result of their own backslidings) the image of Christ in them is much hidden, and "the precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter! Their visage appears blacker than a coal; they are not known in the streets: their skin cleaveth to their bones; it is withered, it is become like a stick" (Lam. iv. 2, 8).

But, when this mortal has put on immortality, then shall our vile body be fashioned like unto His glorious body (Phil. iii. 21),

and the children of God shall then be perfectly conformed to the image of Christ. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, *we shall be like Him*, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John iii. 2); and every true believer, being predestinated to this conformity to Christ, says often, with the Psalmist, "I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness" (Psalm xvii. 15). HOPEFUL.

THE CRY OF A FEEBLE ONE.

"Thou art careful and troubled about many things."—LUKE x. 41.

How oft these little bubbles
Are taking all my time;
And what a weight of troubles
They bring upon my mind!

How often I am thinking,
If I get from this one,
I shall not be so sinking,
Should there another come.

But when I'm brought into them,
I'm weak as heretofore;
Dear Lord, do bring me through them,
That I may Thee adore!

I would see Jesus walking,
And going on before;
Be with Him often talking,
And not be cumbered more.

But, Jesus, Thou must teach me
To tread each step aright;
Thy power, I know, can reach me,
And make my pathway bright.

Dear Jesus, be my Leader;
Command my heart to Thee;
My Captain and my Pleader,
Be everything to me.

While earth must be my dwelling,
I'd sound Thy fame abroad;
Of love and blood be telling,
The only way to God.

W. L.

A PRAYERLESS spirit is not the Spirit of Christ; but prayer to a Christian is as necessary and as natural as food to a natural man.—*Joseph Hart.*

HONEY IN THE WILDERNESS.

"It pleased the Father that in Jesus should all fulness dwell." If the grace that flows from Jesus is sweet, Jesus Himself is sweeter still. Let us not, then, be satisfied with the fulness of Christ, but let us live on the Person of Christ. "He that eateth of My flesh, and drinketh of My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him." I fear we have too little contact with Christ Himself. We do not sufficiently make Him our personal Friend—walking with Him, talking with Him, confiding in Him, as we would with the dearest personal friend of our hearts. "This is my Friend" should be the language of every believer, as he points to and leans upon Christ.

The place where this honey—the symbol of such spiritual blessing—was found was the "wood." Behold, the covenant of grace, the fulness that is in Christ, is not for heaven, but for earth. It is not for the Church triumphant, but for the Church militant, the Church in her warfare.

Here it is the battle is fought, and the conflict is passing, and the enemy assails, and the wound is inflicted, and the heart faints, and the spirit is discouraged, and the soul is weary. This honey of God's providing is for the season of sorrow and seclusion, for the want and weariness, the entanglement and loneliness of the forest. "Eat, O friends," is your Lord's invitation.

God is the God of the tried—Jesus is the Saviour of the tried—the Spirit is the Comforter of the tried—the Bible, with all its consolations and its hopes, is the Book of the tried. If you eat of this honey, your spirit shall be revived. Your eyes will be opened to see new depths of love in God, new chambers of repose in Christ, new promises of sweetness in the Word, and new unfoldings of wisdom, truth, and goodness in the present conduct of Him whose dealings may be veiled in painful mystery, but who will never forget to lead His valiant yet exhausted soldier to the honey in the wood.

THE attacks made upon the soul by sin and Satan resemble water-floods surrounding a house, and incessantly working in at one place or another. No sooner is one inlet secured, than the water makes its way in somewhere else.—*Cecil*.

THERE is one mercy for us—if the cross is heavy, it is not far to carry it, and the distance may be less than we think. Oh, that I had more patience and grace—more humble submission of mind to the dispensations of a kind and all-wise God!—*Tanner*.

A WOEFUL CHOICE.

How little reason have the unregenerate to glory and boast themselves in their earthly acquisitions and successes, whilst meantime they have lost their souls! They have gotten other things, but their souls are lost. It is strange to see how some men, by rolling a small fortune up and down the world—as boys do a snow-ball—have increased the heap, and raised a great estate. They have attained their design and aim in the world, and hug themselves in the pleased thoughts of their happiness; but, alas! among all the thoughts of their gains, there is not one thought of what they have lost. Oh, if such a thought as this could find room in their hearts—"I have indeed gotten an estate, but I have lost my soul. I have much of the world, but nothing of Christ. Gold and silver I have, but grace, peace, and pardon I have not. My body is well provided for, but my soul is naked, empty, and destitute." Such a thought, like the sentence written on the wall, would make their hearts quail within them. What a rapture and transport of joy did the sight of a full barn cast that worldling into (Luke xii. 19, 20): "Soul, take thine ease; eat, drink, and be merry," little dreaming that death was just then at the door, to take away the cloth, guest, and all together—that the next hour his friends would be scrambling for his estate, the worms for his body, and the devils for his soul! Oh, how many have not only lost their souls whilst they have been drudging for the world, but have sold their souls to purchase a little of this world—parted by consent * with their best treasure for a very trifle, and yet think they have a great bargain of it! Surely, if poor sinners did but apprehend what they have lost, as well as what they have gained, their gains would yield them as little comfort as Judas's money did, for which he sold both his soul and Saviour. Instead of these pleasing frolics of wanton worldlings, what a cold shiver would run through all their bones and bowels, did they but understand what it is to have no hope in a gracious God, and to lose a precious soul eternally and irrecoverably. The just God remains still to avenge and punish the sinner; but the favour of God, that friendly look, is unknown; the peace of God, that heaven upon earth, is unknown. The essence of the soul remains still, but purity, peace, joy, hope, and happiness are wanting; and what can remain to lost souls but a tormenting, piercing sight of those things for which they have sold them?

FLAVEL.

* The will of the unrenewed sinner being ever averse to God, he prefers evil to good.

THE USES OF SANCTIFIED AFFLICTIONS.

MY VERY DEAR FRIENDS, who in truth I love, grace and peace be with you. Amen. I received your kind and affectionate letter, for which I feel glad and grateful, because I thereby find that my poor scribble is still acceptable to you, and especially as having written my thoughts on the times. I am more especially glad for the information given of the state of Mary's health and mind, as I felt desirous to hear of her. Affliction is hitherto her lot. There is much meaning in these words, "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is *very pitiful*, and of *tender mercy*" (Jas. v. 10, 11). The prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, are His dear servants, greatly beloved; and Job lived closest to God of any one in his day, as the Lord bears witness: "There is none like him in all the earth, a perfect and upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil." These special favourites of God suffered most and heaviest afflictions: "Many are the afflictions of the righteous;" "He is chastened with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain." Can infinite love and goodness do that which is wrong, or that which is not *well* and *best* for the objects thereof? Certainly not. He doeth all things well; love can work no ill. How different is the movement of God's love from ours in this respect; for, if we could do it, should we not immediately ease them we love of pain? Should we not restore them to health? But what might we thereby do? We might lay them open to that which we do not foresee, and also deprive them of the good which God, in love to them, hath wrapped in their affliction, and God of His glory in bringing good out of evil. Pain does not seem best to us, but the Lord knows how and why it is. His permitting Satan to sift Peter does not seem best, but God knows how and why it is. For an individual to be laid by on a bed of affliction and languishing, and be deprived of the occupation and exercises of life, especially to be deprived of the public means of grace, does not seem best; but God knows the warfare it is for such an one and at such a time; and He sometimes gives His people to see things in His light, and say, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted;" "Our affliction, which is but for a moment [even if all this time-state] *worketh* [is now working] *for us* a far more exceeding and *eternal* weight of glory."

We cannot comprehend how eternity is to explain our afflictions we have in this life, and how they are now working a more

eternal weight of glory for us. Our affliction seems to us, in its pains and exercises, to be all for and in this life; but surely the prophets and Job, so dear to the Lord, and living so close to Him and serving Him, would not have had so great trials if there had not been more in them for their good than human understanding can know or discern. It is a special gracious act of the love of God to afflict His children: "*As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.*" He chastens us for our profit. Here we may not plainly see how, because the chastening and pain may continue, and Satan may continue to suggest dark and distressing matters. Unbelief may continue; deadness, dulness, and heart-coldness may continue—yea, the feelings may be expressed by good old Jacob, "*Few and evil have been the days of the pilgrimage of my years*"—few days and *full of sorrow*—and, as he said before, so may the thoughts be, "*All these things are against me.*"

That the Lord should add to the afflictions of His beloved children the hidings of His face and favour is trying, but such trials are, in His esteem, precious ones; there must be unseen good in it all. See Job, in his great bodily and family affliction (deprived of his children by a dark and awful stroke), and an awful dash to his conjugal affections: "Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God and die;" Satan fiercely besetting him; his friends opposing him, even as to his interest in the favour of God; and added to all this, the Lord hid His face from him: "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him!" "Behold, I go forward [I look out for Him], but He is not there; and backward [to past experience], but I cannot perceive Him." This, added to affliction, gives a general gloom, and unless faith is exercised above sense, it must be a dark dispensation to the soul which leads to doubting of interest in His favour, and a good issue of the affliction and trial. "I am the man that hath seen affliction;" "Surely He is turned against me, for He turneth His hand against me all the day."

Here, then, it is evident we should not conclude of God's mind to us according to the gloomy appearance of His afflicting dispensation towards us, or His hiding His face from us, and leaving us to grope in spiritual darkness, and to find deadness and dulness of soul. Certainly this is not the experience of such as are dead to God, but it is the case and complaint of such as are dear to Him in His love; and I believe that Mary's hope will tell her that all this is true, and will look for that she cannot see or feel. "If we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." Indeed, she is favoured, being kept from despondency, and having at times the application of texts of Scripture to compose and comfort her heart in the midst of the "buts," "ifs," and "hows" sent to cast her down. She is highly favoured with a *but*

full of grace : "*But I hope in Thy Word.*" This experience will prove a match for all that oppose, and will be as an anchor to the soul, and lead to the enjoyment of God in His own good time. "Blessed are all they that hope in Him." Through comfort of the Scriptures we have hope. This, then, is the right sort, and when this hope comes forth it relieves from the mental sadness through doubting, and is a glad expectation towards the Lord. "The hope of the righteous shall be gladness ;" and, however poor and destitute such a soul may be, that expectation towards the Lord and hope in Him will be realized ; it cannot fail. "The expectation of the poor [in spirit] shall not perish for ever ;" and certainly, whenever comfort is derived through such hope, it is what the Scriptures declare to be "good comfort," and whoever has felt the least spark of it is interested in the pardon of sin and in the salvation of God : "Be of good comfort : thy sins are forgiven thee ;" "Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem," or, as in the margin, "speak to the heart" (to the case of the heart), "and tell her that her sin is pardoned, that she hath received double for all her sins ;" for the active and passive obedience of Christ imputed or accounted to her is in merit double to all the demerit of all her sin, so that the law, the justice of God, is not only satisfied, but magnified, having received divine satisfaction in our being made the righteousness of God in Christ.

Remember that hope is a patient grace, so it is called the "patience of hope." "If we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." The encouragement hereto is, "Blessed are all they that wait for Him ;" "It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord."

This, then, is the sense of the matter—first, afflictions are some of the greatest blessings from God to us ; second, He knows the good He intends thereby ; third, when all appears dark to us, and we are in deadness, we should not conclude by sense, but endeavour by faith, in hope, as to that we cannot feel or see, against hope to believe in hope : "But I hope in Thy Word ;" fourth, as God hath declared that our affliction "worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," while we look not at the temporal things that we see, but at the eternal things that we do not see, the right turn is "to hope for that we see not," and "with patience wait for it."

My sincere love to Mary, and may the Lord abundantly bless you both, is the desire and prayer of

Yours very affectionately,

Hastings, May, 1848.

D. FENNER.

SOLITUDE SWEETENED.

THE disciples of Christ, like their Lord and Master, often feel themselves alone. The season of sickness, the hour of bereavement, the period of trial, is often the occasion of increased depression from the painful consciousness of the solitude and loneliness in which it is borne. The heavenly way we travel is more or less a lonely way. We have, at most, but few companions. It is a "little flock," and only here and there we meet a traveller who, like ourselves, is journeying towards the Zion of God. As the way is narrow, trying, and humiliating to flesh, but few, under the drawings of the Spirit, find it. If, indeed, true religion consisted in mere profession, then there were many for Christ. If the marks of discipleship were merely an orthodox creed, excited feeling, denominational zeal, flaming partisanship, then there are *many* that "find the way." But, if the true travellers are men of broken heart, poor in spirit, who mourn for sin, who know the music of the Shepherd's voice, who follow the Lamb, who delight in the throne of grace, and who love the place of the cross, then there are but "few" with whom the true saints journey to heaven in fellowship and communion.

But the solitude of the Christian has its sweetness. The Saviour tasted it when He said, "I am not alone, because the Father is with Me;" and all the lonely way that He travelled He leaned upon God. The society of God is the highest, purest, sweetest mercy a saint of God can have on earth—yea, it is the highest, purest, sweetest bliss the saints of God can have in heaven. To be with Christ, to behold His glory, to gaze upon His face, to hear His voice, to feel the throbbings of His bosom, to bask in the effulgence of God's presence, oh, this is heaven, the heaven of heaven!—*Selected.*

THE HOLY SPIRIT SOUGHT UNTO AS THE
GLORIFIER OF JESUS.

"He shall glorify Me."—JOHN xvi. 14.

THE Godhead of the Holy Ghost is made plain in the written Word of God, and is demonstrated by His work in and upon the elect. His grand work is to testify of Christ, and enrich the believer with the possessions of Jesus. All His convicting and convincing operations are subordinate to this grand and glorious teaching.

The promise to the Church is, "All thy children shall be

taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children." This promise includes everything that a heaven-born soul can desire. God's teaching leads him to pour out his soul in earnest supplication before Him for His most Holy Spirit to direct him into Christ, where alone he can find relief from guilt, from the power of sin, and from fear of death and hell. This unction from the Holy One teaches him all things. He is taught by it what the righteousness is in which he stands justified—who Christ is, and in what light he is to view Him. He is taught the virtue of Christ's most precious blood, in whom he hath an inheritance, being predestinated according to God's good pleasure. And this teaching and spiritual knowledge is attended with solid peace in the conscience, which, though it may be interrupted, can never be destroyed. "Great peace have they that love Thy law, and nothing shall offend them;" or, as the margin reads, "there shall be no stumbling-block." He shall not stumble at the Person, blood, and righteousness of Immanuel, nor seek another way to obtain peace; for, if his peace be disturbed by the swelling corruptions of his own heart, discovering themselves in evil thinking or in evil doing, he knows he must go for a cure to the same Jesus who first looked in love upon him—

"Come, Thou Holy, blessed Spirit,
Glorify the Lord in me;
Then shall I reject all merit,
And enjoy true liberty.

"Once I laboured to be holy;
Thought I ought to keep the law;
Strove to keep the precept wholly,
And from thence some comfort draw.

"But, alas! the ground was rotten;
All deceptive were my schemes;
Till anew of God begotten,
Then I left my fleshly dreams.

"Now I long to see the Saviour
In His Godhead and His grace,
And participate the favour
Poured upon His chosen race.

"Come, Thou ever-blessed Spirit,
Shed the Saviour's love abroad;
Then shall I in truth inherit
The rich fulness of my God."

FOWLER.

LET the cry of your prayers outcry the cry of your sins.—*Dr. Goodwin.*

LETTERS FOR THE YOUNG.—No. XXVII.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—In accordance with my promise, I now sit down to pen these few lines to you, looking up unto our adorable Lord for His guidance and direction, for of myself I feel totally ignorant what to say.

In looking through the experience of a Christian, one thing particularly attracts my attention—the changeability which we as Christians experience. At one time we are blessing and praising God for His boundless love toward us, and at another time we are afraid we shall be cut off as cumberers of the ground. At one time we are rejoicing in the God of our salvation; at another we are doubting and fearing as to our interest in salvation at all. One time we are blessing God for the promises in His holy Book, and at another we are reading in it condemnation towards us altogether. What a blessing it is that our salvation does not rest upon our frames and feelings! If it did, I should be for ever banished from God's throne. But thanks be to His holy name, while we are so changeable, He never changes. Our doubts and fears will not affect Him; His love to us is just the same. If He loved us twelve months ago, He loves us now. If He loved us while enjoying His presence, He loves us now, though we may not be able to trace it. He sometimes withholds His presence from His children, but it is always for some wise purpose. He has not changed toward us, although He sometimes sees fit that His people should "walk in darkness, and have no light." And why is this? Maybe He sees us wandering, and He holds back His presence in love, to draw us back to His fold. Maybe He withholds His presence in order that we may enjoy it the more when it does come. But, whatever our heavenly Father may see fit to withdraw His presence for, we know that it will be all in the end for our good; for, as we often sing—

"He is too wise to err,
And too good to be unkind."

How unworthy we are of all or any one of the mercies we have received and are daily receiving from the hands of our covenant God! When I consider the cold and formal state into which I sometimes fall, it is wonderful to me that God's mercy, His saving mercy, should have ever restored my soul. But, though I have sometimes experienced these seasons of cold formality, yet I hope at times I have found great pleasure in the service of my Lord and Master, and that it is my desire to "spend and be spent in His service," to be sanctified to the honour and glory of His name, and to realize in my soul that God is my salvation, for then, and only then, are we enabled feelingly to say what we often sing—

"Then will I tell to sinners round,
What a dear Saviour I have found ;
I'll point to His redeeming blood,
And say, ' Behold the way to God.' "

We often sing this, but how often do we practise it ? We want the answer to the prayer of David, " Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation," before we can speak of it to our fellow Christian pilgrims.

Others may say what they like of our religion—we may have the scorn of a wicked world, we may have the reproach of the professing world, and we may have the temptations of the devil besetting our pathway, and filling our minds with doubts and fears—but when the Lord is pleased to speak to us, by His Spirit witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God, telling us in His " still small voice " to trust and not to fear, then it is that we are strong, and rejoice in the God of our salvation ; then it is that we laugh at the scorn of the world, and can also rise above the reproaches of the professing world ; and then it is that we can raise a standard against the enemy. We wish to enjoy more of these seasons, for the memory of them is sweet.

But sometimes we are mourning the absence of our best Friend. We read the Word of God, but find no comfort there ; we fall on our knees to pray, and find no comfort there. We seem banished from God's presence altogether ; and while the world laughs at our religion, we begin to think it is not worth much. We reason in our minds about the reality of it, and the devil comes and tells us that we deserve God's wrath, and we know it. He says, " You have no interest in the love of God ; " and we feel as though we have not. Thus we know not what to do, but we cry unto God, and say, " Is Thy mercy clean gone for ever ? Wilt Thou remember me no more ? " until some sweet promise comes and cheers the mind, revives the hope, and fills the soul with holy love.

I remember these words came very sweet to my mind last week, " The bruised reed will He not break, neither will He quench the smoking flax," especially as I felt so dull, and was mourning the coldness of my heart to the things pertaining to religion. What a blessing it is that we have this recorded in the Word of God, for how often it cheers and comforts some desponding saint, whose hope seems almost gone !

But, finding time very short, I must draw my remarks to a close, leaving the rest till some future time, and praying that God's blessing may rest upon you, and all connected with you, and that you may be built up in your most holy faith, and be favoured with the sweet comforts of the Master.

Believe me, yours affectionately in Gospel bonds,

G. W. C

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RECOLLECTIONS OF A SERMON,

PREACHED AT ZOAR CHAPEL, READING, LORD'S DAY MORNING,
JULY 2ND, 1876, BY THE LATE MR. W. MATTINGLY.

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation."—HEBREWS ix. 27, 28.

WHAT a very great mercy to have an interest in this great salvation, in this one offering! Have not some of us felt it to be so? Yes, friends, we have indeed, and that beautiful hymn has been most sweet—

"Thy mercy, my God, is the theme of my song,
The joy of my heart, and the boast of my tongue;
Thy free grace alone, from the first to the last,
Has won my affections and bound my soul fast."

It has been the theme of my song and the joy of my heart for many years, and is still, for I feel that, without His sweet mercy, I could not live here. Is it yours? Read that hymn, you anxious ones after salvation, you who are seeking for mercy, and may the Lord bless it to you, and give you to rejoice in His free grace.

Friends, the Old Testament saints all looked forward to the time when Christ should come. "These all died in faith." "They all went to heaven," as one has said, "on the credit of Christ's blood." But we look backwards, and I hope and trust some of us can say with the poet—

"My soul looks back to see
The burdens Thou didst bear,
When hanging on the accursed tree,
'And hopes her guilt was there.'"

Yes, friends, and when blessed with the manifestation of the love of Christ in our souls, and the felt sense of His pardoning mercy, we *can* and *do* believe our guilt was there. But what a mercy to have a hope, however trembling, if it is a well-founded one, built upon Christ, His blood and righteousness! "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb. ix. 24). For who? For the Church of God, and for every individual member of the Church,

even as many as the Lord our God shall call. The Apostle Paul traces it out sweetly where he says, "Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate : and whom He did predestinate, them He also called : and whom He called, them He also justified : and whom He justified, them He also glorified" (Rom. viii. 30). Here it is, friends, "*called*"! "Them He also called." I hope ever to contend for a call by grace. We must experience the new birth : "Ye must be born again ;" you must be regenerated, born again of the Spirit. Do you know anything of a call by grace ? Has the Lord ever brought His Word home with power to your heart, causing you to tremble, feeling what a sinner you are, and what a holy and righteous God the Lord is, and that, if He dealt with you according to your deserts, hell must be your portion ; and have you been obliged to cry to Him for mercy, from your felt sense of the need of mercy, feeling that, unless the Lord has mercy on you, you must perish everlastingly ? All God's children are brought more or less to feel this. There must be a beginning to your religion.

I well remember the time when the Word of God first entered my heart as a convincing and converting Word, bringing me to feel what a sinner I was, and what a holy and righteous God the Lord is. I was then a youth about seventeen years old, and was lying down in a gentleman's park, when the words I have read as a text were brought home with solemn power to my heart, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Oh, how I trembled as those words entered my heart ! I did indeed fear death ; but oh, the judgment ! How I trembled at a judgment to come ! Being then very ill, I felt and feared I should die, and have to face a holy God, whose presence I knew and felt would be a consuming fire to me. Friends, I was not left there, but was brought to cry, and that most earnestly, to the Lord for mercy ; and I never found any solid rest or peace until I found it at the foot of the cross, where I was blessed with a manifestation of the pardoning love and mercy of God to my soul, and then I could, and did indeed, rejoice with a "joy unspeakable and full of glory."

The Word of God says, "Make your calling and election sure ;" that is, prove your calling, and then your election is sure. If you have been called out of darkness into light, out of a worse than Egyptian bondage, out of the world lying in the wicked one, never to go back again ; called to hate sin ; called to love God, His people and His ways, to live to His honour and glory ; called to know yourselves as sinners, in the way I have been speaking of, and to enjoy something of the Lord's matchless love and mercy, then your election is sure, and it is to you these words apply : "Work out your own salvation with

fear and with trembling." Not as the Arminians would have us to believe. No, friends, for it is God that worketh in you, and then the child of God does indeed at times work it out with fear and trembling.

I have many times, when lying on my bed in the silent watches of the night, solemnly weighed matters up betwixt God and my soul—examined myself to prove what was the ground of my hope—and oh, what solemn searchings of heart I have had, fearing after all whether or not I might be deceived—whether indeed I ever knew or felt anything of the love and mercy of God ! But oh, what sweet work I have felt it to be when the Lord has strengthened my weak faith and confirmed my hope, and enabled me to trace His goodness and mercy ; and I have been led sweetly to look back to the spot and the place where the Lord called me by His grace, and where He has shed abroad His love in my heart, and to the many places where He has appeared for me both in providence and grace, the many trials and afflictions He has sustained me in and delivered me out of, and the many Ebenezers I have raised to His praise, so that I have felt and sung with the poet (in my heart)—

“ He that has helped me hitherto
Will help me all my journey through,
And give me daily cause to raise
New Ebenezers to His praise.”

Friends, do you ever examine the ground of your hope ? Have you been brought to weigh matters up between God and your soul ? You must have a personal religion—one going on between God and your soul. I love a personal religion, and hope ever to preach and to contend for one, and for a walk and conversation consistent with our profession. A general religion won't do for you or for me. We must know the things of God for ourselves. We shall have to die for ourselves, for “it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” All men. We must all die, each one of us here this morning, and we know not how soon. We have no lease of our life, and we are constantly reminded of it, as we see one and another taken away—cut down in the midst of life—and we know not which of us may be next, for “in the midst of life we are in death.” Yes, friends, and some of us feel that these clay tabernacles are being taken down pin by pin. I do, especially so of late, and can say with the poet—

“ Weary of earth, myself, and sin,
Dear Jesus, set me free ;
And to Thy glory take me in,
For there I long to be.”

What an unspeakable mercy for those of us that have a hope beyond this poor, changing, dying world ; " for if in this life only we had hope in Christ, we should be of all men most miserable." What a mercy to be enabled, as we sometimes are, to boast of victory over death and the grave ! Yes, friends, and in some solemn moments, when blessed with the Lord's manifested presence, we have felt and sung with the poet—

" Bold shall I stand in that great day,
For who ought to my charge shall lay,
While through Thy blood absolved I am
From sin's tremendous curse and shame ! "

What a very great mercy to be made fit to die—to have a good hope in the mercy of God ! " The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy " (Psa. cxlvii. 11).

Friends, we know not what a day may bring forth, nor even an hour. You careless sinners who have not a thought about your immortal souls—you who tremble at death now, and unto whom the thought of it is so terrible—there is a judgment to come. What will you do in the judgment, you that are in your sins ? Remember—I say, remember—" it is appointed unto men once to die, but after death the judgment." What will you do in that great, that awful day, when you will have to give an account of the deeds done in your body, whether they have been good or whether they have been evil ? Yes, every secret sin and every idle word. You can only die once. As death leaves you, judgment will find you. How solemn ! There is no repentance in the grave ! You must be brought to repentance here in this life, or perish eternally. You that are young in years may go first, for the young die as well as those older in years. May the Lord, in His mercy, bring you to repentance whilst young in years !

It is a solemn thing to make a profession of the name of Christ, and not to possess Him in our heart. You who are here this morning, among the Lord's people—you who come here from year's end to year's end, and can live in sin and love it—what a most awful thing it will be for you when death comes, if you remain in your present state ! One of the most awful things there can be is to be Gospel-hardened—to sit under the sound of the Gospel, and to receive no saving benefit from it. The servant of God is, unto such, " the savour of death unto death." How solemn ! how awful ! But " we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, both in them that are saved and in them that are lost." " Who is sufficient for these things ? " We do indeed feel our insufficiency ; but I desire to be clear from the blood of those that hear me—to speak God's Word, so far as He has revealed it unto me, faithfully to sinner and to saint, whether men will hear or forbear ;

neither would I court their smiles or fear their frowns, but speak so that, when I go from this pulpit at night, and lay my head on my pillow, I may feel clear from the blood of you all, for the Lord has said, "He that hath My Word, let him speak My Word faithfully," and I would not keep back any part of it. I do indeed feel it is a most solemn thing to be a servant of the Lord, to have to speak for the Lord, to be as His mouth, to take forth the precious from the vile.

But what a mercy the Lord does employ saved sinners to preach His truth—those who have handled and tasted the good Word of eternal life—and He has said, "His Word shall not return unto Him void, but it shall accomplish that which He please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto He has sent it" (Isa. lv. 11). Yes, and we do at times feel it to be sweet work, blessed employment, to exalt a precious Christ, to point poor sinners to Him as the only way of salvation, and tell of His matchless love and mercy.

Friends, it is a most solemn thing to make an open profession of the name of Christ. It is not a thing to be trifled with, to talk lightly about, or to play with. No; but those that make one are to walk out their profession in their every-day life, so that the world, the mere professor, and the Church of God, may see and know whose they are and whom they serve. It is not a thing to put on of a Sabbath morning, and to be taken off again at night, as it is to be feared a great many do. No; real religion has to do with our every-day life, or it has not to do with us at all. There is a secret something going on within day by day—yea, hour by hour. Hart says—

" True religion's more than notion ;
Something must be known and felt."

Yes, that is it. The child of God wants a religion to live by and to die by—one that will land him safe above. They want to have their lamps burning, and oil in their vessels; and they often say with the poet—

" Pause, my soul, and ask the question,
' Am I ready to meet God ?'
Am I made a real Christian,
Washed in the Redeemer's blood ?
Have I union
To the Church's living Head ?'"

" A real Christian." Has this ever been, or is it now, a solemn question with you? Are you ready to meet God? Are you fit to die; for "it is appointed unto men [all men] once to die, but after death the judgment"? Are you washed from all your

sins in the Redeemer's blood? And have you union to the Church's living Head? What are each one of you come here for this morning? Is it to criticise and go away, and make fun of religion? Is it to hear what ability the minister has? Is it to be seen, and to see others? Or is it only a religious form? What a most awful thing it will be if you are never brought to feel your true condition as a sinner in the sight of a holy God, and the solemnity of meeting in His great name! Without faith in Christ you must perish, and that eternally, for the Lord has said He will not be mocked. He requires those that worship Him to "worship Him in spirit and in truth;" and none but such true worshippers can worship Him, for He is a Spirit.

Have you been praying to the Lord that He would bless His servant, and give him a word to speak which would prove a blessing to you? I hope some of you have. What a mercy, friends, to be enabled to strengthen the hands of the Lord's ministering servants by your prayers! You know how, when Moses held up his hands in prayer, Israel prevailed, and when he let down his hands, Amalek prevailed; but when his hands were heavy, Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other. So it ought to be still, for the Lord's servants need their hands, as it were, to be held up; and the Lord has said He "will be inquired of by the house of Israel to do those things for them." Yes, friends, we do indeed need your prayers, and if you want a blessing by the ministry, you must ask for one. You who have come up to the house of God this morning seeking for mercy, you who are hungering and thirsting after salvation, you who long to see Jesus, the Lord will appear for you. "Unto them that look for Him will He appear;" and to hunger and thirst for Him is to look. You anxious ones that are longing to know and feel your sins are pardoned—you whose longing desire is with the poet—

**"Assure my conscience of her part
In the Redeemer's blood"—**

you know the minister cannot help you; you want a word from Jesus. You who are saying in your heart, "Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation," the Lord will appear for you; yea, He has blessed you already, for He has said with His own gracious lips, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled" (Matt. v. 6). These are not my words. No. May the Lord give you to feel the blessedness of them in your own soul, for He has never said to the seed of Jacob, "Seek ye Me in vain;" but He has said, "Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Therefore go to Him, poor sinner, poor anxious one, whatever be your state or case, how-

ever unworthy you feel yourself to be, however great a sinner, for the Lord has said, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out;" and He "saves to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him." "To the uttermost"! Who can tell how far that "uttermost" reaches? None; for—

"No heights of guilt nor depths of sin,
Where His redeemed have ever been,
But sovereign grace was underneath,
And love eternal, strong as death."

And, "though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

The invitations of the Gospel are to the hungry, thirsty soul: "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" (Isa. lv. 1). "But," you say, "I am afraid mine is not a right hunger—that I have not been brought really to thirst as the Lord's people do—and I fear that my convictions are not deep enough." Are they such that have brought you to feel yourself a sinner against a holy God, and led you to cry to Him for mercy, feeling that, unless the Lord does have mercy upon you, you must perish everlastingly? And is your cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" "Lord, save, or I perish"?

"All the fitness He requireth,
Is to feel your need of Him:
This He gives you;
'Tis the Spirit's rising beam."

Is your hunger and thirst such that nothing less than a manifestation of Christ's pardoning love and mercy will satisfy you? Is it your longing desire to know Him—to be found in Him? Do you desire Him above everything beside? If this is your case, then you are a true seeker—a real thirster—and the Lord has begun a work of grace in you which He will perform. Yes—

"Those feeble desires, those wishes so weak,
'Tis Jesus inspires, and bids you still seek;
His Spirit will cherish the life He first gave;
You never shall perish while Jesus can save."

You are, indeed, looking for Him, and "unto those that look for Him will He appear." He is a sin-pardoning God and Saviour, and is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think." Therefore seek on, wait on, poor anxious one; for "blessed are all they that wait for Him," "watching at His gates, waiting at the posts of His doors," for He waits to be

gracious unto all such. What a very great mercy to be a real seeker, for all true seekers shall be finders !

“Blest soul, that can say, ‘Christ only I seek ;
Wait for 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.”

“Unto them that look for Him will He appear.” To believe is to look—to look to Him by faith—and it is the Lord who gives faith—

“True faith’s the life of God ;
Deep in the heart it lies ;
It lives and labours under load ;
Though damped, it never dies.”

We may, and we do at times, feel and fear that we have not a grain of real faith, but the Lord will appear unto all them that look for Him. He will strengthen their weak faith, and enable them to rejoice again in Him as their God and Saviour—

“The faith that unites to the Lamb,
And brings such salvation as this,
Is more than mere notion or name—
The work of God’s Spirit it is.”

Friends, as long as we are in this sin-cursed world, we shall want the Lord to appear for us (I mean the children of God). We shall be still looking unto Him in all our trials, sorrows, and afflictions. But what a sweet thought to the child of grace that the appointment of all things is in his Father’s hand ! As the Psalmist says, “My times are in Thy hand ;” and nothing can take place without His permissive will—

“All must come, and last, and end,
As shall please our heavenly Friend.”

“Unto them that look for Him will He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” This has a reference more especially to the second coming of Christ—that great, that awful day when He shall come to judge the world in righteousness. Friends, do you ever think about this great, this awful day, when the heavens shall depart as a scroll, and the earth and all that is therein shall be burned up ; when assembled worlds shall meet around this glorious King, to be judged according to what they have done in their flesh ? Then will He say to the wicked—to those who have set at nought and despised Him and His people—to those who have said in their heart, if not in word, “We will not have this Man to reign over us”—“Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” Oh, awful sound ! heart-

rending declaration ! Horrors past imagination will then surprise the sinner's heart. But to the righteous—to those who have loved and served Him here below—He will say, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Oh, who can tell the blessedness of being saved—"saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation" ?

"He saves from hell, we bless His name ;
He takes our wandering souls to heaven."

There is not only what we are saved from, but what we are saved to. The Apostle Peter says, to "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away ; reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." What an unspeakable mercy to have an interest in this great salvation, and to be kept looking and longing for His appearing ; for all you who long for His appearing then shall say, "This God is mine !"

These are solemn and blessed truths. May the Lord well impress them on your mind, and add His blessing, and He alone shall have the praise.

"I WAIT ON THEE."

To Thee, my God and King,
Due homage I would pay ;
My heart an offering bring,
And still unceasing pray :
Believing Thou dost answer prayer,
And for Thy needy suppliant care.

Dear Saviour of my soul,
My Friend in time of need,
On Thee my cares I'd roll,
Believing Thou dost plead
For all that come to God by Thee,
And 'mong that all for sinful me.

Come, blessed Spirit, come,
Sweet Comforter divine ;
Come, make my heart Thy home,
And let me rise and shine :
Direct me to the Father's love
And to the Lamb who reigns above.

ALFRED.

WHEN we first enter into the divine life, we propose to grow rich ; God's plan is to make us feel poor.—*Newton.*

A LETTER BY THE LATE DANIEL HERBERT.

MY DEAR KIND FRIENDS,—I feel constrained to trouble you once more, as I could not rest satisfied till I had satisfied you that your truly kind and welcome present arrived safe. I can say with truth that, when it came, it almost overcame me. My heart was filled with gratitude to God and warm affections towards you, and I was forced to shout out, with the language of David, and say, "O Lord my God, now I know that Thou favourest me." And what can I say to you, my dear friends? I can only thank you, which I do from my soul; and I rejoice that my heavenly Father has said it, that "whoso giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord;" therefore, what you have lent to the Lord, and so kindly given to me, my God has promised to repay, and I have not the least doubt but He will. I pray my Father that He may grant you a large interest when my head shall rest amongst the clods of the valley. I admire your generosity. You and Mrs. R—— were almost my first friends, and you have continued to be my friends for more than twelve years, while others who had manifested almost unbounded esteem have abandoned me, and cast me off as an outcast, unworthy their further correspondence. I often feel my mind very much oppressed at what could be the reason of so great and unexpected a change. After ten years' experience of esteem and affection almost unbounded, to abandon me all at once has often filled me with distress and surprise; and I fear sometimes that I must have done something or said something that caused so great a change. Troubles and distresses have been my lot, but I must say I never had anything that so affected my mind before. But, alas! what is man? "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes." You may tell my friends, if you see them, how much they have disappointed *their poor old friend*. I felt persuaded the kindness and affection manifested towards me would have lasted my life. I notice your kind wishes to see me next May or June, and should my heavenly Father spare me, and I should feel as well then as, I bless my God, I do just now, I do think I shall venture, for my desires to see you are more than I can express. As the Lord has permitted me to enter upon another new year, oh, that my Father may be pleased to make it a more propitious one than that gone by; but, if it should be a thorny path, I bless my God, I expect soon to reach that blessed land where thorns will never grow; and I am often looking and longing, hoping and waiting, to hear my blessed and glorious Christ say to me, "Come up hither."

I meant to have filled my paper, but what I used to delight in has become a task, for I am become a poor, cold, shiftless, useless

old man. My mind is not calm, my heart is not warm, my soul is not happy, my harp is on the willows, and my way hedged up; yet I would say with the man of God, Nehemiah, "Shall such a man as I flee?" for I know it will be better by-and-bye.

I observe from your letter that you had some proofs of the awfulness of the times. We have had several sad fires about us. I anticipate that ruin will be this wicked nation's lot. The people about us are a little calm, but oppression makes thousands almost mad, and tens of thousands sad. How many thousands are anticipating good from our new Ministry! * Oh, that they may not be disappointed! But one satisfaction to my mind is this—the Lord Omnipotent reigneth; and, as He has promised never to leave me, I pray Him to enable me to leave my all with Him.

I hope these lines will meet you and my kind friend Mrs. R—— well, happy, and prosperous in body and soul, and, though it is a hundred to one whether I shall ever see you any more in the flesh, I expect hereafter to meet you before the throne of our glorious Jesus, where all our song will be "To Him who loved us, and died for us." While He lives we cannot die, and while He stands we cannot fall. That God may bless you both is the prayer of

Yours truly obliged,

Sudbury, January 7th, 1831.

DANIEL HERBERT.

We give the following lines by the writer of the above letter, as an appropriate accompaniment to the same:—

"What though my troubles roll in thick and fast?
My soul, rejoice, they will not always last;
Not one but what my Father hath decreed;
He knows my soul is longing to be freed.

"There's not a groan or sigh escapes His ear;
He has His bottle, too, for every tear;
Not one in vain shall trickle down the face
That's born of God, and called by sovereign grace.

"Though earth may frown, and friends suspend their love,
Christ is engaged to lead me safe above;
Though all should fail, and leave me in distress,
Yet Jesus is my hope and righteousness."

THE Bible is my mirror, in which I see what I was in Adam before the fall—what I became by the fall—what I am, and should be in Christ now—and what I shall be through eternity.
—*Luther.*

* The Reform Ministry, under Earl Grey, then just come into power.

LYDIA.

"Whose heart the Lord opened."—ACTS xvi. 14.

THESE words contain a simple and succinct description of a genuine work of grace. The narrative of Lydia's call teaches a lesson which needs to be enforced for the comfort and encouragement of the "*little-faiths*" in the Lord's family, namely, that it is not absolutely essential to conversion that *all* God's children should feel the "terrors of the damned" in their conscience, be "shaken over hell," or fall into those cutting and dreadful convictions for sin which some do. Many a dear soul, possessing a true and gracious experience, fears there is something vitally lacking because these "*terrible things*" have not been gone through. The fact is, God is a Sovereign, and brings His own into His kingdom in His own way; and we cannot help observing that more real communion with the Lord, a more tender walk, and a great deal more humility is often manifested where the operations of the Spirit have been gentle, gradual, and prolonged, than in some cases where there are great "*depths*" to boast of.

Certainly, Lydia's was one of the simplest conversions recorded in the sacred Scriptures; and yet to her belongs the high honour of being the first convert on European ground.

The Apostle had endeavoured again and again to remain on the continent of Asia. After being "forbidden of the Holy Ghost" to preach the Word in the province of Asia, he "assayed to go" into the neighbouring district of Bithynia, but "the Spirit suffered him not." The Lord, by a vision, directed his steps to Europe. After a short and successful voyage, in which he was accompanied by Silas, and perhaps Luke, he landed at Philippi, and "abode in the city certain days." On the Sabbath he withdrew to a place by the "river-side, where prayer was wont to be made," and "preached unto certain which resorted thither." Amongst these was Lydia, "whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul." This is a remarkable instance of *heart-work*. Heart-work constitutes the great distinction between good-ground hearers and those compared to thorny ground, stony ground, or the wayside. In the former case the Word operates *in* the heart (1 Thess. ii. 13); in the latter it does not.

In prosecuting the subject, we will, in the *first* place, consider Lydia's case and circumstances; *secondly*, describe the opening of her heart; and *thirdly*, look at her heart when it was opened.

I. Lydia's case and circumstances. Lydia was a stranger in Philippi. She belonged to the far-off town of Thyatira, and had probably taken up her residence in this city in pursuit of her calling. The Lord knows how to bring His people to the

destined spot in which He intends to meet with them. To the place where Lydia found the readiest market for the dye which she sold, the Lord also brings His servant Paul (quite against the latter's desire), who was to be the instrument, in His hands, of her conversion. Thus this elect vessel of mercy, and he who was chosen to be the means of her renewal, were brought to the predestined spot—

“ Yea, He decreed the very place
Where He would show triumphant grace.

“ Also the means were fixed upon
Through which His sovereign love should run ;
So time and place, yea, means and mode,
Were all determined by our God.”

It is an instructive and interesting fact that Lydia was in business. Some of our dear young readers are, like her, daily engaged in the sale of the necessities or luxuries of life. Let this fact bespeak their attention to the following remarks.

It is said, Lydia “ worshipped God ;” hence she was probably a Jewish woman. Anyhow, she became a true seeker, and, as such, was therefore made willing to receive the truth. We hope there are a goodly number of seeking souls at the present time among the young. For such this paper is written, and let such learn to be constant in using the means. On the Sabbath day, Lydia resorted with others to the place “ where prayer was wont to be made.” Unlike the idolaters around, she had learnt something of the value of her soul, and something of the majesty of God. Her worldly concerns did not *wholly* occupy her mind or time. One day in seven she withdrew to the sacred retirement of the river-side. But something more than this was needed. If a profession of religion had sufficed to save Lydia, there had been no occasion for Paul to go to the river-side that Sabbath morning. Her knowledge was very imperfect, and, till the Lord “ opened her heart,” she was, like all the rest of Adam’s fallen posterity, in her natural condition of darkness and ignorance. However, she attended the place of prayer. She was a “ hearer”—see verse. It is written, “ Faith cometh by hearing” (Rom. x. 17), and this statement was abundantly verified in Lydia’s experience.

II. We must now describe the opening of her heart. This was done by *the Lord*. It is a work of divine power. Creature ability is of no avail at all. We know such a statement is derided and denied by most ; nevertheless, it is a truth that no heart was ever savingly “ opened” under the testimony of God’s servants, but by the power of the Spirit operating *in, by, and through* the

Word. The fact that Lydia's heart was opened in this supernatural and divine way implies that previously it had been closed. Lydia with her unopened heart was a type of all persons in an unregenerate state. It was a dreadful effect of the fall that thereby the heart of man became closed against God and holiness, so that it is wholly filthy and noisome, enwrapped in impenetrable darkness like a dungeon shut up for ages. Whilst unopened, no light can pierce its dreadful gloom; not a beam from the "Sun of Righteousness" reaches it, neither does the breath of the Spirit enter therein. Unrenewed man at the best is but a "whited sepulchre;" inwardly his heart is wholly corrupted and darkened. However, the time comes when the closed hearts of the elect are to be opened. This may be done either suddenly or gradually, but always effectually. The first evidence of an opened heart is the entrance of light, thus it is written, "The entrance of Thy Word"—effected by Thy Spirit—"giveth light," one ray of which makes manifest according to its measure the filthiness and loathsomeness of the dungeon; which is now seen to be altogether unclean. The Lord is generally pleased to make a way for the light to enter by the preaching of the Gospel, as was the case with Lydia. This Word is compared to a hammer, because it breaks the stony heart.

Let us trace the process by which the Lord frequently opens the hearts of His Lydias. A young person sits under the ministry of the Word, and gradually becomes more and more interested in it. A growing seriousness is manifested, a real concern as to the state before God begins to operate powerfully, and at length it is evident that a *living desire* exists. This desire is "the Spirit's rising beam," a ray of divine light penetrating the heart which has been gently and (it may be) almost imperceptibly opened by the Lord. The enlightening beam reveals in some degree the innate depravity, helplessness, and unworthiness of the sinner. This known and felt, there issues from the opened heart a cry for mercy, a desire after Christ, a longing to know the forgiveness of sin. As the light increases, the more exceeding sinful do sin and self appear, and consequently the more fervent and ardent will be the thirsting and panting of the soul to be delivered therefrom. But in some cases a *check* may take place. Through the allurements of the world and the temptations of Satan, instead of the light increasing, it may for a time appear to be diminishing, and the impressions and feelings experienced may apparently begin to wear away. Where the Lord has opened the heart, the rubbish by which Satan tries to stop the inshining of the light shall not finally or effectually shut it out. Such a soul shall never be permitted to sink into its original gross darkness. The Lord will

put His hand a second time to the work, and will perfect that which He begins.

We must not omit to observe that not only does some measure of light enter the heart which the Lord unseals and breaks open, but also the "wind" has access thereto. The Spirit comes as the keen "north wind" of cutting convictions, blowing away all false hopes and refuges; and, again, it comes as the comforting "south wind" of consolation, conveying *hope* upon its wings. Thus a cry for mercy is followed by a "Who can tell?" and *desire* and *hope* are produced and maintained.

The result of the admission of light and air into a foul and fast-closed chamber is *purification*. This, likewise, takes place in the renewed, opened, and enlightened heart. The *affections* are purified; sin, once loved, is now hated; and as the growing light reveals more and more of its malignancy and misery, the more the soul's detestation to it increases. Love to Christ and His righteousness takes the place of the love of the world and sin. Instead of the affections being wholly "set upon things beneath," they are so far purified as to be in measure set upon "things above." The *will* is purified; in nature's darkness it was entirely bent to evil, but it is now purified to such a degree that it inclines to good, and the soul is made willing to be saved—salvation is the greatest good—and made willing to be like Jesus.

On account of these purifying effects, the new birth is called the "washing of regeneration" (Titus iii. 5). Pure affections and a willingness to follow Jesus, &c., are "new" to the soul, and are created therein by God, and hence are spoken of as the "new creature" (Gal. vi. 15).

Now, all this may occur quite unknown at the time to the messenger whom the Lord employs in the work. Ministers cannot always tell where God is applying the Word. The Lord may be gradually opening many a young heart by the testimony of His servants, whilst they may be mourning over their uselessness. It is a common complaint now that there are so few conversions. Perhaps that may be in part because we look for conversions like that of Paul, and *overlook* those like Lydia's. The writer, at all events, is not without hope that the Lord is working powerfully in the hearts of a goodly number of young people in different parts of the country.

In concluding this part of the subject, we might notice that the opening of Lydia's heart proved that she was an elect "vessel of mercy," ordained to eternal life. If our dear readers know anything of the experience we have endeavoured (feebly, however) to describe, it proves the same thing. The Lord opens the hearts of His own in the fulfilment or carrying out of His purpose of grace.

Proceeding to the next point, we will—

III. Look at Lydia's heart when it was opened. Many things are to be seen in an opened heart which are not in existence anywhere else. In it we see—

1. *Love.* This precious grace of the Spirit was sweetly in exercise in Lydia. What love she manifested both to the servants of God and to the Word of God! The testimony of Paul and Silas being received into her heart, she was eager to receive them into her house. She also loved God's ways, for "*she was baptized.*" Meet example for every one whose heart the Lord has opened! Baptism, rightly understood, is a most blessed ordinance, and it has been highly honoured of the Lord. It is one of Jehovah's own appointed ways by which those who love Him are to manifest that love. It is the door into the visible Church. We have the order clearly set forth in Acts ii. 41, 42: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." Here we find, *first*, conversion, or the reception of the Word into the heart opened to receive it; *second*, baptism; *third*, union to the Church; *fourth*, communion with the Church in the Lord's Supper.

Dear reader, the Master says, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." His last injunction to His disciples was this—"Do this in remembrance of Me." Though it is, perhaps, possible to go too far to one extreme, and make too much of the ordinance of baptism, there is reason to fear that many of the Lord's dear children are apt to go the contrary way, and too much ignore it, although it is (as we have above proved) the *only Scriptural way* to the privileges of Church fellowship. By walking in the path of obedience, Lydia proved her love to the Lord and His ways.

2. *Faith* was also manifestly in Lydia's heart, and evidenced in her baptism, which was an open profession of her faith in the Lord Jesus. Hence afterwards she could say, "If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord." Lydia believed in that dear Redeemer whom Paul preached. She believed his testimony; she believed God's way was the best. Her faith brought forth the precious fruits of humble obedience, ardent love, and lively hope.

3. *Hope* was likewise in Lydia's heart. We read in Romans v. 5, "Hope maketh not ashamed." Lydia was not ashamed to follow Jesus, neither was she ashamed of His cross, nor of His poor, despised, persecuted servants. Immediately after their release from prison she welcomed them a second time into her house.

Thus we have seen in Lydia's opened heart, faith and hope and love.

GOD ALL-SUFFICIENT.

"But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."—PHILIPPIANS iv. 19.

WHAT a rich and exceedingly full promise is this! Just like the Almighty God, and so suitable to the creature; for who could supply all our need, both for body and soul, but He to whom all things belong, whose also is the power, the riches, and the glory? Should not the children of God take encouragement from such a sweet word as this, and believe that all their *real* need will be supplied? Yes, surely we ought; and no doubt this promise has been precious to many, while others, perhaps, fear to claim it as theirs, or as spoken to them, because of its greatness, or because they think their need to be so different from others. But that which is impossible with men is possible with God, for the need of all nations cannot exceed the fulness there is in Christ.

But what is our need—our present pressing trial? Is it the want of strength, bodily strength, to fill our position in life? Then the Lord graciously says, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." Looking to Him each morning for the help and strength needed through the day, we shall realize that He will supply this need; though, perhaps, like our dear Master, we may only have strength enough, and none to spare. Is it guidance we need? Are we perplexed, and know not which way to take? Let us then wait upon the Lord in prayer, and watch His hand towards us. He has said, "I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go" (Psa. xxxii. 8); and if, like Gideon, we are fearful of taking a wrong step, He will in mercy condescend to our low estate, and confirm us in the right way, by repeated answers to prayer; though it is more God-glorifying, perhaps, if we can, when first assured of the Lord's will, go forward, relying on His word, as Peter did (Acts x. 20). Or is bereavement our present trial—the loss of a dear husband or parent? The Lord says, "I will be a Father to the fatherless and a Husband to the widow" (see also Isa. liv. 5; lxvi. 13). Or it may be the loss of a child, and thou art mourning like the poor widow of Nain. But Jesus had compassion on her, and He will also on thee, saying, "Weep not" (Luke vii. 13).

The Lord knows the desolation that death makes, and He can heal the bleeding heart, and fill up the gap He has made, and be more—ah! far more—than the dear one that is gone. If we can say with David, "I shall go to him" (2 Sam. xii. 23), we have cause to rejoice in our sorrow.

Some time ago, I noticed a little girl playing at her garden gate, when all of a sudden she opened it and ran out, afterwards returning with her father. The words came into my mind,

"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him;" and I longed thus to run and meet my heavenly Father, at the sound of His voice or footstep. "Draw me; we will run after Thee." But how far superior is the one to the other! "That little girl," I thought, "may lose her father by death, and perhaps very suddenly; but not so the child of God. He is the Everlasting Father, Husband, Brother, Friend, and death will be the very means of bringing us more fully to know and love Him."

Or, perhaps, our pressing trial may be straitened circumstances, for many of the Lord's people, who are not really poor, may feel this; but the Lord says He will supply all our need. Will He take care of the sparrows, and neglect His own dear children, when He says the very hairs of your head are all numbered? Never! never! He loves them too well. He may *try* them, but never *forget* them. And oh, with what gratitude do they partake of a meal which seems to have come direct from heaven, and in answer to prayer! We may safely conclude their asking a blessing at such a time is no form, though, perhaps—

"Their lips will only tremble
With the thanks they cannot speak."

Thus the Lord gets glory to His dear name by the gratitude of His tried people.

Is it wisdom we want? The Lord can supply this need, as He says in James i. 5. He will deign to listen to us if we ask His gracious Majesty about the most trifling things. As the poet says—

"Our life's minutest circumstance
Is subject to His eye."

His exalted state in glory does not make Him less willing to aid His people than when He was on earth.

Is it sorrow that presses us down—perhaps heavy family trials? The Lord says, "I know their sorrows" (Exod. iii. 7); and, if He knows them, He also feels them, and will deliver, as He did in the case of Israel of old, though perhaps not so quickly as we should like. But we may pour out our hearts before Him, and sometimes even the very act of doing this brings relief.

Or, it may be, we are misunderstood. David knew this (2 Sam. x.), and also David's Lord; therefore He can sympathize with His dear people. How exceedingly painful this must have been to our dear Lord the three-and-thirty years He was on earth; for not only was He misunderstood by the world, but it seems also by His disciples (Matt. xvi. 21—23); and if sometimes we tread the same path, may

we prove it is in sympathy with our once suffering Head ; and, if this trial should quicken us in prayer, bringing us more often to a throne of grace, it will be amongst the "all things" that are working for our good.

A dear saint now in glory once wrote, "How very glad I was to hear you say you felt happier by looking more to Jesus ! A godly young woman came to see me the other evening, and as she was alluding to her lonely position—without father, mother, sister, or brother, and often finding herself misunderstood, and thought distant when she meant to be kind (she is so very shy)—she suddenly stopped and said, 'But I tell Jesus all about it, and that always takes the weight off me.' I thought it was so very simple. Oh, that we did but know more of the simplicity that is in Christ Jesus !"

Or, it may be, affliction is our trial, and we are deprived, through weakness and pain, from taking our share in every-day life and work, though fond of activity. The dear Lord knows all this, and can supply this need as well as every other ; and if our prayer often is Psalm xxv. 16—18, He graciously answers it in Psalm xli. 3 ; and how very sweet is the marginal reading ("turn all his be²")—just as if the dear Lord would let us see and feel that, though He is Lord of heaven and earth, and manages all things, yet He is not unmindful of the little things in a sick room, for how very refreshing to a sick and weary one is a bed just made ! The Lord knows this, and therefore says He will "turn all his bed in his sickness ;" for in all our afflictions He is afflicted. He does not give one pain without cause ; all is for our profit (Heb. xii. 10). Then let us pray that it may "yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness."

What mercies there are, too, in every affliction to the child of God ! If one is deaf, and unable to hear the voice of those dear to them, yet they can hear the "still small voice" of the Lord. They are not shut out from this, though they are from so much that is pleasant, for they can hear the least whisper of the Spirit. If one is blind, too, and cannot see their dear friends or the beauties of nature, they can see their heavenly Father. The natural sight is of no use in this respect, for we walk by faith. Far better to be blind and deaf naturally than spiritually. Or, if we feel talking a trouble, and sometimes are too weak to make those around us hear, yet we can still hold communion with the Lord. The outward voice is not needed, for He understands a look, sigh, or groan, and even our very thoughts. How needful, then, to have the Lord with us in all our afflictions !

And, if the Lord will supply all our need in providence, will He not also in grace. The body is dear to Him, and is not the soul ? If sin is our trial, and we feel to need a Saviour, will He not

supply this need? Oh, yes, that He will! This greatest of all needs He has provided for, in His dearly-beloved Son, whom He gave for the very purpose of saving sinners. His name is Jesus—that is, Saviour (Matt. i. 21). The Word says, “He will subdue our iniquities” (Micah vii. 19). Whatever they may be—an irritable temper, unkind, hasty words, censorious remarks, or sinful thoughts, He can and will subdue. The Lord is able and willing to give every mourning sinner grace and strength to mortify the old man, with its affections and lusts; for, though it may seem a lingering death, it is none the less sure.

If we feel to need a broken heart, or tender conscience, or meekness, love, gratitude, and humility, the Lord can supply us with these things. “Ask, and ye shall receive.” He gives a new heart and a new spirit (Ezek. xxxvi. 26); and oh, how blessed are those who have the Holy Spirit within, the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is a holy-making Spirit (Gal. v. 22, 23).

And, if the Lord supplies all our need in body and soul, through life, we must surely believe He will be with us at death, for that must be included in the “all.” Oh, yes, the Lord will help His dear children then, and give strength when it is needed: “The thing of a day in his day, as the matter shall require” (1 Kings viii. 59, margin). Now we require grace to live with; at death we shall require grace to die with, and the Lord has promised both. The Apostle says, “But my God shall supply all your need,” not according to what I may wish for you, or you may wish for yourselves, for the Lord often gives exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, but “according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus,” and His riches are “unsearchable” (Eph. iii. 8).

A READER.

To suppose that any one will turn from the love of this world to the love of eternal things, without an operation of the Holy Ghost, is to be as bad a philosopher as a divine, for it is to expect an effect without a cause.—*Cecil*.

PRAYER is a holy intercourse with God. “It is,” as the martyr Bradford expresses it, “a simple, unfeigned, humble, and ardent offering of the heart before God, wherein we either ask things needful, or give thanks for benefits received.” Acceptable prayer is the desire of the heart, offered up to God, through the influence of His Spirit, in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, for things according to His will. “The true worshippers,” says our Lord, “shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him.”

"THIS IS NOT YOUR REST."

MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER, THOMAS HARDY,—From a mourning card received this week, I learn that the good Lord has taken your dear mother home to Himself. Our friend L— tells me she made a very blessed end. What wonders of grace and mercy to our God belong! Out of weakness your dear mother was by Him made strong, and, through His divine power, has obtained everlasting victory, and the days of her mourning are for ever ended. It will make a large gap in your family, and will be a great loss to your dear father; but he will not be long behind her. May the dear Lord give him patience and submission to His will, and courage to press on a little while; and "He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." "God is faithful, by whom we were called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord."

I have been very ill within the last six weeks—could keep very little on my stomach—have not been able to preach until last Sunday for a month, and then I preached in the morning, and hope I may be able to preach twice next Sunday; but I am weak and poorly, and not fit for much work, nor do I expect to do as I have done. I have been very mercifully favoured in my affliction to "be still, and know that He is God," and to cast my burden upon Him, and He has sustained me. He will never suffer the righteous to be moved.

My wife has been to Leamington with me for a fortnight, and we hope the Lord has blessed the means in giving me a little more strength. My desire is to wait upon Him and for Him, and feel, "It is the Lord; let Him do what seemeth Him good."

We unite in Christian sympathy to you all, and hope the Lord will fulfil His gracious word, "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days so shall thy strength be." The Lord bless thee and keep thee.

Yours in the truth,

Lutterworth, October 10th, 1873.

R. DE FRAINE.

THOUGH the holy walk of a Christian does not recommend him to the favour of God, yet it does recommend the religion of the Son of God to the world.—*Mason*.

MARK what the Son of God says—it is through much tribulation you must enter the kingdom. I can tell you what you will want, for I have no doubt you have as fleshly a nature as I have. You will want a kingdom and heaven here in this world, and the same by-and-bye also; but one kingdom and one heaven must suffice.—*F. Covell*.

GRACE IN TIME OF NEED.

SAINTS are like to meet with needy times, or with such times as will show them that they need a continual supply of grace that they may go rightly through this world. This is therefore a motive that weareth a spur in the heel of it—a spur to prick us forward to supplicate at the throne of grace. This needy time is in other places called “the perilous time,” “the evil day,” “the hour and the power of darkness,” “the day of temptation,” “the cloudy and dark day.”

And, indeed, in general, all the days of our pilgrimage here are evil—yea, every day has a sufficiency of evil in it to destroy the best saint that breathes, were it not for the grace of God. But there are also, as I have hinted, particular times—times more imminently dangerous and hazardous unto saints—as—

1. There are their young days—the days of their youth and childhood in grace. This day is usually attended with much evil toward them that are asking their way to Zion with their faces thitherward. Now the devil has lost a sinner; there is a captive has broken prison, and one run away from his master. Now hell seems to be awakened from sleep, the devils are come out; they roar, and roaring they seek to recover their runaway. Now tempt him, threaten him, flatter him, stigmatize him, throw dust in his eyes, poison him with errors, spoil him while he is upon the potter's wheel; anything to keep him from coming to Jesus Christ. And is not this a needy time? Doth not such an one want abundance of grace? Is it not of absolute necessity that thou, if thou art the man thus beset, should ply it at the throne of grace, for mercy and grace to help thee in such a time of need as this?

To want a spirit of prayer now is as much as thy life is worth. Oh, therefore, you that know what I say, you that are broken loose from hell, that are fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before you, and that do hear the lion roar after you, and are kept awake with the continual noise of his clanking chain, cry as you fly; for the promise is that, if you come to God with weeping and supplication, He will lead you.

Well, this is one needy time. Now thy hedge is low, now thy branch is tender, now thou art but in the bud. Pray thou may not be marred in the potter's hand.

2. The time of prosperity is also a time of need—I mean, of thy spiritual prosperity—for, as Satan can tell how to suit temptations for thee in the day of thy want, so he has those that entangle thee in the day of thy fulness. He has his spiritual wickednesses in the high and heavenly places. He can tell how to lay a snare for thee in the land of Canaan, as well as in the

wilderness ; in thy time of receiving good things, as well as in thy hungry and empty hours. Nay, such times seem to be the most dangerous, not in themselves, but through the deceits of our heart. Hence Moses gave this caution to the children of Israel, that, when God had given them the promised land, and vineyards, and wells, and olive-trees, and when they had eaten and were full, "then," says he, "beware lest thou forget the Lord which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage." And again he doubleth this caution, saying, "When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which He has given thee. Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping His commandments, and His judgments, and His statutes, which I command thee this day, lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and thou in all good things art increased, then thy heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage." All this may be applied spiritually, for there are, as I said, snares laid for us in our best things ; and he that has great enjoyments, and forgets to pray for grace to keep him humble then, shall quickly be where Peter was after his knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ by the revelation of the Father.

3. Another needy time is a time when men are empty, as to worldly good. This time is full of temptations or snares. At this time men will, if they look not well to their doings and goings, be tempted to strain courtesies both with conscience and with God's Word, and adventure to do things that are dangerous, and that have a tendency to make all their religion and profession vain. The holy Agar was aware of this ; so he prayed, "Let me not be rich and full, lest I deny Thee ; let me not be poor, lest I steal, and take the name of my God in vain." There are many inconveniences that attend him who is fallen into decay in this world. It is an evil day with him, and the devil will be as busy with him as the flies are with a lean and scabbed sheep. It shall go hard but such a man shall be full of maggots, full of silly, foolish, idle inventions, to get up and to abound with fulness again. "It is not a time now," will Satan say, "to retain a tender conscience, to regard thy word or promise, to pay for what thou buyest, or to stick at pilfering and filching from thy neighbour." This Agar was afraid of, therefore he prayed that God would keep him from that which would be to him a temptation to do it. How many in our day have, on these very accounts, brought religion to a very ill-savour, and themselves into the snares of the devil, and all because they have not addicted themselves to pray to God for grace to help in this time of need ; but rather have left off the thing that is good, and given up themselves to the tempta-

tions of the devil, and the subtle and ensnaring motions of the flesh.

4. Another needy time is the day of persecution. This was called, as was hinted before, "the hour of darkness, the cloudy and dark day." This day, therefore, is full of snares, and of evils of every kind. Here is the fear of man, the terrors of a prison, or loss of goods and life. Now all things look black; now the fiery trial is come. He that cannot now pray—he that now applieth not himself to God on the throne of grace, by the priesthood of Jesus Christ—is likely to have a fall before all men upon the stage; a foul fall, a fall that will not only break his own bones, but also the hearts of those that fear God and behold it: "Come therefore boldly to the throne of grace, that you may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

5. Another time of need is that time wherein thou changest thy condition and interest into a new relation, for here also the snares and traps lie waiting for thee. There is a hopeful child goes to service, or to be an apprentice; there is a young man and a young maid entered into a married condition, who, though they prayed before, yet they leave off to pray then. Now these people are oftentimes ruined and undone. The reason is, the change is attended with new snares, with new cares, and with new temptations, of the which, because through unwatchfulness they are not aware, they are taken, and drawn to perdition and destruction by them.

Many in my short day have gone, I doubt, down to the pit this way, that have sometimes been to appearance the very foremost and the most hopeful in the place where they have lived. Oh, how soon has their fire gone out, and their lamps forbore to burn! How quickly have they lost their love to their ministers, by whom they were illuminated, and to the warmest Christians, through communion with whom they used to be kept awake and savoury! How quickly have they found them out new friends, new companions, new ways and new methods of life, and new delights to feed their foolish minds withal! Wherefore, O thou that art in the fifth head concerned, "come boldly unto the throne of grace, to obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

6. Another time of need is when the generality of professors are decayed; when the custom of fancies and fooleries has taken away all gravity and modesty from among the children of men. Now pray, or thou diest; yea, pray against those decays, those vain customs, those foolish fancies, those light and vain fancies that have overtaken others, else they will assuredly knock at thy door and obtain favour at thy hand, the which, if they do, will quickly bring thee down into the dirt with others, and put thee in peril as well as they.

7. Another time of need is the time of guilt contracted, and of the hiding of God's face. This is a dangerous time. If thou now shalt forbear to pray, thou art undone, for the natural tendency of guilt is to drive a man from God. So it served our first father; and oftentimes, when God hides His face, men run into desperation, and so throw up all duties, and say, as one of old, "Why should I wait upon the Lord any longer?" Now thy great help against this is prayer—continuing in prayer. Prayer wrestleth with the devil, and will overthrow him; prayer wrestleth with God, and will overcome Him; prayer wrestleth with all temptations, and makes them fly. Great things have been done by prayer, even by the prayer of those that have contracted guilt, and that have by their sins lost the smiles and sense of the favour of God. Wherefore, when this needy, this evil time has overtaken thee, pray. "Come boldly unto the throne of grace, to obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

8. The day of reproach and slander is another time of need, or another day in which thou wilt want supplies of grace. Sometimes we meet with such days wherein we are loaded with reproaches, slanders, scandals, and lies. Christ found the day of reproach a burdensome day unto Him; and there is many a professor driven away from all conscience towards God, and open profession of His name, by such things as these. Reproach is, when cast at a man, as if he was stoning to death with stones. Now, ply it hard at the throne of grace, for mercy and grace to bear thee up, or thou wilt either miscarry or sink under ground by the weight of reproach that may fall upon thee.

9. Another time of need is that wherein a man's friends desert and forsake him, because of his Gospel principles, or of those temptations which attend his profession. This is a time that often happens to those that are good. Thus it was with Christ, with Paul, with Job, with Heman, and so it has been with many other of God's servants in the day of their temptations in this world, and a sore time it is. Job complained under it, so did Heman, Paul, and Christ. Now a man is as forlorn as a pelican in the wilderness, as an owl in the desert, or a sparrow on the housetop. If a man cannot now go to the throne of grace by prayer, through Christ, and fetch grace for his support from thence, what can he do? He cannot live of himself, wherefore this is a sore evil.

10. Another time of need is the day of death, when we are to pack up all, and begone from hence the way of all the earth. Now the greatest trial is come, excepting that of the day of judgment. Now a man is to be stripped of all, except that which cannot be shaken. Now a man grows near the borders of eternity. Now he begins to see into the skirts of a new world. Now death is

death, and the grave is the grave indeed. Now he begins to see what it is for body and soul to part, and what to go and appear before God. Now the dark entry, and the thoughts of what is in the way from a death-bed to a gate of a holy heaven, comes nearer the heart than when health and prosperity do compass a man about. Wherefore this is like to be a trying time, a time of need indeed. A prudent man will make it one of the great concerns of his life to obtain grace for this day (though the fool will rage and be confident), for he knows all will be little enough to keep him warm in his soul while death strokes his cold hand over his face and over his heart, and is turning his blood into jelly—while strong death is loosing his silver cord and breaking his golden bowl. Wherefore, I say, this motive weareth a spur on his heel—a spur to prick him on to the throne of grace for mercy and grace to help in time of need. Therefore come, come boldly, as God bids thee. What better warrant canst thou have to come than to be bid to come of God? When the good man bids the beggar come to his house, then he may come boldly. The consideration of the invitation doth encourage; and that we have our Friend at court should also make us come boldly.

BUNYAN.

A PARADOX.

AND if, by these contrary and improbable ways, the Lord preserves our souls in life, no marvel, then, we find such strange and seemingly contradictory motions of our hearts, under the various dealings of God with us, and are still restless in what condition soever He puts us, which restless frame was excellently expressed in that pious epigram of Mr. Gatsker, made a little before his death—

“ I thirst for thirstiness ; I weep for tears ;
 Well pleased I am to be displeased thus ;
 The only thing I fear is, want of fears ;
 Suspecting, I am not suspicious :
 I cannot choose but live, because I die ;
 And when I am not dead, how glad am I !

“ Yet, when I am thus glad for sense of pain,
 And careful am, lest I should careless be,
 Then do I grieve for being glad again,
 And fear lest carelessness take care from me :
 Amidst these restless thoughts, this rest I find—
 For those that rest not here, there's rest behind.”

FLAVEL.

“ Part of the host have crossed the stream,
 And part are crossing now.”

LETTERS FOR THE YOUNG.—No. XXVIII.

TO FANNY.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,—As you and your simple statement in your note frequently come before my mind, it seems like an intimation from the Lord to write a few lines, that your heart may be encouraged to seek His face, and call upon His blessed name, who never did and never will “despise the day of small things,” or send them empty away who hunger and thirst after Him and His righteousness.

It is one of the most pleasing sights to a believer in the Lord Jesus to see the young in years inquiring their way to Zion, with their faces thitherward; and the voice of their prayer and supplications is delightful to the Lord, who bids them seek, and declares that they shall find; ask, and they shall have; knock, and the door of mercy shall be opened. The Lord, in the blessed Scriptures, has been pleased to write very many exceeding great and precious promises for their encouragement, and sweet invitations to draw poor guilty-feeling sinners to Himself; and him that cometh He will in no wise—on no account—nor for anything they have done, cast them out. Therefore, I trust you will be enabled to go to Him at all times and under all circumstances, confessing your sins and entreating His favour. He is a sin-pardoning God and Saviour, and “able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think.” Blessed are they that hear the voice of the Good Shepherd, “watching at His gates, waiting at the posts of His doors. For whoso findeth Him findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord.” He says, “I love them that love Me, and they that seek Me early shall find Me;” and to find Him is to find everything, for He is “All and in all.”

My heart’s desire for you is, that the Lord Jesus may win your affections and bind your soul fast to Himself, so that you may be enabled to say, “My Beloved is mine, and I am His.”

My kind regards and best wishes to your mother and the rest of her family.

From your friend,

ALFRED HAMMOND.

Nature never did or can
Love Him who is God and man;
He is, till by faith He’s seen,
The despised Nazarene.

But for free and sovereign grace
I had never sought His face;
In my eyes He still had been
The despised Nazarene.

Glory be to God alone,
 Who to me His Son has shown ;
 I the Father's form have seen—
 The despised Nazarene.

Blessed Jesus, I would see
 Glorious beauty still in Thee ;
 Though by men called poor and mean,
 The despised Nazarene.

Precious Saviour, Thou art worth
 More than all in heaven and earth ;
 This I know, for I have seen
 The despised Nazarene.

Gosport, April 23rd, 1876.

A. HAMMOND.

MOMENTS.

WE do not realize the importance of moments. Only let us consider those two sayings of God about them : "In a moment shall they die," and "We shall all be changed in a moment," and we shall think less lightly of them. Eternal issues may hang upon any one of them, but it has come and gone before we can even think about it. Nothing seems less within the possibility of our own keeping, yet nothing is more inclusive of all other keeping ; therefore, let us ask God to keep them for us. Are they not the tiny joints in the harness through which the darts of temptation pierce us ? Only give us time, we think, and we should not be overcome. Only give us time, and we could pray and resist, and the devil would flee from us. But he comes all in a moment ; and in a moment—an unguarded, unkept one—we utter the hasty or exaggerated word, or think the un-Christ-like thought, or feel the un-Christ-like impatience or resentment. I cannot keep them for Thee ; do Thou keep them for Thyself.—*Selected.*

IF there were no other proof of the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures than the hatred that the devil, the Pope, and his swarm have to them, this would be sufficient evidence.—*Luther.*

FAITH and holiness, with every other blessing, are the purchase of the Redeemer's blood, and He has a right to bestow them on whom He will, in such a manner and in such a measure as He thinks best, though the spirit in all men lusteth to envy ; and "whom He loveth, He loveth unto the end."—*Joseph Hart.*

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THE SOWER.

THE SUBSTANCE OF A SERMON,

PREACHED AT PROVIDENCE CHAPEL, BEDFORD, ON WEDNESDAY
EVENING, AUGUST 2ND, 1882, BY MR. J. W. WREN.

“Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the Most High: and call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.”—PSALM l. 14, 15.

IN this Psalm Jehovah proclaims His great power and majesty. From the heavens He causes His voice to be heard in the earth. His call, on this occasion, is to His own people; and, to distinguish them from any inferior relationship, He calls them His saints—those who made a covenant with Him by sacrifice. These were first sanctified, as is shown by their being called “saints.” They were, secondly, devoted to Him by whom they were consecrated, and this was sealed by sacrifice. Soul, body, and spirit were now given up as an offering unto the Lord. This was accepted by Him, and made solemn and binding in the form and nature of a covenant, and all was confirmed by sacrifice. This is a receiving Christ as a pledge of the love of God, which confirms all the promises of God with us personally, and brings near to God by a personal union with Him through Christ Jesus, which, when felt, makes us feel that we are obliged to God, to live to Him and walk before Him in newness of spirit all our days. Such love claims our best services, and while it is fresh upon our hearts, we give Him our best.

In the case before us, there had been a positive neglect to walk according to the terms proposed and accepted so warmly and solemnly. There was a service rendered, but it was low and heartless. There was no *sweet cane bought with money*. There was a giving that which cost but little; the lame and the lean were offered. Those utterances of the heart, fresh and warm, were wanting. The flame of love was not to be seen burning upon the altar of devotion. Therefore God justly complains, “I will testify against thee.” Yet, to show His tender regard for them, and the relationship He bears to them, and the reality of their mutual engagement the one to the other, together with His present claim upon them, He says, “I am God, even thy God.” I can own the justness of this accusation, but can hardly understand the love that passes over so very many aggravated transgressions without personal hate to the offender. But such a God is our God.

The Lord complains not about their outward conformity to the worship enjoined upon them. Many in this day are not lacking in their attendance upon the means of grace, nor as to their views of truth ; but, like the complaint here, there is a want of a spiritual conformity, reverence, and respect for God, whose name is above all praise. After these complaints laid before them, God sets before us a service which is well-pleasing unto Himself ; and—

I. I shall, the Lord helping me, set forth before you a service acceptable to God.

The words of my text dropped so sweetly into my heart a short time ago, that I feel I am not ignorant of their meaning ; and, as my heart is warmed by the goodness of God, my description may be warm also in speaking about it, and my desire is, that God may warm your hearts in calling to your minds afresh His goodness, and give some renewed tokens of His favour.

1. Let us consider the relationship in which God is set before us in the first part of the text. Thanksgiving is the service to be rendered by us ; then God is set before us here as a giving God, a God of mercies ; therefore the service He asks of us is thanksgiving. The sense of His goodness upon my heart makes it respond in warm accents of sweet and loving praise ; as David, when in a similar frame of mind, warmly says, “ O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good : for His mercy endureth for ever.” I do sometimes receive gifts from God’s own hands, and such mercies at such a time do sweetly scent of heaven and of Himself, the ointment of which perfumes my soul, and causes it to put forth speedy and lively motion in thanksgiving to His name. Oh, my friends, do you not feel it thus in your hearts ; and do you not perceive that the children of God serve Him with a service according to knowledge—that, according to God’s work for them and in them, so is their service towards Him ?

The learned Ainsworth says, “ Confessing to His name ;” and the same word is used in the translation of the Greek text in the margin, in Hebrews xiii. 15 ; and our text this evening is the self-same one handled by the Apostle in that Epistle to the Hebrews, to stir up their minds to gratitude, and to guide them in so doing. This is, I apprehend, an acknowledgment of His goodness and tender mercies to us, both in private and public—what David calls, “ letting the *voice* of His praise be *heard*.”

2. There are times when we can do this heartily ; and—

First, when we are led to look back, and many mercies are remembered : “ Thou shalt remember all the way the Lord thy God hath led thee.” These mercies are two-fold—temporal and spiritual.

Let us first notice the spiritual. When I consider how God delivered my soul from the dominion and reign of sin, giving me

a knowledge of His dear Son, and begetting in my heart a lively apprehension of Him, when Satan was warring with my soul, saying, "There was no such a Person," my dear friends, did I not confess His goodness in this, I should dishonour Him and defile my conscience. Bear with me if I seem too confident; your turn will come to speak well of Him too.

Again, He has many times brought deliverance to my soul under straits, healing when diseased or wounded by sin, counsel to guide me in perplexities, instruction to teach me when and where my wisdom has failed me. When these are collected by His own hands, and both of us (the Lord and myself) look them over, and walk back to the spots where they were given—when these are placed in the front of mine eyes, I cannot help thanking Him for giving to one so utterly unworthy such spiritual blessings as gladden the heart and give me ground to hope that, when I have done with time things, "He will receive me to glory." Have not you, dear friends, found this true in some degree in your own souls?

Again, second, when some *new* mercy—what David calls being "anointed with *fresh* oil"—is given us, we are able to give thanks, for at such times there is such wisdom displayed in the choice of the word, and the means by which it is conveyed, and a divine power sweetly writes this conviction upon the heart, "It is the Lord!" Thus was it with Peter when he saw the multitude of fishes, and the circumstances attending the catching of them. We as creatures, especially children, are pleased with new things; so some new mercy fresh upon our spirits doth cause thankfulness of heart unknown to any but the godly. What a sweet adaptation there is in the Word of God to meet the wants of His people! And Jesus has the tongue of the learned to *speak* and apply the *very* word to our souls. It is the only word which could have met us so exactly. It comes new and fresh from the mouth of God, and it works effectually in our hearts. These are the words by which men live. My mind is incapable of taking in at one time all the sides, parts, and greatness of His mercies. I try to do so, but I am like one who is overcome by numbers. Like David, "I know not the numbers thereof," and overcome by greatness which cannot be surmounted. Then I fall to admiring with thankfulness of heart, and adoring my God for His abundant goodness.

Then, third, let us gather up our temporal mercies and put them all in a heap. Surely we shall have to pull down our barns and build greater. "Since I sent you forth without shoes, scrip, &c., lacked ye anything? And they said, *Nothing.*" There is much thanksgiving couched in that one word, "*nothing.*" If we could count up all the money God has given us since He separated us

from the many ways of getting it which the ungodly resort unto, what a sum! Count over your other mercies—your ordinary, daily home mercies—put them all in order as a stock-taker does, and see if you can find it in your heart to say, “Is the Lord among us or not?” I feel that it would be wrong and unkind for me to say so. Then, let us offer unto God thanksgiving, for this is His will concerning us in Christ Jesus. The great adversary of our souls will ascribe to blind chance our mercies, saying, “That which you ascribe to God was only something which took place in an ordinary way. You call it an answer to prayer, but it would have taken place exactly the same if you had not have prayed.” These are darts of hell—the water-flood of the dragon to stop the mouth of praise, and to quench the burning incense of a grateful heart. I have been privileged to answer this our common enemy thus, “But I *did* pray, and *this is what I prayed for.*”

The second part of the service we are exhorted unto is, “Pay thy vows unto the Most High.” And—

1. I consider the relationship in which God is set before us in this part—“the Most High.” The high and majestic position, together with the greatness and dignity of the Person, do claim the most exalted and spiritual service, and a faithful rendering of praise unto God for all His benefits. His own Personal worthiness is infinitely beyond us in every act of worship, however warm the heart, however devout the soul, and however faithful in the payment of vows. There is a serious lacking and an unworthiness which fill the renderer with shame; yet—

“Me He accepts, which is the sign
That I am His, and He is mine.”

In this relationship there is the idea of Master and Lord, as in Malachi i. 6: “If I am a Father, where is Mine honour? and if I am a Master, where is My fear?” The Colossian Christians “received Christ Jesus the Lord;” and Christ is often called “our Lord”—a Prince as well as a Saviour. “He is thy Lord, and worship thou Him.” The Lord when on earth complained of some who called Him, “Lord, Lord,” and did not yield consistent obedience unto Him. They feignedly said, “The Lord.” This is vowing and paying not, and our Lord exposes them for their hypocrisy, as He will do all such as play the hypocrite. The children of God are sadly deficient in this matter; therefore, the complaint is made in this Scripture for all Christians in all ages. And, my dear friends, I myself am condemned by this Scripture in this matter, and fall under its rebuke; but, instead of being put to everlasting shame and confusion of face by the rebuke of the Lord, the rebuke is kindly given by Him to save

me from it. How good the Lord is to rebuke us ! " His mercy endureth for ever." " Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy."

2. Let us consider the paying of vows. The nature of a vow is given us in the history of Jacob, and is called in other parts of Scripture, " the opening of the mouth unto the Lord," promising Him a service : " And Jacob said, If God will be with me," &c. And this vow God put Jacob in mind of many years after, as being unpaid. " Pay thy vows unto the Most High." When in trouble, David vowed, *i.e.*, opened his mouth unto the Lord, and said, if the Lord should hear him, and deliver him, he would pay them in the Lord's house, and in the presence of all His people. It is the service of sensible obligation—" your reasonable service," saith the Apostle—and a service unto which we subscribed heartily and voluntarily. Such a service is out of our reach, separate from Christ ; but the very nature of the service supposeth us to be joined to Christ as a wife to her husband. Jesus says, therefore, " Abide in Me ;" and, when there is a sensible abiding in Him, this service is most easy—yea, it is the most agreeable yoke in the world. " His commandments are not grievous," says holy John. He is not an austere man. I have been brought into bondage by having Him so set before me, but for the benefit of my young friends I say it, we cannot go faster than the Lord leads us, nor know more than He teaches us ; and, if such a Scripture as the text is so set before you as to lead you to think the Lord a hard Master, and that the preacher is legal, your own state of mind is at once discovered, for we naturally judge of things according to our own state of mind. So many think such a Scripture as this legal, hard, austere, when it is their own legal, unbelieving heart that makes it so appear unto them. From all such sinful calculations and conclusions may God deliver us. I have found that the very things the Lord has demanded of me, He has kindly put them into my heart, and so wisely and wonderfully working them, and associating them with myself, that, although they were His, yet they were mine too—yes, and my very, very own—and this fact endears the Lord to my soul, and makes His service perfect freedom. A person that vowed anything whatsoever, whether goods or themselves were devoted, everything must be first consecrated before it was devoted. Unsanctified hearts are not fit things to devote to the Lord. When our hearts have been warmed by the power and Spirit of the Lord, we devote ourselves unto Him ; but, when a thing was devoted to the Lord, it must not be used for other purposes than that to which it was devoted. To do so is to commit sacrilege. But how often has my heart been taken up with other things, and not through deceit, but quite wittingly ; and, in so

doing, I have greatly aggravated the transgression. There is a moral inability to pay vows, but there is also a sinful backwardness to render that service we promised to render. I feel sometimes that, if God will help me through the services of the Lord's day, how thankful I shall be in the evening; and, when I have been sensibly helped, I find another spirit come over me. What base conduct; and, if our God was not a long-suffering God, He could not bear with such creatures.

II. The true worshipper and his requirements. And—

1. He who truly worships God must be upon good terms with Him; and not only once in his life must he be so, but now while he worships, or there is no getting near to Him. The saying of the restored blind man far exceeds the religion of many: "Now we know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper of God, and *doeth His will*, him He heareth." The like we have in the Epistle of John: "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight." This is undeniably true, and if we were led to observe more closely our conduct, could we not find sufficient reason there why we are not more successful in our business with God? Sin indulged and harboured in the breast steals away the heart from Christ, indisposes for prayer, and weakens faith. It makes "Captain Credence" lame, and leaves a wide gap for our enemies to enter, and sets our best Friend at a great distance from us. But to be upon good terms with God, to be living in holy fellowship with Him, brings us to these places where prayers and answers are joined together. "They shall call, and I will answer." Such holy conduct cannot be attained by us through any strain of our own arm; but, if a sense of God's great love, His great gift, and His sovereign kindness to us is fresh upon our spirits, this brings us near to Him. We are friends through such kindness, and there is a holy familiarity with Him; and this produces a godly fear which runs through our whole life, so seasoning our actions that there is a setting the Lord before us, and a doing all in the name of the Lord Jesus, having a gracious respect for God and His holy ways in His precepts. This I have felt latterly more than I have ever before felt in my whole Christian life; and, when some tell me of their enjoyments, I cannot reconcile their conduct with their enjoyments. When my conduct has been like theirs, I have lost my enjoyments, and my access to God too; nor could I gain them back again until that spirit of folly was chased from me. The fifteenth chapter of John's Gospel is full of this teaching. But there may be darkness and the absence of God's smiling face when sin is not the cause. Job is an instance, and this is for the trial of faith.

But, dear friends, numerous oppositions will oppose those who desire to fear God's name, and shape their spirits and conduct according to His fear. This holy walk will be broken and gappy, and our fellowship and communion with God will be injured. These sweet streams will be suddenly cut off. Sin will dirty these waters and defile the conscience.

And this brings us to a second idea. If sin is committed and the conscience defiled, there can be no more sweet fellowship and freedom with God in prayer until this grievance is settled. My friends, how do our matters stand? Have we any accounts unsettled—any matters unbalanced? Long standing accounts are the most difficult to settle. There is a backwardness in us to touch a long standing debt. If we wait a long time before we write to a friend to whom we are in debt, and stand in duty bound to write to him, every day as it passes leaves us more unfit than the day before. This, in measure, applies in the matter before us. When we are about to have company, we prepare for them. We have a cleaning out time. So also in spiritual things. Have we committed sins? These must be confessed and acknowledged before the Lord before there can be a sweet nearness to God about our own concerns. If any misunderstanding arises between friends, before there can be any mutual converse, there must be a thorough clearing up of those things that caused the separation. Without this there will be a shyness and a reservedness. How very often I find things to confess! I very seldom retain unbroken freedom with God for a whole week; and sometimes I get into such mire that the mouth of prayer seems closed, and would so remain were it not that the work of Christ secures to us these spiritual blessings, and the promise of God promises them *freely*; and these being wrought in us by the power of the Holy Spirit; and so we are like a ship in a dead calm, but a wind distinct from the ship suddenly springs up, and she is off to her destination. So a sweet power distinct from nature sets us going, to the unburdening of our conscience and the easing of our sin-burdened soul. I have found that a heart to pray has brought me ease or relief without the direct answer.

III. Those who are privileged to walk with God and worship Him are not excused from trouble: "Call upon Me in the day of trouble." But these things must not be displaced, for, if we displace them, we may not expect to get the Lord's ear nor His answer. Let us consider the order of these words. Here is the service—

1. A being upon the best terms with God. "And now," says God, "let Me hear about your trouble. I will attend to it, and you shall praise Me." I cannot tell what trouble my friends have come to the house of God under to-night; but

I know my own, and it is my blessed privilege to call upon God about it. Had it not been so, I could not speak from both these verses. I might have been able to speak a little about this fifteenth verse. Our text says, "the day of trouble." *Seasons of trouble* have often been my lot; and once in particular, when calling upon God, Satan met me and said, "If it was not for trouble you would not pray;" and these very words seemed put into my hand, to answer him by another hand than mine: "Call upon Me in the day of trouble."

Dear friends, this is coming into close quarters with our great adversary; and, although he is too strong for us, yet he is a coward. "Resist him," saith the Word, "and he will flee from you," and leave you to pour out your heart before Him who has bidden you call upon Him, and has so contrived your circumstances as to give you an occasion to do so. Days of trouble are of a certain measure—they are but for a time. "Call upon Me in the day of trouble."

2. "I will deliver thee" is God's promise. His deliverances are timely and perfect. He has given me many such since I have been in Bedford, which causes me to say of Him, "Therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live." This determination is wrought in the heart by the power of the Holy Spirit, and is a proof from whence our deliverances come. This promise embraces the present. Let us lay our cases before Him. He may not answer us at once, but this is the secret of success: "If we know that He heareth us, we know that we have the petition that we desired of Him." This was Hannah's case. This promise embraces the future too, and troubles of every kind, many or few, great or small.

Oh, my friends, what privileges those people have who fear the Lord! Where can a people be found that are favoured like unto them? What a reality true religion is! And our God is the true God. What care He bestows upon us here! What goodness He causes to pass before us, and gives us the promise of an "eternal weight of glory" hereafter, when these troublesome days are over! Such mercy as is displayed here in this grace here and glory hereafter cannot be equalled. "What can we want beside?"

"Call upon Me" is in this place an exhortation. In the ninety-first Psalm it is imperative: "He *shall* call upon Me" "in trouble." Those who fear God understand the exhortation to be the privilege and encouragement to lay all their troubles before Him—the opening of the gate of the new and living way, gracious access, and liberty to draw near in a spiritual and endearing manner to God in distress. The imperative shows how God manages our circumstances, our troubles, and our cares—

“ And bids afflictions drive us home
To anchor on His grace.”

This makes the throne of grace a sweet spot, and the exercise of prayer healthy employment, and the “God that heareth prayer” to be the Chief “among all the gods of the nations” to the praying souls. “I will deliver thee” is still the promise. It is true to-day; I have proved this promise true. God’s deliverances are choice things; they differ from deliverances boasted of by some men, which seems to be a getting into trouble and a getting out again. All sorts of ungodly men could tell of such things. Some speak of deliverances wrought by God when they have told their troubles to men, and those who have heard them have helped them in their difficulties. This obscures the handiwork and hides the hand of God from us. Those deliverances which God works are peculiar to the person and the circumstances of such, and are like to Himself. There is a divine ray of wisdom, of power, and glory in those which God works, such as cannot be found in those wrought by human hands; and the difficulties are sometimes of such a nature that none but God can help, and sometimes of such a kind that no ear may hear but His. Then to see His arm made *bare*, and His seasonable deliverances wrought—it seems as if God came down and touched these mountains, and all was set straight, and the foot set in an even place. Let us remember His promise is, “I will deliver thee.” Amen.

IV. The state of mind into which the delivered is cast—
“Thou shalt glorify Me.” And—

1. The heart is afresh warmed with a sense of God’s free bounty, which ensures a warm service of the same kind. The heart is now ingeniously skilful to give praise to His name, for “whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me.” This is the highest note of worship offered unto God. The song of the glorified is “Hallelujah!” in one continued unbroken strain of perfection. On earth this note is touched sometimes, and then only imperfectly. To speak of this from recollection is very difficult, but while the heart is warm, how easily and freely does a song of praise flow therefrom! Love in the flame and passion never thinks it has done sufficient. It never expects a reward, nor puts any price upon its services. It gives all freely, and thinks that all its best is too poor to be presented to One so worthy.

2. Respect is had to the dignity of the Person to be glorified. The first verse furnishes us with the names and dignity of the Person to whom praise is offered. As this is the highest service a believer can render, so God is set before us as being quite worthy of our praise: “Give unto the Lord the glory *due* unto His name.” “*Thy name is above all praise.*” Respect may be had

to the glory and dignity of God's Personal glories in this place. This one consideration would make our praises exceedingly poor compared with this glorious Lord. As His creatures we owe our all to Him, and are incomprehensible debtors to Him on this ground, without anything else; but when He puts redemption, mercies, and deliverances, and the promise of heaven hereafter, all into the scale together, the weight of all these so very far exceeds all our praises that no calculation of the mind can sum up the over-measure of His goodness. Then, when so beaten and overcome, we fall to admiring Him, blessing Him, calling Him by sweet names, ascribing greatness and glory to our God all in a lump, not being able to do so in detail, for "who can show forth all His praise?" And, when I have been so favoured, my own unworthiness and insignificance has appeared at its greatest height, and names of vileness and sinfulness have been heaped upon myself with these hands, while the praises and virtues of His name have been shown forth; and those names of honour coined by His own hand have been heaped upon *Himself* who hath called us to know Him after so blessed a manner.

3. The design of the heart so saturated with His goodness is to praise Him for making all His works contribute to His own glory. All His grace shown to the sons of men is like the water dropping from the clouds, which hastens back again to the great ocean from whence it came. He causes all His grace to "be to the praise of the glory of His grace." The partakers of His grace are wrought into the same frame of mind with Himself in this matter. They are never happier than when they desire grace that His revenue of praise may be secured to Himself. Grace enables them to live out of their little selves "to the praise of His glory." Grace naturally constrains to do *all things* to His glory, not to lavish the gold of His grace upon ourselves. How often have I obtained, after a hard begging of God, a little grace from Him, and then strutted about in my begged garments proudly, that men might admire *me*! "Verily I say unto thee, They have their reward." But God is able, and has blessed me with a little of that frame of mind to desire grace upon His own terms, and according to the rules of His Word. When all the gifts that God endows His people with are devoted to Him, then He is glorified. He gave them for this purpose, "that God in all things might be glorified." Every fresh outbreak of His grace gives a fresh occasion to praise Him either in the heights or in the depths of it. "Oh, the depths!" The riches and the abundance of it towards my soul start the daughters of music into song, and I have felt my heart quiver and vibrate like the strings of the instrument, and my very soul has thrilled with joy and delight in God, ready sometimes (as a bird leaping upon

the topmost perch) to burst the cage in which it is confined, but feeling the limited house, and the poverty of the strains through being so confined. I have said, after I have done my best—

"Forgive the song that falls so low
Beneath the debt of love I owe;
It *means* Thy praise, however poor,
An angel's song can do no more."

"THERE REMAINETH THEREFORE A REST TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD."

"There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain."—REVELATION xxi. 4.

HEAVEN'S negatives are precious ; oh,
The many eyes that fill,
That fill for very gladness ! oh,
The many hearts that thrill
At mention of the *only* place
Where all the aches are still !

Heaven has no death ; however bright
Our earthly suns may be,
The graveyard shadows hide our joys
In sad obscurity ;
But, in the resurrection, graves
Ne'er yawn for me or thee.

No sorrow is in heaven ; the streams
Which fed our griefs are dried ;
We shall see Jesus, see Him smile,
And venture to His side :
So that He does not speak in wrath,
I shall be satisfied.

No "crying ;" oh, the bitterness
That lives along with tears ;
God has a home in waiting, where
Throughout the eternal years
No tear shall dim the eye of one
For whom the Saviour cares.

But sweeter than immortal life,
Or sorrowless abode,
Among the tearless faces in
The paradise of God
There shall be no more pain when once
The golden streets are trod.

Oh, wearying, weakening mortal pain !
How good that we must part,
And not another ache be mine
And not another smart ;
And not one fear of thy return
Drive sadness through my heart !

Oh, loved and loving ones, give heed
To this my fond request ;
If from my dying lips ye learn
That I am really blest,
When ye have dutifully laid
My weary flesh to rest,

Write o'er my grave the precious text
Which I have loved so long,
And think of me as being one
Of the forgiven throng
Who share the Saviour's glory in
The painless land of song.

Oh, Jesus, Jesus, but for Thee
I'd lie among the lost,
And through a long eternity
In sufferings be tossed ;
But I am marvellously free,
For Thou hast paid the cost.

Shall we not bless Thee by-and-bye,
When care is put away ;
And comfortable in Thy sight,
We rest ourselves for aye ;
Owning how wise the love that planned
The sorrows of the way ?

MRS. T. CHAPLIN.

THE term "agnostic," says the *Westminster Teacher*, so much used at present, is Greek for a "not-knower." The *New York Sun* very fairly expounds its import when it says :—"An agnostic is a man who doesn't know whether there is a God or not, doesn't know whether he has a soul or not, doesn't know whether there is a future life or not, doesn't believe that any one else knows any more about these matters than he does, and thinks it a waste of time to try to find out." How much to be preferred is the state of the man who can say with Paul, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day ; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing."

NIGHT THOUGHTS BY A WATCHMAN.

THE PERPLEXITIES OF THE NIGHT.

MENTAL embarrassment or confusion of thought is a most distressing condition, in which some persons pass the greater part, if not the whole, of their life. They have but few bright hours to relieve the long night of gloom and sadness of their restless disposition. For these, we desire to retain the deepest sympathy continually. But few know their sad state, or understand their fearful and desponding temperament. To treat their fears and sorrows as being without cause, and groundless—to be bright and cheerful in their company—is to give them increased pain. To a nature the opposite of theirs, that which oppresses them may be of no importance. Ever remember that one's burden is light or heavy in proportion to one's strength to sustain it or patience to endure it. The perplexities of these anxious and forecasting spirits are great to them, though trifling in the estimation of others who are blest with a more confiding nature or a stronger faith in the God of all grace. In this, too, the strong must bear the infirmity of the weak.

Perplexity in the night is often caused by the objects we behold being distorted and changed, to our view, by the darkness around and the fear within us. They are, in fact, the same in the darkness as in the light; but we then do not see them as they really are. Darkness and timidity will transform a friend, coming to meet us in a lonely road, into a foe seeking our life. The approaching Jesus, who, had He been recognized, would have made the disciples rejoice to see Him coming to them, walking upon the sea, caused their fear to run high, for they thought it was a spirit. This was in the night, and they were perplexed. However, their embarrassment was speedily removed by the Lord making Himself known to them while He was yet on the rough sea. The disciples were as dear to Him, and as much the objects of His care, in the night, on the rough sea, as when He said to them, "As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you." His love to His disciples to-day is strong and constant, knowing no change; but the way He takes to manifest that love is oft perplexing to His followers, who are still so "slow of heart to believe." The greatest proofs of His love are the hardest to believe, and the most difficult to understand. The Lord's death on the cross quite staggered the halting few who remained with Him to the end of His life. They knew not what to think, or what to believe, during the three days He laid in the grave, and they were astonished to hear the report of His resurrection. But again He came to them while they yet believed not, and confirmed their hope, and established their faith in Himself as the Messiah,

the Redeemer of Israel, by making Himself known to them, and opening their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures. Thus, again, when sad and fearful, they were delivered from their doubts and perplexities by His appearing.

While we remain ignorant of God's Word and ways, we shall have confusion of thought and fearfulness of heart; and ignorance will be ours while we remain in this body of sin and death, and in this world of darkness and deception. Expect not always such faith as shall cast out of the heart all fear, nor such knowledge as shall remove all perplexity from the mind. An advanced scholar, of much experience, said, "Now we see through a glass darkly; now we know but in part." Our ignorance may well humble us, and cause us to cry, "Lead me in Thy truth and teach me." Truly it is so. "We are perplexed, but not in despair" (2 Cor. iv. 8).

The women who were early at the sepulchre were much perplexed at not finding the body of Jesus there; but this also was the result of ignorance and forgetfulness. He had told them before of His death and burial, also that He would rise again the third day. This they had forgotten (Luke xxiv. 6). To have found a dead Christ would have been a greater cause of sorrow than finding an empty grave. The empty grave was the proper thing on the third day.

Is it not the case with you, fellow-believer, that you do not find the Lord when and where you expect to see Him? And, again, He appears when and where you expect Him not. The two perplexed disciples, who reasoned and were sad, did not expect to have Jesus walking with them to Emmaus; but so it was. How could He who was full of compassion rest, when they were distressed and desponding? How could He remain apart from those who so much needed His instruction and consolation? He is still the same in His regard for anxious souls who desire to be established in the truth. He knows well that nothing but the confirming word from Himself, and the joy of His felt presence, can assure their hearts and give them peace. This He has promised, and this He will grant.

While waiting in a state of perplexity—in the darkness of spiritual night—the time appears much longer than it really is. But, if darkness adds to the pain of waiting, it also causes the soul to cry more earnestly for the morning, saying with the Psalmist, "My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning." However, that which we wait, watch, and cry for, we value highly when obtained.

But, doubtless, that which gives intensity to the perplexities of the night is the fact that a soul thus in darkness cannot tell

where it is. This state God repeatedly brings His children into, in order to destroy the pride of their heart. It is when they are in this position that a little child can lead them. A king will ask direction of a beggar, or a child, when he has lost his way. Pride must lead to confusion and shame. He who will not *inquire* the way to Zion will never find the city of God. The blind are thankful for a guide ; and the Lord hath said, "I will bring the blind by a way they *knew not*." The blind, who know not the way, must be perplexed without a guide constantly at their side.

Reader, is it night with you ? Have you been trying to walk alone ? Have you neglected to ask the way ? And are you now confused and sad, because the Lord does not shine upon your path ? This, too, is a mark of your being in the right way, for He hath said, "They *shall* inquire the way to Zion, going and weeping ; they shall go, and seek the Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward " (Jer. l. 4, 5). The face is Zionward if the heart is seeking and turning to the Lord for wisdom. In our best moments we are nothing more, in ourselves, than *lost sheep*. A lost sheep must be perplexed and fearful. But the Good Shepherd goeth after that which is *lost*, until He find it : "And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders rejoicing, saying, I have found my sheep which was lost " (Luke xv. 5). The way the lost sheep is taken home by the shepherd may be rough and dark, but it must be right. He will lead by a strong hand, from which none can pluck away. The safety of the sheep is in the wisdom and power of the loving Shepherd, which are all-sufficient. Some of the sheep are taken most of the way home in the night. They seldom see the way they are being led, or the hand that is rightly leading them, or the way they have already come. Indeed, they may question the fact of their being led, because of the darkness and perplexity which constantly fill their mind. However, there is great truth, and often great grace, where there is much doubt. Perplexity leads to inquiry, and inquiry to a realization of safety, satisfaction, and joy ; and thus every perplexity worketh for good.

If God has broken thy power, destroyed thy wisdom, and blighted thy hopes, so that thou art lost in darkness, perplexed with doubts, and disquieted with fears of every kind, yet, nevertheless, notwithstanding all this, thou art not in despair. No ; at the worst it is only "perplexed, but not in despair." "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that walketh in darkness, and hath *no light* ? " Art thou this perplexed one ? Hearken—He speaks to thee : "Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God " (Isa. l. 10).

W. B.

THE SINNER DIRECTED TO THE SAVIOUR.

AN EXTRACT FROM FLAVEL.

"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."
—JOHN i. 29.

THESE are the words of John the Baptist ; and they were spoken in consequence of the question which was asked of him by the Jews, "Who art thou?" The humble prophet confessed, "I am not the Christ;" and on the next day, seeing Jesus coming to him, he exclaimed, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

Since the Redeemer left the world, He is not to be seen with an eye of flesh ; but believing on Him is seeing Him by the eye of faith ; and every one who thus seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, shall have everlasting life (John vi. 40).

Jesus Christ Himself has pronounced a blessing on those who "have not seen and yet have believed" (John xx. 29); and this blessedness is well described by the Apostle Peter, when he says, "Whom having not seen, ye love: in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory" (1 Peter i. 8). It is a disparagement to so glorious an Object as Christ to behold Him and not wonder—to see, and not love Him. Certainly, the admiration, love, delight, and joy of our hearts are all at the command of faith. Let us, therefore, consider what excellencies are in Christ for the eye of the believer to behold and admire.

I. *"God was in Christ"* (2 Cor. v. 19). He was "God manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. iii. 16). A God incarnate is the world's wonder. Here is Infinite and finite joined in one; the Creator and creature united in one Person. It is an argument of weakness to admire little things, and of stupidity not to admire great things. Many miracles were wrought by Christ in the flesh, but the greatest of all miracles was, that He "was made flesh and dwelt among men" (John i. 14).

II. *"Christ is the wisdom of God"* (1 Cor. i. 24); yea, "in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. ii. 3). Never did the divine wisdom display its glorious beams in the eyes of men and angels, in any work since the beginning of time, as it hath done in the appointment of Christ to be the Lamb of God, a sacrifice for sin. *"Behold the Lamb of God!"* and in Him behold the unsearchable wisdom of God, in recovering sinners who believe in Him from all the danger of sin; and yet making sin more dreadful to them, by the way of their recovery from it, than ever it could be made by any other consideration. Behold the depth of infinite wisdom in suiting the

sinner's remedy to the cause of his disease. The disease was the pride of man; the remedy was the humiliation of the Son of God. Man affected to be as God; *that* ruined him. God was manifested in the flesh, and found in fashion as a man; *that* saved him. Oh, profound wisdom, which, from the loss and ruin of our primitive glory (which was the undoing of us, soul and body), takes the occasion of raising us up to a far better state, and settles us in it, with a much better security than the former.

III. *The love of God is in Christ.* "Behold the Lamb of God!" and in Him behold the love of God, in the highest and most triumphant discovery that ever was or can be made of it in this world. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the Propitiation for our sins" (1 John iv. 10). Oh, here is the love of God to sinners! God manifests love to us in our daily provisions, protection, deliverances, and comforts; that we have health when others groan under pains—herein is love: that we have bread to eat when others are ready to perish—herein is love! Oh, but to have Christ to be a Propitiation for us, when the angels that fell were left in their fallen state, herein is love indeed! All the love that appears in the variety of providences for us in this world, in our health and estate, in our relations and comforts, is nothing compared with this love: herein is love indeed!

IV. *The tender mercies of God over poor sinners are in Christ.* As Christ is the mercy promised (Luke i. 72), the capital mercy, so He is the channel through which all the streams of God's mercy flow freely to the sons of men (Jude 21). The mercy of God to eternal life, or His saving mercies, are only dispensed to us through Jesus Christ. "Behold the Lamb of God!"—a Lamb prepared by the astonishing mercy of God; a sacrifice for us, when no sacrifice was appointed for fallen angels! This is the Lamb of God, to which, under the Jewish dispensation, all legal sacrifices had respect, and from which they derived all their virtue and value. The paschal lamb and the lamb for daily sacrifice were but the types and shadows of this Lamb of God. Behold the Person appointed by God for a sacrifice to take away sin. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was crucified for us. He shed His precious blood and offered up His life, a sacrifice to God of a sweet-smelling savour, "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16). As the sprinkling of the blood of the paschal lamb upon the door-posts of the Israelites was that which preserved them from the destroying angel, so the blood of Christ, the Lamb of God, typified by that blood, saves all who believe on Him from the wrath to come. Thus Christ, the Son of God, prevents the destroying angel executing the

fierceness of His Father's anger, and preserves them as His people, that they may enter into the land of Canaan, the everlasting rest. But who can open the unsearchable riches of Christ, or recount His wonderful excellencies? Angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, behold and admire Him for evermore. Heaven would be no heaven for them if they could not behold Christ there, sitting as a King in His perfect beauty, on His holy hill of Zion.

But let us rather proceed to improve this subject than endeavour farther to unfold it; for new wonders will appear in Christ, if we behold Him through the countless ages of eternity.

1. Oh, sinner, if you are sensible of a stony, hard heart, which cannot relent and mourn for all the wrong done to Jesus Christ by sin—that your affections are benumbed and stupefied, so that no considerations you can urge upon your own hearts are able to cause a relenting pang for sin—to you I would direct these encouraging words, as the most effectual means to melt your heart. Look hither. “*Behold the Lamb of God!*” Consider what is here represented, and thy heart is hard indeed if it relent not upon such a view of Christ. It is said (Zech. xii. 10), “They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.” Behold the Son of God, brought “as a Lamb to the slaughter” for thee, a vile, polluted sinner! Behold the invaluable blood of this Sacrifice shed for thee! Bring thy thoughts close to this subject—think who it is that was made a Lamb for sacrifice; for whom He endured all His unspeakable sufferings; how meekly and willingly He endured all the wrath of God and men, standing in His perfect innocence, to be slain for thee. Behold, He who had no sin was made sin for thee, that thou, who hadst no righteousness, mightest be made the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. v. 21). Oh, who ever loved thee at such a rate as Christ hath done? Who would endure the misery that Christ endured for thy sake? Would thy father, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend that is as thy own soul, be content to feel that for thee, though but for one hour, which Christ felt, when “His sweat was as it had been great drops of blood falling down to the ground?” (Luke xxii. 44.) Nay, thou wouldst thyself never taste such a cup for the saving of thy own child as Christ drank off to the very last dregs when He cried, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” Behold how He loved thee! Surely, if the rocks rent asunder at His sufferings, thy heart is harder than a rock if it thaw not at such a sight as this. Fix thine eyes awhile here, and thine eye will affect thine heart.

2. Oh, sinner [for whom Christ died], are you making light of sin, and easily overcome by every temptation to the commission of it? Oh, come hither: "*Behold the Lamb of God,*" and you cannot possibly have slight thoughts of sin after such a sight of Christ. See here the price of sin! Behold what it cost the Son of God to atone for it! Did He come into the world as a Lamb, bound with the bands of an irreversible decree, to die for sin? Did He come from the bosom of His Father to be thy Ransomer, and that at the price of His own life? Did the hand of divine justice shed the heart-blood of this immaculate Lamb, to satisfy for the wrongs thy sins have done to God, and yet canst thou look upon sin as a light matter? God forbid! Thy sin actually cost the blood of Christ, one drop whereof is more valuable than all human blood; and yet wilt thou not deny thy lusts, nor resist temptation for His sake? "*Behold the Lamb of God*" slain for thy sin, and thou canst never have slight thoughts of sin any more.

3. Are you drooping and discouraged in your spirit because of your manifold and aggravated iniquities, and sinking into despair from being overwhelmed with the burden and weight of your sins? These words are a sovereign cordial to revive your heart and hopes—"Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!" If the blood of the Lamb can take away the sin of the world, it can take away thy sin, though there be a world of sin in thee; for do but consider Christ, as appointed from eternity to be our Propitiation: "Him hath God the Father sealed;" as sacrificed in our room in the fulness of time—"Christ our Pass-over is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. v. 7); as accepted by the Father with the greatest content and pleasure, even "as a sweet-smelling savour" (Eph. v. 2); as publicly justified and discharged by God, the Creditor, at His resurrection (1 Tim. iii. 16, and John xvi. 10); and, lastly, consider Him as now in heaven, where He "appears in the presence of God for us," as "a Lamb that had been slain" (Rev. v. 6), bearing the very marks of His death, and presenting them before God as the most effectual and moving plea, to procure pardon and mercy for His people. Let these things, I say, be duly pondered, and nothing will be found more effectual to relieve your mind, under the desponding sense of your sins.

4. Are you faint-hearted, and ready to shrink from any sufferings for Christ, as unable to bear and endure anything for His sake? "*Behold the Lamb of God!*" Did Christ suffer such grievous things for you, and cannot you suffer small matters for Him? Alas! what is the wrath of man to the wrath of the great and terrible God? Besides, Christ was an innocent Lamb, and deserved not to suffer the least degree of penal evil upon His own

account; but you have deserved hell, and yet shrink under the sufferings of a moment. Did He suffer so much for you, and can you suffer nothing for Him? Surely He, in suffering for you, has left you an example "that you should follow His steps" (1 Pet. ii. 21). Are our sufferings to be compared, in kind or degree, to the sufferings of Christ? or what is our blood to the blood of Christ? Remember, "if you are planted in the likeness of His death, you shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection" (Rom. vi. 5). Like Christ, you must endure the cross, and despise the shame, for the joy that is set before you.

5. Are you impatient under your personal trials and troubles, apt to grieve under common afflictions, or to swell with revenge under injuries from the hands of men? "*Behold the Lamb of God!*" "As a lamb before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth" (Isa. liii. 7). And can you bear nothing without complaining? How meek was Christ the Lamb when He suffered most vile things from the hands of sinners! And art thou a lion for fierceness? He suffered patiently, and deserved it not; you suffer impatiently, and have deserved what you suffer. Oh, that you would learn to be more like Christ in all your trials and afflictions!

Lastly. Are you "staggering at the promises through unbelief"? Can you not rely upon the Word of promise, because your own unbelieving heart fills you with unworthy suspicions of the power, faithfulness, or willingness of God to perform it for you? "*Behold the Lamb of God!*" Are not "all the promises of God Yea and Amen in Jesus Christ, to all that believe in Him"? (2 Cor. i. 20.) Or, is there anything put into any promise of greater value than the blood of the Lamb that was shed to purchase it? Or, is not the giving of Christ to die for us the accomplishment of the greatest promise that ever God made to us? And after the fulfilment thereof, what ground remains for you to doubt the fulfilling of lesser promises, for, "if God spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. viii. 32.)

"*Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!*"

RELIGION is the best armour that a man can have, but it is the worst cloak.—*Bunyan*.

THE way to heaven is narrow, and there are but few travellers in it. God's children must not expect a smooth path, for a religion that brings no cross will not lead to a crown. If we are sincere followers of Christ, we must expect trials, crosses, and afflictions.—*W. Tiptaft*.

"THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS."

(A LETTER FROM "THE EPISTLES OF FAITH.")

MY DEAR FATHER,—Since it has pleased God to convince me of the desperate evil of sin, the terrors of His law, and the horrors of a guilty conscience, which I have laboured under for many months, it is with no small consolation I acquaint you with the essential and joyful change I still experience and enjoy in my soul, a more particular account of which I will give you the next opportunity.

From a deep sense of my lost state as an undone sinner, I have been brought to the foot of the Saviour's cross, to receive, through the merits of His atoning blood, both pardon and peace; and have found Him a prayer-hearing and a prayer-answering God. What sweet invitations do I read in His Word for the vilest of sinners to approach Him, having felt myself as such; and, on the other hand, my need of a Saviour. "To me then is the Word of this salvation sent." He has granted me pardoning and quickening grace; so that, by continually pleading His promises, praying fervently for an increase of faith, and begging of Him to remove unbelief, and dispel every doubt and fear (which I believe He will grant in His own due time, through His beloved Son, Christ Jesus), though I have often groaned all this out, without words to utter it, yet He well knew the state I was in, and took pity on me, and shared with me in the distress. All this, and much more than I can express to you, I now feel.

That horror, dejection, and guilt which I felt is removed; while joy and peace are springing up in my heart. I feel a pardon and forgiveness of my sins, by the application of His atoning blood. I know He is exalted to give repentance to just such sinners as I am; and, having experienced a heartfelt sorrow for sin, and the foolish vows that I made, I humbly trust that a godly sorrow, which worketh repentance to salvation "that needeth not to be repented of," is now given to me. Blessed be God, I know mercy to be His precious attribute, to those who feel their need of mercy. Have I not a right, then, to claim Him as my Saviour? Surely, I have, for "the Spirit itself beareth witness with my spirit that I am His child." I find that I can approach a throne of grace with a humble boldness, a strong confidence, and a full persuasion that God is my Father in covenant. Methinks I find sweet access to Him, for I have had conspicuous answers to prayer lately, and have found a fervency in requesting those things He has since granted me. How delightful is prayer to the soul when God gives a spirit of grace and supplication! Here all grievances are redressed, as you observe. When the heart is overwhelmed

with affliction and distress, here is the bosom of a gracious Saviour to pour them into, who, being "a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief," tried and tempted like unto us, knowing our infirmities, and whereof we are made, can sympathize with us, when confidence in the creature will prove vain. When we are enabled, in times of trouble, to pour out our complaints before Him, how it eases the troubled mind ; and we are encouraged to this, for He hath said, "He will be enquired of." He commands us to persevere in wrestling hard with Him by fervent prayer, and He delights in answering prayer, for He "said not to the seed of Jacob, Seek ye Me in vain." Knowing Him, therefore, to be faithful to His promise, may God incline our hearts to seek His face daily, and to come, moment after moment, for a fresh supply of His grace. May we feel more and more real spiritual poverty, for "the rich," He hath declared, "shall be sent empty away."

He is said to "dwell with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit," to "revive" them, not "deaden" them. This is sweet comfort to a broken-hearted sinner, and has often struck me with great power and comfort. *Oh, happy state—a "knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of sins ;"* a firm persuasion of an interest in the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ ; a good hope through grace ; and to know that I am free from the bondage and sentence of the law by His perfect obedience to it ; nor can it, in any one point, condemn them that are in Christ Jesus. Blessed is that soul whom God hath made "willing," in the day of His power, to be saved by free grace alone.

ELIZABETH MORTON.

Miss Morton was, before the Lord called her by His grace, a rigid Catholic in a convent.

HEAVEN.

HIS gracious presence makes a mighty change upon the saints in this world. His glorious presence in heaven, then, must needs raise their graces to perfection and elevate their capacities. The saints experience that the presence of God now with them, in His grace, can make a little heaven out of a sort of hell. How great, then, must the glory of heaven be, by His presence there in His glory ! The gracious presence of God makes a wilderness lightsome to Moses ; the valley of the shadow of death to David ; a fiery furnace to the three children. What beauty, then, shall arise from the Sun of Righteousness, shining in His meridian brightness on the street of the city paved with pure gold !—*Boston.*

THE PRODIGAL'S REPENTANCE AND PRAYER.

(LUKE XV.)

My Father, I have sinned in that I've gone astray,
 And, following *ignis fatuus*, have left the good old way ;
 My wanderings I own, my sinfulness I hate,
 And now by grace return, and not, I hope, too late ;
 A service with Thy servants—the lowest place—I crave,
 Unworthy now Thy son to be, yet believing Thou canst save.

My Father, I have erred, for, instead of trusting Thee,
 I've trusted in Thy creatures, who now far from me flee ;
 And men my heart oppress, for friends and foes betray,
 And I have night and sadness, instead of joyous day.
 Sin, hateful sin, hath wrought me all this dreadful woe,
 Hath hid Thy blessed face from me, and made me many a foe.

My Father, I have sinned 'gainst heaven and in Thy sight,
 Have wandered from Thy fold, till lost in gloomy night ;
 And now I, trembling and afraid, do cry aloud to Thee,
 "O God, my Father, Friend ! be merciful to me !
 Save, Lord, or I shall perish ! on wild or in the deep,
 Save, for Thy mercy's sake, O Lord ! oh, save Thy wandering
 sheep !"

Father, I have so sinned against Thy Word and Thee
 That I unworthy am of Thy sweet clemency :
 Have wasted much of time, and talents buried too,
 And now with keen remorse am pierced through and through.
 Oh, gentle Shepherd—Saviour—look Thou with pitying eye
 On all my grief and shame, or else with grief I die !

Father, I know I've sinned, but Thou hast kindly said
 That he shall live again who once was dead ; *
 And whoso cometh unto Thee for pardon and for grace,
 Shall freely be forgiven all, and see Thy smiling face.
 Lord Jesus, may I come ? Wilt Thou give life to me,
 Who have so long been dead to all that's good and Thee ?

I know Thou canst and wilt, for Thy own Word is true ;
 Thy love, too, is eternal, Thy mercies ever new :
 Never did needy wretch, in olden time or now,
 Besiege Thy throne of grace, and humbly to Thee bow,
 Who went away unheeded, or empty, or distressed,
 For whoso cometh unto Thee, Thy Word declares is blest.

Bless me, e'en me, O Father ! Great Source of every good,
 Give me Thy new best robe—fill me with heavenly food !
 The ring of everlasting and all-surpassing love
 Now give to Thy poor prodigal, and look Thou from above !
 Smile on me once again, and banish all my fears ;
 The pardoning kiss bestow, and dry up all my tears.

Margate.

G. H. M. READ.

* In trespasses and sins.

A BRAND PLUCKED FROM THE FIRE.

"MOTHER, I am come to you to die!" Thus a widowed daughter addressed her widowed mother as she entered the door in an advanced stage of that dire disease—consumption.

On Saturday afternoon, February 15th, 1879, the mother, whom I had known for four years by her constant attendance at St. John's Green Chapel, as also by her having the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, called on me and said, "Mr. Brown, I wish you would come and see my daughter this afternoon. She is very ill. She came to me on Wednesday morning very early. I was quite alarmed to see her. She had not been out of doors before for some time, and as soon as she saw me, she said, 'Mother, I am come to you to die.' I said, 'Child, whatever made you come out such a morning as this?' She answered, 'I was obliged to come. I could not stay any longer. I have had no sleep all night, and something kept telling me to come to you.' She looks very ill; and she is very unhappy. She wants you to come and see her. She wishes you to come this afternoon."

I soon followed the mother to her home, and found the daughter lying on the couch, much flushed, greatly confused, and her hair neglected. With a wild glare she fixed her eyes on me. For a few seconds we looked at each other without speaking. The following is almost, if not quite word for word, the conversation we had at that interview.

"So you are not very well, Mrs. Knipp?" "I am very ill. I am going to die." "But you are not quite sure that you are going to die just now?" "Yes I am. I feel I am. I know I can't get better; and my sins are not pardoned." "How do you know that your sins are not pardoned?" "Why, because they all come up before me. All my sins, ever since I was a girl, come up before me now." "And do you really want your sins pardoned?" "Yes, I do. I know that, if they are not pardoned, I must be lost. Do you think the Lord will forgive me?" "I can't tell whether He will forgive *you* your sins or not. He does pardon all those who are brought to know and repent of their sins—to confess them to Him, and seek His pardoning grace. Shall I read a portion of God's Word?" "Yes; and pray for me."

I read a part of the fifty-first Psalm, and made some remarks on each verse as I read it. When I came to verse seven, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow," she turned off the sofa, and, kneeling on the floor, covered her face with her hands. I paused till she got up, then continued, "Make me to hear joy and gladness: hide Thy face from my sins, and blot out all my

iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence." I then asked, "Do you want the Lord to do these things for you?" "Yes, I do. He must do it all." With a few words in prayer I left her, promising to call on the following Monday. That Saturday night was, for the most part, a sleepless one for me. I did indeed try to speak to the King for her.

On Monday evening I found her lying on the sofa very exhausted, her mother, three sisters, and a brother being with her, expecting her end was near. Her mother said, "Mr. Brown, dear." She nodded assent, but did not speak. As I looked upon her face, I was struck with the great change—a happy peace was impressed on every part. It was almost needless to ask, but I inquired, "Have you peace in your mind?" "Yes. Jesus has appeared to me. He has washed me, and made me whiter than snow. That is very white; but He has washed me *whiter* than snow." "Then the Lord has granted you pardon?" "Yes. He has pardoned me through the blood of the Lamb; He has done a great work for me. Yes, He has worked in me mightily. Oh, what a great work! He did it all Himself. I am a brand plucked out of the fire. I have obtained mercy." "I am most glad to know you have found mercy," I replied; and, seeing she was so very weak, I rose to leave, when her mother said, "Shall Mr. Brown pray with you, dear?" "Yes. But I *have* pardon," was her ready reply. We knelt, and I thanked God for His manifested favour to her, and desired that He would grant those present the like grace, to seek and find the Saviour of sinners. Herself, and also her relatives present, quite thought she would not live through the night. Her soul was full of joy and peace. While able to speak she could not be silent.

According to promise, I called the following day. She was then much revived and quiet. From this time she seemed to improve in health. But her spiritual joy had greatly abated; her faith had to be tried. Satan cast many fiery darts. She was fearful lest, after all, she should not be right. Her convictions of sin were great. Her deliverance from fear and terror was great. I fully expected the trial of her faith would also be great. I visited her frequently, and endeavoured to point out to her the faithfulness of God—His firm and immutable purpose and promise never to forsake, cast off, nor lose any one who should seek His mercy and hope in His Word. Notwithstanding she could adopt the lines—

"When thus afflicted, tempest-tossed—
And all my former comfort lost,
I tremble, lest I was deceived
In thinking that I once believed."

At these times she was very reserved, and would only reply "Yes," or "No," or "I hope so," respecting her spiritual state. She was always reserved to others.

In the beginning of May she became much worse, rapidly wasted away, till from a most robust woman she was reduced to little more than skin and bones. Her three children caused her some anxiety at times, as to how they would be treated and provided for. She had a mother's heart. I once inquired, "Would you like to get well again?" Her reply was, "Sometimes I think I should, for the children's sake, but I must leave them with the Lord. I have no wish to live for my own sake, and I know I never shall be well again." "Do you always feel ready and willing to die?" "No, not always; sometimes I do." At another time I asked, "As you get nearer the end, does your hope brighten up at times?" "It is not so bright as I should like." "Does the adversary tell you that your conversion was not real, that your joy was not from God, and that your sins have never been pardoned?" "Yes, that he does," was the emphatic reply.

On the Tuesday before her death, which took place on Saturday morning, May 24th, her breathing became most difficult, and her cough distressing, and continued so till she departed. Her pains were very great at times. But her patience was not exhausted. No murmur escaped her lips. She was thankful for all that was done for her, and feared being troublesome to her mother and sister. Her death was expected every hour during the last four days.

On Wednesday I said, "Do you really desire to depart?" "Yes, I do." "It will be a glorious sight to see Jesus in heaven, with His redeemed people." "Yes—something better than this poor world of sorrow and affliction. There is no rest here. I long to be gone." "If you get safe at last, do you think that you will be able to love the Lord for saving you?" She answered, smiling, "Yes, that I shall." "Would you like me to pray with you once more?" "Yes, please." "What shall I pray for? What do you want?" "That the Lord may take me to Himself."

I saw her again on Thursday, and also on Friday. On Thursday she was rather oppressed in mind, and fearful of death. I reminded her of her former joy, and asked, "Was the joy you expressed and the peace you had at the first real? I hope you did not say then what you did not feel? Did you deceive me?" "No; I know I felt it at the time. I still have a hope." "You can say then—

" 'Midst all my dejections, dear Lord, I can trace
Some token of favour, some marks of Thy grace.' "

On Friday she was calm, and ready to depart. Her breathing was very hard. She had scarcely strength to speak. I quoted—

“ Ah ! I shall soon be dying,
Time swiftly glides away ;
And on my Lord relying,
I hail the happy day.”

“ Yes, that will be a happy day for me,” was the reply. “ You have no fear of death then ? ” “ No ; I shall be glad to go. But I must wait the Lord’s time. I hope to be patient.” “ It will not be very long now before you will be released from all your pains. Think how much the Lord suffered in His death.” “ Yes, He died upon the cross. He did indeed suffer for us. I want to be patient.” “ ‘ For the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross.’ You will soon enter the joy. Perhaps I shall not see you again here. I once more say, good-bye.” “ Good-bye ; thank you for all your kindness.”

She spoke but little after this, only answered questions by saying, “ I am quite happy ; ” “ I have no fear of death.” Just before she breathed her last, she made an effort to speak. “ Washed—washed—washed,” was all she could say. Doubtless she tried to utter the words so often repeated by her, “ Washed in the blood of the Lamb.” Thus she calmly died.

“ Oh, sinner, saved by grace,
And washed in Jesus’ blood,
The streams of love we trace
Up to the Fountain, God :
And in His wondrous mercy see
Eternal thoughts of love to thee.”

The subject of the above narrative was the daughter of a God-fearing woman, who had caused her mother much heart-sorrow by her wayward conduct. Suffice it to say, she was a sinner, and, till the date named in the account, had shown no sign of real repentance. I shall not soon forget the deep anxiety stamped upon her face when leaving her at my first visit. She said, “ You will pray for me, won’t you ? ” Nor the perplexity evinced on another visit, when I did not answer very readily a question she put to me. She added, “ I don’t think you know what to make of me, after all ; and sometimes I don’t know what to make of myself.” On another occasion, when suffering greatly, both bodily and mentally, she cried out, “ Oh, what shall I do ? Oh, what shall I do ? ” But I could neither relieve the body nor the mind. All I could do was to breathe my desire to Him who alone can bind up a broken heart, that He would appear for her and to her again, which He soon did. Well may we sing—

" Oh, the mysterious depths of grace !
Who shall thy wandering mazes trace ?
Surpassing human thought to know
Where thy reviving springs shall flow.

" No heights of guilt, nor depths of sin,
Where God's redeemed have ever been,
But sovereign grace was underneath,
And love eternal, strong as death."

WALTER BROWN.

LETTERS FOR THE YOUNG.—No. XXIX.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—How sad the thought, as we see our dear friends one after another struck down and carried out of the world by death, to think sin is the cause of all the pain, sufferings, and death that have ever afflicted this world ! The young are not spared ; the affectionate, the useful, industrious, thoughtful, and aged, all must come under the scythe of this terrible monster who knows no pity. Our turn must come, and the question forces itself, What is our hope for another world, seeing we must of necessity soon leave this ? What are we trusting in ? Our uprightness and kindness to others is only our duty, and for all the good we may be permitted to do while we live here, no praise can rightly belong to us. But we must say (as our divine Lord and Master said to His disciples) we are unprofitable servants ; we have done only that which it was our duty to do. But it is a mercy indeed that a remedy has been found for sinners in the *Law-Fulfiller*, Jesus Christ, the righteous One. We think too little of our own state and case. We are sinners, and breakers of God's holy and just law ; and the terrible consequence of such a condition is, that the taint and pollution of sin runs through all we do, think, or say. Holy Job said, " Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean ? " Not one.

The heart and affections being deceitful and defiled, we stand in need of a righteousness in which to appear before God. Our own doings cannot save us, therefore the best of them is no foundation to stand upon for eternity. See Matthew vii. 26, 27, where our own doings are compared to a sandy foundation, which the storms of death and eternity will sweep away for ever. Oh, then, how solemn is our position if we have no foundation, no refuge ! *At death we shall need them.*

But, bless the Lord, He has opened the door of mercy. Jesus died, " the Just for the unjust," that He might bring sinners unto God. " It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners,"

without any merit or worth in them ; and all who feel themselves sinners, and grieve on account of it, are welcome to this safe refuge. See Matthew v. The poorer the wretch the welcomer—

“ The door of Thy mercy stands open all day
To the poor and the needy who knock by the way ;
No sinner shall ever be empty sent back
Who comes seeking mercy for Jesus’s sake.”

“ Christ Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost.” Here is encouragement for every one who feels their lost condition. The angels sang at His birth, “ We bring you *good tidings* of great joy. Behold, this day is born a *Saviour*.” Just what we need ; every way suited to us. The prophet Jeremiah asked, “ Is there no balm in Gilead ? Is there no physician there ? ” Yes, bless the Lord ! “ Then why is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered ? ” The answer forces itself to the lips—“ Because there is no heart for the application.” The balm (Jesus’ blood) is there—the Physician is there (Jesus, the sinner’s Friend)—but is there a coming to Him ? Yet He has all to give, without any price—freely, to any and every poor sinner that seeks, asks, and knocks. Oh, that the Holy Spirit would put life into the sweet words of truth, the application and power of which is much wanted ! Come, Holy Spirit, and breathe the living words ! Bestow divine faith !

May I entreat you to read the fifty-fifth chapter of Isaiah, and see if it is possible for sweeter and truer words to be written ? Can anything be added to improve it ? Can you suggest a single alteration to make it suit you better ? Pause awhile and let conscience reply. Eternity is at the door, with all its momentous consequences. We must die, and cannot tell how soon. “ We must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.” We must face the Judge of all hearts, of all the earth. The great division will be made, according to the words of Holy Writ (Matt. xxiv. 30, 31 ; Matt. xxv. 31, &c.). On which side shall we be gathered ? The great white throne will be set, the books will be opened (see Revelation xx. 11—15), and the dead, raised from their graves, will be judged out of the books. But, blessed be God, there is a book of life, and every poor sinner who has felt his need of mercy, and has fled for refuge to Jesus, to lay hold of the hope set before him in the Gospel, his or her name will be found there ; while all who trust to their own doings, however commendable before men, will be found with the scribes and Pharisees of old, upon whom our Saviour heaped the most fearful denunciations. They were satisfied with their cobweb coverings, and despised the rich, full, and spotless righteousness of Jesus. May the Lord open our eyes to see the beauty and suitability of Jesus,

who saves His people from their sins, gives ears to hear the words of divine truth. "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," and a heart to feel the drawings of His love and mercy. He says He will not cast out any, nor break the bruised reed—

"Come, ye sinners, poor and wretched,
Weak and wounded, sick and sore ;
Jesus ready stands to save you,
Full of pity, joined with power :
He is able,
He is willing—doubt no more."

I now conclude with remarking upon John the Baptist's words, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." That word *taketh* is so sweet, as it is what is done in the sinner now ; and Jesus the Saviour is called a "Lamb" to show His meekness and gentleness. Who would be afraid of a lamb ? The Apostle John, in a vision, saw "a Lamb as it had been slain," to show that the sacrifice had been made, and was acceptable to God ; and every poor sinner coming to Him is made acceptable through that one offering. Oh, what a mercy John did not see Him only as "the Lion of the tribe of Judah," but "a Lamb as if it had been slain" !

I would give you these blessings if they were in my power, but they are God's to give. I can and do pray for them to be given to you as well as to myself.

"Come guilty, come filthy,
Come loathsome and bare ;
You can't come too guilty,
Come just as you are."

I am, yours in sincerity,

T. W.

THE fire that shall try every man's work will try not of what *bulk* it is, but of what *sort* it is.—*Boston.*

OUR unthankfulness for, and our light estimation of, God's Word will do more than anything to help the Pope into the saddle again.—*Luther.*

THAT which makes heaven so full of joy is, that it is above all fear ; and that which makes hell so full of horror is, that it is below all hope.—*Dr. Goodwin.*

A WHOLE-HEARTED disciple can have but little communion with a broken-hearted Lord ; and, "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."—*Joseph Hart.*

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THE SOWER.

A SERMON BY MR. BOORNE,

PREACHED AT DEVONSHIRE ROAD CHAPEL, GREENWICH, ON
THURSDAY EVENING, JANUARY 12TH, 1882.

"Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."—JAMES v. 11.

THIS Epistle was written, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, by the Apostle James, and directed to the Church of God under suffering circumstances; and the main drift of it is to beget and encourage in the Lord's people a godly patience.

He opens his Epistle by telling his brethren to "count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations"—not for trials' sake, not for temptations' sake, but for the fruit that would be wrought by the Holy Spirit through such trials and temptations; wherefore he says, "Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." He strikes the same keynote almost at the close of his Epistle. Here he takes his figure from the patience of the husbandman: "Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." Then, having referred to animated nature, he exhorts them to look to the prophets: "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience." Then he comes in the words of our text, and says, "Behold, we count them happy which endure."

What a mercy it is to have that which will endure! We know, if we have our religion from God's teaching, it will endure all the tests that may be applied to it. God, therefore, brings His dear people, to be manifest as His chosen, redeemed, called, justified and sanctified ones, and to have something which will endure, even eternal life. These will, as Hart says, "stand every storm, and live at last."

A mere *profession* of religion, which thousands have, may pass current for a day, month, or year, or for a term of years; but the end comes, and the end thereof is "the way of death" (Prov. xiv. 12). If I know anything aright of what the Lord has taught me, it has been a concern to have the end right. When He began with me, He brought the end nigh, and made me to feel the

sentence of death stamped upon everything ; and your end may have been brought very nigh to you, and perhaps made to appear as if death was at the very door. Why does the Lord do this but to make us look away from time things to those things which are eternal, and ponder that which will endure unto everlasting life ? What is our life, and all the things we want, or think we want here ? Christ says, " 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 ? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat ? or, What shall we drink ? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed ? For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness ; and all these things shall be added unto you " (Matt. vi. 30—33). Is this the pre-eminent desire, " the kingdom of God and His righteousness " ? Do eternal things outweigh time things ? Do the thoughts of a dying day bring you greater anxiety than the things of this time state ? It is a mark in your favour.

" Behold, we count them happy which endure." We are told that, when the Lord was warning His disciples respecting the destruction of Jerusalem, He said, " He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved " (Matt. xxiv. 13). How many you have seen endure but for a time, who have been perhaps many years in a profession, till a time of temptation came, and then they fell away ; and it has filled your heart with concern, and made you cry mightily to God to uphold you ! You have heard of some falling, and you have thought, " Who can stand if such fall ? " You have been ready to say with the disciples, " Who then can be saved ? " (Matt. xix. 25). But it is a mercy to know this, that all those whom the Lord brings down to His feet, to be saved in His own way, and who flee to Christ, shall be saved. They may not bring forth all the fruit they desire, nor be able to say, " I am sure I am safe, and shall get to heaven ; " but it is a mercy to be enabled to cast our souls unreservedly upon Him. And such souls shall endure, though they may have all their life sore fears that they shall fall away and come to nothing.

" Behold, we count them *happy* which endure." It is not to be understood that they are always happy ; because, when they are brought to endure chastening, to endure trials, to endure temptations, they have anything but a sense of happiness. It is not what they may think of themselves, but what God thinks and reckons them to be.

I suppose few here would care to run a race ; but you might count him a happy man who, having to run, did not give in. It is said, " So run that ye may obtain " (1 Cor. ix. 24) ; and,

again, "Lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith" (Heb. xii. 1, 2). We count them happy, then, that hold on their way.

"Ye have heard of the patience of Job." We might take Job's trials, and some of us might be able, in some things, to compare with him. His first trial was to suffer the loss of property. He that was rich had all frittered away from him, and that suddenly. A man that was in a state of affluence was soon brought into poverty. Then look at his children. He was praying to God for their preservation, "and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all, for," says he, "it may be that my sons have sinned, and have cursed God in their hearts." So Job prayed unto God day by day; but, notwithstanding, they were all swept away, and the Holy Ghost does not give us any assurance that they were children of God. Scripture is silent upon this point. How great the mercy, when you have had a loss by bereavement, and have had it lightened by knowing that it was eternal gain to the departed!

But Job was also personally afflicted, even with sore boils, so that the poor man could take no rest; and thus afflicted in body, and distressed in soul, he could find no ease, for he says, "When I say, My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint; then Thou scarest me with visions." Job had to endure these things—yea, more, for his own wife, the partner of his bosom, who should have comforted him, said unto him, "Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die. But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips" (Job ii. 9, 10). And, besides all this, his friends, who came to mourn with him and to comfort him, condemned him as a hypocrite. Well might James say, "Ye have heard of the *patience* of Job." He could not have endured without that grace which God gave him.

And yet how many things seem to portray great impatience, for he curses the day of his birth, and shows, when put into this over-heated furnace, that Job was a man of like passions with us. But how kindly James passes over all this impatience! This was of the flesh, and God knew it, and looked at His own work which He had wrought in his heart, and as if He should say, "I look at the work of My Spirit. I don't expect to gather grapes of thorns, nor figs from his thistly nature." And what a very great mercy it is when we are enabled to look at God's grace in the hearts of His dear children—when we can discover grace shine

through the natural imperfections ! There is a difference between one and another in temper and disposition ; but if, while we discover that which is natural, we look through it to that which is spiritual, we may, like James, speak well of the patience of our afflicted friends.

See how grace enabled Job to hang on, when circumstances seemed to be beating him off ; but in the trial he was constrained to look to the Lord, for he says, " He knoweth the way that I take ; when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." He was sure that an end would come to his trials, although he says, " Behold, I go forward, but He is not there ; and backward, but I cannot perceive Him : on the left hand, where He doth work, but I cannot behold Him : He hideth Himself on the right hand, that I cannot see Him." But he says, " When He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold " (Job xxiii. 8—10). Job's stability was in this—he was in the hands of the Lord, and traced all up to the Most High, to that God who did all things for him. There was his stay ; but he would never have held on if it had not been for the Lord's goodness and power towards him.

You may, and will be, thrown into confusion when you look at second causes ; but if you are enabled to trace all to the first cause, knowing that God will make all work for your good, you will trace all those things which are evil to yourself, and see that the Lord permits them to accomplish His own designs. This will help you to humble yourself, and to " wait patiently for the Lord." You will wait for Him to perfect that which concerns you.

Again, " Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope." What a mercy to be helped to look back upon Scripture characters, and see how the Lord has ever carried on His own work ! Look, for instance, at Joseph's trial. He was cast into prison, not a guilty culprit, but under a false charge. How long he was in prison we know not, but we are told this, that, " until the time that his word came, the word of the Lord tried him." But God was with him in the trial, and He constrained the keeper of the prison to deal well with him. Joseph was there under a false charge, but he had One to vindicate his cause and deliver him.

Sometimes we know what our trials are sent for. We have felt we needed the rod. But, although all our chastisements are trials, yet all our trials are not chastisements. Some may be tests or proofs of our faith, and of the Lord's faithfulness. In Job's case, it would be wrong to say that his trials and afflictions were chastenings, laid on him for his sins. Neither were Joseph's. He was upright in all his dealings, but the Lord did it for the glory of His name. And so you may

have trials, and you cannot at all times tell why. You *have* known when you have stretched forth your hands to a strange god ; but you want to know now, perhaps, what this particular trial is for. How you will try to charge your conscience, and say, "Is there anything wrong? Have I done iniquity?" And you will search and inquire why the Lord has brought so heavy a trial upon you. You know that sin in *general* is the cause of all trouble, but in *particular* you want to know, "Why am I thus?" I have known what this is. It is well to "wait patiently for Him." "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." This was part of Job's sore, for he says, "He appointeth many such things for me;" and, when we know that God has appointed it, we also know it shall not be more severe than He has designed it. If it be severe, He will keep thee alive in it. He will not "crush under His feet the prisoners of the earth" (Lam. iii. 34). If "He cause grief, yet will He have compassion, according to the multitude of His tender mercies;" and, if God does this, it is well to wait and see the "end of the Lord." God has some end to answer.

We might take a two-fold view of this—the purpose or design, and the means of accomplishing it. God has His design like a workman—yea, He never works without a design. What man would build a house without a drawing or plan of it? So God, in drawing out His own plan respecting His people, works by it; but perhaps only by little and little is it revealed unto them. "The Lord hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet." Because God works by His design, He will make everything fit into it. You will see how the Lord orders and times a thing, that you will have to gaze, admire, and wonder, and say, "This is God's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes." You have had to look on, and it is easy then; but, when you seem to think it is working against you, then you may say, "This cannot be from the Lord." But it is well then to cease from our own judgment. "Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall every man have praise of God" (1 Cor. iv. 5). Job says, "He bringeth deep things out of darkness." And, as God has His plan, do you think He will leave you to battle alone with your trials, and let things fall out by chance? No! He will time everything for your good and His own glory. How often you have sung these words—

"The fictious powers of chance
And fortune I defy;
My life's minutest circumstance
Is subject to His eye."

But, because you do not see the Lord working for you at times, you fear He is doing nothing for you. Look at Gideon: "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour." But says he, "If the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all His miracles which our fathers told us of?" But "the Lord is with thee;" and He told Gideon these words—"Go in this thy might." See how many of his men he had to give up, for he thought he must have a mighty army. But says the Lord, "Bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there." At last he was reduced to three hundred men, and the Lord said, "By them I will deliver Israel." Therefore it is written, "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord" (Jer. ix. 23, 24). "Ye have seen the end of the Lord." There was God's end, and God's means, too, to that end. "He is great in counsel, and mighty in working."

"Ye have seen the end of the Lord." And, again, how "the end of the Lord" has been seen to glorify His name! When the dear children of God have been in sore trials, He has not forsaken them. Hence, says the Church, "All this is come upon us; yet have we not forgotten Thee, neither have we dealt falsely in Thy covenant. Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from Thy way: though Thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death" (Psa. xliv. 17—19)—

"Then to maintain the battle
With soldier-like behaviour;
* * * *
This, this is faith
That conquers death,
And overcomes the devil."

"Ye have seen the end of the Lord." There is not only the design, but the end or termination of all the trials that His people shall endure. You may say, "There will never be an end to my trial; and, if it does come, it will not be before my death." Well, it is true in some cases they may be life-long trials, but those that are so may prove to be the greatest blessings to you. How many have had to thank the Lord for the removal of trials; and how many have also had to bless His name even for continuing them! You may say, "The furnace is so hot! I have had enough of it;" but God will use it to take away your dross and tin, and He will discover

more than you can conceive. God may see there is some strength yet shut up, and "He will repent Himself concerning His servants when He seeth their power is gone, and there is *none* shut up nor left." There is a time when the Lord will deliver you, and, until that time comes, nothing will bring to you the deliverance. Sometimes you have tried to bring a promise to pass, and you have said, "This is God's time, and I shall make use of the opportunity." Your time may be always ready, but God will work it out Himself, and does not leave you to work it out. It is yours to wait and be patient until He fulfils it. The Lord brings His children to these points ; and what patience the soul feels to need, after he has received the promise, before the fulfilment comes ! You may have searched for years God's Word ; you have prayed and entreated the Lord to bring it to pass ; have had thousands of fears it will not ; but sometimes you have thought, "It will come. Surely it will come ;" and God has many times enabled you to take the matter to Him, and yet things seem just as they were. But, though you may have to wait, it is your mercy to be helped to do so, and to plead with Him His own faithfulness, and so He gives you strength to wait on. "Ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb. x. 36, 37). It is well to compute time as God reckons it. "He that shall come will come."

"Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord." God has His period, and that will be the period of mercy. He "is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." Therefore He says, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him" (Psalm ciii. 13). He is full of pity and compassion. Take God's dealings with His ancient Israel, and see both His goodness and His severity. Hear how pitifully He breaks out, "Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord ; and I will not cause Mine anger to fall upon you : for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever" (Jer. iii. 12). He will fulfil His promise. And you will remember how God stirred up His prophets to speak of the compassion of God. The corn and the wine and the oil had been cut off ; but says He, "I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, My great army which I sent among you." How He pitied thee, sinner, when "none eye besides pitied thee"—when you were in that state described by Ezekiel in his sixteenth chapter, as He says, "I clothed thee also with broidered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk."

How often you have had to praise God that He should ever

have turned His eyes upon you, when you had no compassion upon yourself or any one else ! But have you not had to look back to see how He has done this a second time ? He has come when you have wandered from Him, and has bound up your wounds. You may have judged hardly of Him, and have said, "Art Thou become cruel unto me ?" So did Job. But it was not so. You may have thought Him hard towards you, and have been ready to say in your haste, "All men are liars," as if you were the only object of pity. Look at Job. What crushing trials he had, as if the good man must go down with sorrow to the grave ; but, when His time came, the Lord turned back his captivity. Elihu said, "He shall pray unto God, and He will be favourable unto him : and he shall see His face with joy" (Job xxxiii. 26). I believe, in that trial, Job restrained prayer before God, and many a child of God has, for a time, given over praying outwardly. I do not say there is none in their heart, nor do I, by any means, justify the omission of prayer. We find, in the end, Job went and prayed for those who had condemned him : "And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends ;" and, as to his worldly substance, God gave him twice as much as he had before. To show the Lord's kindness and compassion, Job is held up as an example of suffering and patience. Oh, He is very pitiful, full of compassion, and of great mercy ! Oh, what tender mercy there is in our God. Well might Zacharias say, "Through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the Day-spring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace" (Luke i. 78, 79).

When God's mercy comes into our hearts, what tenderness it brings with it ! You might have thought and felt your heart as hard as adamant. "Lord," you have said, "I don't know what to do with it." But the Lord has come again with comfort into your heart ; then what tenderness of conscience, precious faith, and going forth of desire after Him ! It is just as it is written— "He shall return to the days of his youth ; his flesh shall be fresher than a child's." Have you not felt it so—such freshness upon your spirit, and such tenderness in your soul ?

Then, again, God will show that His tender mercy has been towards us when we were in our sin and in our blood. When we had no care for Him, He quickened us, and "saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus iii. 5). Then we were enabled to trace it up through the precious redemption by Jesus Christ, and look back to that mercy and grace which He promised to us before the world began. And the child of God not only looks backward, but he looks forward also ; as it is said, "Looking for that

blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus ii. 13). Now, why does the Apostle bring this forward, but to make them remember that their looking and waiting would soon be over, and that the end draweth near, as it is said, "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh"? You are waiting for the mercy, you are waiting for the pity, you are waiting for the compassion of the "Friend of sinners." Is it not worth waiting for? In all your trials God means you well. His wounding means a cure. Joseph knew not how to keep in his pity and compassion towards his brethren. It was not long before he had them in and made known to them the love of his heart: "I am Joseph, your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now, therefore, be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life." It is, depend upon it, to let us know that the best is always last. Though, my friends, you may be under sore trial, remember the best is to come, and that which nothing will supersede—

"The joy prepared for suffering saints
Will make amends for all."

Remember, God is only doing it to perfect His own purpose and design. How roughly God seemed to deal with the martyrs! We might have looked on and said, "These never can be the favourites of heaven." But it was because they were the favourites of heaven that God put that honour upon them. "They loved not their lives unto the death." God enabled them to endure, seeing Him who is invisible. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way for your escape, that ye may be able to bear it." I appeal to your experiences. Some of you have had more trouble than others, but dare you say, with all the troubles you have had, that you have been too spiritually-minded, and have lived too near to the Lord, too separate from the world, or have searched His Word too much? "No," you have to say; "it has been the very reverse of that." Well, then, if so *with* all these trials, what would you have been *without* them? Then say you, "I see it is right; it is for the best. 'He performeth the thing that is appointed for me; and there are many such things with Him.'"

"But," says one, "it is all very well for you, who have just come out of a trial, but I am in one, and in darkness too." Then says the Lord, "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

darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them" (Isa. xlii. 16). Can you say, up to the *present* time, that God has forsaken you? "No," say you, "but I have, to my shame, often forsaken Him." He that hath brought you into trouble will bring you out of it. He says, "Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me" (Psa. l. 15).

May the Lord add His blessing. Amen.

"O THAT THOU Wouldest BLESS ME INDEED!"

DARKNESS and death surround us,
Sad hearts and tear-filled eyes;
Fountain of life and healing,
Here let Thy beams arise.

Isa. ix. 2.
 Isa. xxv. 8.
 Psa. xxxvi. 9.
 Mal. iv. 2.

Light of the pilgrim fathers,
Lamp of my untrod way,
Oh, may Thy rays illumine me,
Still brighter day by day!

Exod. xiv. 20.
 2 Sam. xxii. 29.
 Psa. xxxi. 16.
 Prov. iv. 18.

Guide of the way-worn traveller,
Bent 'neath a load of care;
Hope of the contrite mourner,
When verging on despair;

Psa. cvii. 4—7.
 Psa. lv. 22.
 Jer. xiv. 8;
 Isa. lvii. 15.

Sun of Thy Church in conflict;
Brightness of souls in bliss;
Strength of the faint and weary,
And **H**elp in helplessness—

Psa. lxxxiv. 11.
 Rev. xxi. 23.
 Isa. xxv. 4.
 Hos. xiii. 9.

Dark is the vale of Jordan,
And strong its rolling tide;
When death's cold waves o'erwhelm me,
Then shine and be my Guide.

Job x. 22.
 Jer. xii. 5.
 Psa. lxix. 1, 2.
 Psa. xlviii. 14.

Joyful my parting moments;
Cheerful, to earth farewell;
Through Thee the victory gaining,
My song Thy praise shall swell.

Psa. xxxvii. 37.
 2 Tim. iv. 6—8.
 1 Cor. xv. 57.
 Rev. v. 9.

Essex.

W. B.

ONLY the waters in the ship can sink the ship; but while kept outside, all the heaving deep of waters thundering over three-fifths of the globe can work no shipwreck. So, while kept outside of the Church, the floods of ungodly influence can only help to float it on its voyage of glory, or to lift it to its Ararat of rest.—*Chas. Stanford.*

GOD A JEALOUS GOD.

"For thou shalt worship no other god: for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God."—EXODUS xxxiv. 14.

EVERY truly enlightened and sensible sinner is willing to own the sad truth and painful statement made by the Lord in Jeremiah xvii. 9, that "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;" and the longer we live the more we experience or *feel* the truth of it; and though, through enlightened judgment and restraining grace, we do not actually worship gods of wood and stone, as the poor deluded heathen do, yet we too often worship gods of our own devising, or, in some cases, turn the Lord's free favours into idols, and thus forget the Lord, whose name and character is Jealous.

For many years there appears to have been but little enjoyment amongst Christians of the Lord's sensible presence, our cry more often being, "My leanness, my leanness" (Isa. xxiv. 16). Perhaps one reason of this may be because, when the Lord bestows His favour, we prize the gift and forget the Giver. We look upon the *joy* we sometimes feel in religion as our religion, or, in other words, as God, and really worship that instead of the Giver, from whom alone all true spiritual joy flows.

If a kind parent took his little child a present, and the child was so delighted with it that it did not think anything of the father who gave it, would not the parent feel hurt? Would he not devise means to take the present away, so that he might again feel the child's affection? And is not this the way the Lord, "whose name is Jealous," is acting? Does He not see that His dear children think so much, and place so much dependence in the joy and happiness they feel in religion, that He has withdrawn it from them, lest they should make a god of feeling, and forget Him who is the Giver? If, when deprived of sensible joy and feeling in religion, in reading, in prayer, or in hearing the Word preached, we question our interest in Christ Jesus, and fear, because we have no feeling or joy, we cannot be God's child, it goes directly to prove that we took the joy and feeling that springs from religion to be religion, or God, and shows us the necessity for the Lord to remove these, that Himself, His own Self, who loved us, and gave Himself for us, may be all our salvation and all our desire. The Lord loves His people so much that He is jealous when He sees them loving anything before Him; and so, in love, strips them of spiritual enjoyment, because they think too much of the gift, and forget the Giver.

May the Holy Spirit, that blessed Glorifier of our Lord Jesus Christ, help us unitedly to pray the dear Lord to restore unto us the joy of His salvation (Psa. li. 12), and with this *inestimable*

gift, also give us grace to use it aright, that we may not slight the blessed Giver by making too much of the gift, to the forgetting of Him, but may it endear more than ever the dear Son of God, through whom alone all spiritual joy can come.

Oh, that every time we feel a broken heart, a tender conscience, a soft feeling, or a holy joy, we may be enabled to bless the Lord with all our hearts for it; and yet, as it were, say, "Let me not rest in this, but give me Thyself. May the sweet streams lead me to the still sweeter Fountain." We would desire and pray for a *feeling* religion, and yet desire never to make too much of feeling, or put it in its wrong place. May the dear Lord direct us aright in this important matter. Dear Mr. HART said—

"Did we *His Person* learn to prize,
We *more* should prize *His grace*."

A READER.

HEAVEN.

HEAVEN is a day without a cloud to darken it, and without a night to end it. In heaven there is the presence of all good, and the absence of all evil. As heaven is kept for the saints by Christ, so they are kept for heaven by the Spirit. If we live with God here below, we shall live with Him above; we must change our place, but not our employment. In heaven all God's servants will be abundantly satisfied with His dealings and dispensations, and see how all conduced, like so many winds, to bring them to their haven, and how even the roughest blast helped to bring them homeward. In heaven God will never hide His face, and Satan never shows his. Grace and glory differ only as the bud and the blossom; grace is glory begun, and glory is grace perfected. We may hope for a place in heaven, if our hearts are made suitable to the state of heaven.

J. MASON.

THE flowers of paradise would quickly wither on earth if they were not watered with dew from heaven. "How have the mighty fallen," when the Almighty hath not stood by them!—*Secker*.

HEAVEN'S gates are not so highly arched as princes' palaces; they that enter them must enter them upon their knees. Heaven's gates are wide enough to admit of many sinners, but too narrow to admit of any sin.

LOVE—ITS SUPREMACY.—Truth is doing much in this world; Faith more; but they are only the milk-white steeds yoked to Love's chariot, which shall carry it through the earth conquering and to conquer.—*Gill*.

A GRACIOUS VISIT.

UPON one occasion, when the children of Israel committed evil before the Lord, He delivered them into the hands of the Midianites—a wild and warlike nation—that by them the straying sheep might again be driven into the crook of their Chief Shepherd.

Great was the affliction at that time in Israel. A considerable part of the people, abandoning their homes and all that they had, fled into the forests and mountains, or hid themselves in dark caves and clefts of the rocks, while some sought shelter in strongholds in sequestered places or on lofty heights; and, as soon as Israel had sown anything, the Midianites came immediately upon them, like a swarm of locusts, despoiling the land of its crops, and leaving nothing of nourishment behind, neither sheep, nor oxen, nor ass.

This severe scourge had its full effect. Israel perceived their guilt, smote upon their thigh, and raising their hands towards heaven, the cry of supplication resounded throughout the land: "Return, return, O Lord, to Thy oppressed inheritance!" And the faithful God hearkened, and brought them help.

In the field by Ophrah stands a solitary oak, and close to it is a threshing-floor, where a young husbandman is busy threshing. In this occupation he perpetually glances around him with anxiety and fear, lest he be surprised by the Midianites, from whom he wishes to conceal the wheat. His name is Gideon, and his father, likewise a husbandman, is called Joash. While the good young man is thus zealously employed, a Stranger, whose majestic and affable aspect shed over His countenance a something resembling the translucent splendour of the sun, comes unexpectedly upon him. He seats Himself under the oak apparently fatigued by a long journey; and, so soon as He is perceived by Gideon, addresses him with, "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour;" at which Gideon felt surprised, and thought, "What manner of salutation is this?" Recollecting himself, however, and conceiving whom he had before him, he gave vent to the feelings of his heart: "Oh, my Lord," said he, "if the Lord be with us, why then has all this befallen us? and where be all His miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt? But now the Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites."

And here the history tells us "the Lord looked upon him." The Lord was the Son of God, and, as He looked upon him with benevolence and affability, He said, "Go in this thy night, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites:

have not I sent thee?" It is not always pleasing and agreeable to be looked upon by the Lord. Once, when He looked upon the Egyptians, the whole army was struck as if by a terrible thunder-bolt; the hearts of the heroes were seized with despair, and trembled, and the senses of the wise were confounded and darkened. "He looketh upon the mountains and they tremble." Such a look from eyes like flames of fire fell upon the attendants of Daniel, and great fear came upon them, so that they fled and hid themselves. And how lamentably do we hear Job groan, as if from out the deepest hell, "Thine eyes are upon me, and I am not. Am I a sea, or a whale, that Thou settest a watch over me? How long wilt Thou not depart from me, nor let me alone till I swallow down my spittle? I have sinned: what shall I do unto Thee, O thou Preserver of men? and why dost Thou not pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquity?" And there is still a looking down of the Majesty of heaven upon the worm—a peering of the only Holy One into our darkness—a gazing on the part of Eternal Righteousness upon the sinner, which is of all terrors the most terrific that a poor heart can experience on earth. And yet it must, in a measure, be felt and experienced, or we shall never be able to bask in the sunshine of divine grace.

The look that Gideon was favoured with under the oak was a look of benignity and grace. The eye he encountered there had in it nothing terrifying or blighting, but was like a clear and serene sky, bright and lovely, and shone with pure affability and mildness. This was one of those looks of God which raise the dead and gladden the weeping, by which whole streams of peace and joy flow into hearts that are riven, and of which David sings, "Cause Thy face to shine, and we shall be saved."

Whilst viewing Gideon with this look of benignity and grace, the Lord directs him, "Go in this thy might." In what might? "In the might of My countenance, Gideon, which has assured thee of My love and favour."

Truly the power of such gracious looks, by means of which man becomes convinced in his heart that the Lord loves him, is exceedingly great. Hearts which but now resembled a turbulent ocean are changed in a moment into pavilions of heavenly Sabbath rest; and souls which but a while ago sat lamenting on the ground in sackcloth and ashes, start suddenly like young eagles on wings of joy and rapture, when the eye of divine mercy had kindly beamed upon them.

And in such instances, what sacrifices are made, what renunciations men are capable of, what patience is proved, what contentedness and affectionate brotherly love is evinced! And whence all this? It is the power of a gracious look from the

Lord; it is the efficacy of the consciousness, "My Jesus loves me!" "Go in this thy might," said the Lord to Gideon, having enlivened him with the look of love and grace. It does not imply He meant that "Thou, Gideon, shouldest vanquish the enemy in thy own strength. I refer thee to My might, not to thine own. This, Gideon, shall be thy strength—that I have looked kindly upon thee; and this shall animate and suffice for thee, that I am gracious towards thee. In this thy might go and conquer!"

Oh, precious words! Know this one thing only—that He is kindly disposed towards thee, then thou hast no need either to despair or tremble. If thou hast only received the testimony that He is thy Friend, neither storm nor tempest need any longer affright thee. Boldly defy, then, the menacing spears, even should they be pointed by thousands; and be not troubled that thou mightest meet on thy road mountains too steep to climb. Do not weigh thy powers, measure not thy abilities. Be thou strong or weak, be thou girt or defenceless, it matters not. The powers of thine Immanuel are at thy service; and His love towards thee is thy standard, thy sword, thy helmet and coat of mail, thy shield and protection, and everything thou lackest or standest in need of.

Wherever thou art sent—be it into the fire of temptation, be it into the waters of affliction, be it into domestic embarrassment and difficulties, be it into hot conflicts and laborious enterprises, yea, be it into peril and death, if He has looked upon thee benignantly, and if thou only knowest that one thing, "My Jesus loves me," then go—"go in this thy might"—thou hast nothing whatever to fear, nothing to apprehend. Thy Saviour will accompany and protect thee because He loves thee, and His love is stronger than death, and more jealous than hell. He will smooth every way before thee.

KRUMMACHER.

OH, sin is that mark at which all the arrows of vengeance are shot!—*Dr. Goodwin.*

MERE doctrine, though ever so sound, will not alter the heart; consequently, turning from one set of tenets to another is not Christian conversion.—*Joseph Hart.*

THOUGH Noah's dove made use of her wings, yet she found no rest but in the ark. Duties can never have too much of our diligence, or too little of our confidence.—*Secker.*

EVEN permission in those things we may remedy makes us no less actors than consent. Some men kill as much by looking on as others by smiting. We are guilty of all the evil we ought to have hindered.—*Bishop Hall.*

THE WORK AND EFFECT OF DIVINE LOVE.

WHAT a solemn statement is positively asserted in that text, "They shall scourge Him, and put Him to death;" and what unparalleled love is therein displayed! Have you not sometimes thought, relative to the death of our precious Christ, Could it not have been avoided? Could it not have been dispensed with? Could not the "only-begotten of the Father," the "express image" of the Father, yea, "the brightness of His glory," have been spared such a scene of woe? No. And why? If I were to view salvation and redemption as promiscuous matters, as some divines do, I should have said that He might have been spared; but if I view the fact that He was held responsible in His own bond for the entire and eternal salvation of His own Church, then I come to the conclusion that thus it must be. Then I come to the conclusion of which He spoke after His resurrection, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?" It must be so, and it ought to be so; that is His own statement. And, however we may censure Pilate for his perfidy, the Jews for their hypocrisy, the Roman soldiers for their cruelty, and our own souls for their sinfulness, which was the cause of it all, yet we must look beyond all this, and see that there was an "ought," a "needs-be," and a "must," arising out of the fact that He was held responsible in law and justice to all the perfections of Deity on the behalf of His whole Church, and that there was no being to whom that responsibility could be transferred. We glory in the thought that the covenant bond of Jesus had arranged the whole matter, and that all the sheep were given into His hands; that, even when they all went astray (Isa. liii.), and turned every one to his own way, He, being held responsible for them, the Lord laid upon Him the iniquity of them all. We cannot find a firm footing for faith anywhere but in the responsibility of Christ. Say as much as you please about man's responsibility; you never hear me deny it. Say as much as you please about the creature's responsibility; I do not mean to utter a single syllable in argument against it. But I must insist upon this—that all the creature's responsibility can do for him is to damn him.

Take the responsibility of a poor insolvent debtor, which responsibility renders him liable to imprisonment. Apply to him, and tell him he is responsible, and must pay his creditors. "I cannot," he replies; "I have not a shilling in the world." "Think of the wickedness of going into debt then, and the aggravated manner in which it has been done." Will that remove his responsibility? No; still he is responsible; and he cannot, by any act of his own, remove his responsibility. If

I went forward as the surety of any man, and said, "I will pay all your debts for you," this would not put an end to his responsibility. He would still be bound to his creditors. His responsibility would still hang over his head. But if his creditors allow me to put myself in his place, and agree to let him off on condition that I become answerable for his debts; and if I, in fulfilment of this engagement, do, in point of fact, pay every farthing he owes them, then, but not till then, there is an end of his responsibility. The responsibility is shifted from his shoulders to mine, and he has no longer anything to answer for—I have answered for all.

Now, this is precisely the case with our beloved Lord and His Church. We are all by nature conceived in sin, and owe an infinite debt of obedience and suffering to the law and justice of God. We have no means of paying that debt; but our insolvency does not remove our responsibility. The eternal prison of hell must be our home, if there be no other responsibility than ours. Forth comes the glorious Elder Brother, and allows everything to be laid upon Him—makes everything chargeable to Him—under takes in covenant bond, before sin existed, to cancel the debt of His Church, to "magnify the law and make it honourable," to satisfy justice with infinite payment, to vanquish the powers of darkness, and to work out and bring in perfect redemption and salvation; and that bond being held by Jehovah, and Christ's responsibility being accepted, He must do this—it must be done.

Where is the soul that has received those benefits from Him, who does not say that He is "the Chief among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely"? Moreover, He became incarnate for that express purpose. He took upon Him the likeness of His brethren. It behoved Him to be made in all things like unto them. What for? That He might "bear their sins in His own body on the tree;" and therefore "a body was prepared" for Him for that purpose—"A body hast Thou prepared Me."

Oh, how striking is the Scripture I have just cited—"to bear their sins in His own body on the tree"—as well as "pour out His soul unto death"! And this accounts for the appalling circumstances of His death. Well might He ask, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow, which is done unto Me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted Me in the day of His fierce anger." Look at the expression—"They shall scourge Him." Behold Him whose shoulders upheld and supported the heavens and the earth—behold Him who upholds, and always did uphold, all things by the word of His power—stretched, pinioned, stripped,

the "plowers plowing upon His back" with their cruel instruments of torture, and "yet He opened not His mouth," but, "as a sheep before her shearers, was dumb." What enormity the scene presents to our view!

But not only was He to pay the penalty thus far according to His covenant bond, but He must pay it with His life. They put Him to death with cruelties which none but Himself could have endured. And how did He meet all this? Oh, I am thoroughly ashamed of myself that ever I should have a complaint to make or a murmur to offer about afflictions, pains, persecutions, or sorrows, of any sort or kind, when I find my beloved Lord, whom I so much long to be like, meeting His infuriated persecutors, meeting His murderers, meeting the scourge, the contempt, the despisings, the revilings, the spittings upon, and the scorn and cruelties which accompany a public death, with holy composure—with "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do." Oh, that this scene may be ever before our eyes, until we shall gaze upon His glory, and there witness the scars in His humanity, glorified as it is, in His hands, and His feet, and His side!

Now, think for one moment of the glorious majesty of God's method of saving sinners—the glorious majesty of God's plan of bringing millions of poor, ruined vessels home to glory, without tarnishing the honour of His own name, without dishonouring one of the attributes of Deity, by just accepting His dear Son's covenant bond, under solemn responsibility, to do all, to pay all, to conquer all, to secure all, to obtain all, and to protect all that pertains to the entire salvation of His Church. Who would not love Him?

Oh, the infinite glories of love divine! And did the Great Eternal love me from everlasting? Did He so love me as to adopt me into His family, and register my name in the book of life, and commit me to the care and charge of His only-begotten Son—His dearly beloved, co-equal, co-eternal Son—that all His merits might be transferred to me, and that all my sins might be laid upon Him? Well may we sing with the poet again—

"Oh, for such love, let rocks and hills
Their lasting silence break!"

"God is love." And where is our love to Jesus? Where our love to the Father? Where our love to the Holy Ghost, the divine Testifier, who made us acquainted with all these things, or we had never known them? Let it be remembered that, if there is no supernatural love to God in our souls, there is no Christianity there; for, as the "fulfilling of the law" is love, so the fulness of the glory of the Gospel is love—love from first

to last—and sure I am that the Lord's family shall all, sooner or later, be able to say with John, "We love Him"—yes, we love Him—"because He first loved us." Now, do not reverse this order. Never attempt to insinuate, as the proud Pharisees do, that, if we love God, He will certainly love us in return; but let it stand in the Scriptural form—"We love Him because He first loved us." And, if you possess the result, and really love God, His truth, His ways, and His people, then trace it up to its first cause, and mark the fact for your comfort and consolation—"The eternal God loved me before the world began." That is the way I get at my comfort.

And that love is everlasting: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." When my covenant God and Father can change, when He can vacillate and vary, when He can of love make hatred in His bosom, then I may expect to perish eternally; for sure I am there is enough in me to provoke it, if anything can do it. But, so long as His love is immutable, eternal, everlasting, I am satisfied that it is not possible for the soul that has once tasted that love, and felt its glow, to be cast out from His presence or banished from His sight.

But this also appears to me to be the opening of Jesus' heart of love to our view. In secret contemplation I have been placing myself as near to the Roman soldiers as I could—I say, in secret contemplation. I have imagined that I almost felt his spear as he drew back his arm to thrust it into the Redeemer's heart, and, catching the precious drops of blood that flowed from thence to wash away my sins and purge my conscience, got a peep into His very heart, exclaiming, "It is all love to me—it is all love flowing from Jesus' heart to me." Read what the Apostle says concerning it in the Epistle to the Ephesians, when he enjoins upon the believers at Ephesus that they should "love one another, even," says he, "as Christ loved us, and gave Himself for us"—"*even*," "*even*." And, in the same chapter (Ephesians v.), towards the close, referring to the love enjoined between husband and wife, he says, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it;" so that the giving Himself for His Church, to do and to die, to bear her reproach, and suffer without the camp on her behalf, was an act of love.

And then, what shall we say of the duration of His love? "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." But mark, they are "His own"—"Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." I beseech you to bring this point also to close investigation, for I always like a little examination of conscience as we go on, just to see what part and lot we have in the matter.

Do you believe that Jesus loves "His own"? I am sure He does. If He loves you, and has made it manifest, He has created in you so much love towards Him as sets you longing after His company, His presence, His smiles, and His voice. This is the sweetest and best assurance that you are "His own." Tell me, ye doubting souls, is it not unto you the most important of all objects to have a sweet assurance from Christ Himself that you are "His own"—that He loves you as "His own that are in the world," and must, therefore, "love you to the end"? I know that the most timid believer in the world would not dare to deny this—that the uppermost feeling of his heart is to have Christ's own testimony, by the witnessing of His Spirit, so as to enable him to say with Paul, "He loved me, and gave Himself for me."

Then this grand transaction, solemn and awful as it is, is, after all, the act of love, an appointment of love, the ebullition of love from the very heart of Jesus, a token and testimony of the love of the Triune Jehovah; otherwise, the Holy Ghost would never have revealed it to our souls; so that the soul at Jesus' feet, that only longs to love Him, may rest assured that all the Persons of Deity have been from everlasting in love with it, and cannot retract.

Now here I have endeavoured to come as low as I possibly can, upon a subject so sublime and important, for the encouragement of the weakest and feeblest believer in the family of God. If you do not love Him, you will be willing to part with Him. If you do not love Him supremely, you would hear of any other subject in preference to hearing of Him. If you do not love Him, you have no close fellowship with Him. But if these things are in us, or even only beginning in us by the spark divine, they are a sure testimony of the fact that "we love Him because He first loved us."

IRONS.

I HAVE lived to thank God that all my prayers have not been answered.—*Jean Ingelow.*

WICKED men make equal haste both *to* sin and *from* judgment, but they shall one day find that it is not more easy to run into sin than impossible to run away from judgment.—*Bishop Hall.*

BELIEVERS must be fitted for their inheritance. Many a labouring man has been proved by a cunning or skilful lawyer to be the heir to some large estate, and he has taken possession; but his sudden riches have proved sudden misery—the man was out of his element. So would the sinner be in heaven, were he not first made "meet to be partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light."

GOODLY WORDS BY A GODLY MARTYR.

[A friend has sent us the following letter, written by that godly man, John Bradford, soon after the death of Edward VI., and when the notorious Mary had restored the Papists to power. Though our present case differs from that in which the godly were then cast, yet we quite agree with our friend that there are many things in the Church which render the warnings here given appropriate to the present times.]

TO MY LOVING BRETHREN, THEIR WIVES, AND WHOLE FAMILIES,—I beseech the ever-living God to give you all, my good brethren and sisters, the comfort of the Holy Spirit, and the continual sense of His mercy in Christ our Lord, now and for ever. Amen. The world, my brethren, at this present, seemeth to have the upper hand. Iniquity overfloweth, the truth and verity is seeming to be suppressed, and they which take part therewith are unjustly entreated, as they which love the truth lament to see and hear as they do. The cause of all this is God's anger and mercy—His anger, because we have grievously sinned against Him; His mercy, because He here punisheth us, and, as a Father, nurtureth us. We have been unthankful for His Word; we have contemned His kindness; we have been negligent in prayer; we have been too carnal, covetous, licentious, &c.; we have not hastened heavenward, but rather to hellward; we have fallen almost into a contempt of God and all His good ordinances; so that, of His justice, He could no longer forbear, but make us to feel His anger, as now He hath done, in taking His Word and true service from among us, and permitted Satan to serve us with Antichristian religion, and that in such sort that, if we will not yield to it, and seem to allow it in deed and outward fact, our bodies are like to be laid in prisons, and our goods given, we cannot tell to whom. This should we look upon as a sign of God's anger, procured by our sins; which, my good brethren, every one of us should now call to our memories oftentimes so particularly as we can, that we might heartily lament them, repent them, hate them, ask earnestly mercy for them, and submit ourselves to bear in this life any kind of punishment which God will lay upon us for them. This should we do, in consideration of God's anger in this time.

Now, His mercy in this time of wrath is seen, and should be seen of us, my dearly-beloved, in this, that God doth vouchsafe to punish us in this present life. If He should not have punished us, do not you think that we would have continued in the evils we were in? Yes, verily, we would have been worse, and have gone forwards in hardening our hearts, by impenitency and negligence

of God and true godliness ; and then, if death had come, should not we have perished, both soul and body, into eternal fire and perdition ?

Alas ! what misery should we have fallen into, if God should have suffered us to have gone on forward in our evils ! No greater a sign of damnation there is than to live in evil and sin, unpunished of God ; as now the Papists, my dearly beloved, are cast into Jezebel's bed of security, which of all plagues is the most grievous plague that can be. They "are bastards, and not sons," for they are not under God's rod of correction. A great mercy it is, therefore, that God doth punish us ; for if He loved us not, He would not punish us. Now doth He chastise us, "that we should not be damned with the world." Now doth He nurture us, because He favoureth us. Now may we think ourselves God's household and children, because He beginneth His chastising at us. Now calleth He us to remember our sins past. Wherefore ? That we might repent, and ask mercy. And why ? That He might forgive us, pardon us, justify us, and make us His children, and so begin to make us here like unto Christ, that we might be like unto Him elsewhere, even in heaven, where already we are set by faith with Christ ; and, at His coming, in very deed shall enjoy His presence, when our "vile bodies shall be fashioned and made like unto Christ's glorious body, according to the power whereby He is able to make all things subject unto Himself."

Therefore, my brethren, let us, in respect hereof, not lament, but laud God ; not be sorry, but be merry ; not weep, but rejoice and be glad, that God doth vouchsafe to offer us His cross, thereby to come to endless joys and comforts ; for, "if we suffer, we shall reign ;" if we "confess Him before men, He will confess us before His Father in heaven ;" if we be not ashamed of His Gospel now, He will not be ashamed of us in the last day, but will be glorified in us, crowning us with crowns of glory and endless felicity ; for "blessed are they that suffer persecution for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

"Be glad," saith Peter, "for the Spirit of God resteth upon you." "After that you are a little while afflicted, God will comfort, strengthen, and confirm you ;" and, therefore, my good brethren, be not discouraged for cross, for prison, or loss of goods, for confession of Christ's Gospel and truth, which ye have believed, and lively was taught among you in the days of our late good and most holy prince, King Edward.

This is most certain, if you lose anything for Christ's sake, and for contemning the Antichristian service set up again among us ; and as for you, for your parts, even in prison, shall you find God's great and rich mercy, far passing all worldly wealth ; so shall your

wives and children, in this present life, find and feel God's providence more plentifully than tongue can tell; for He will "show merciful kindness on thousands of them that love Him." "The good man's seed shall not go a begging bread." You are good men, so many as "suffer for Christ's sake."

I trust you all, my dearly-beloved, will consider this dear with yourselves, and in the cross see God's mercy, which is more sweet and to be set by than life itself—much more than any muck or pelf of this world. This mercy of God should make you merry and cheerful, for "the afflictions of this life are not to be compared" to the joys of the life prepared for you. You know the way to heaven is not "the wide way" of the world, which windeth to the devil, but it is a "strait way" which few walk in; for few "live godly in Christ Jesus," few regard the life to come, few remember the day of judgment, few remember how Christ will deny them before His Father that do deny Him here, few consider that Christ will be "ashamed" of them in the last day which are ashamed now of His truth and true service, few cast their accounts what will be laid to their charge in the day of vengeance, few regard the condemnation of their own consciences in doing that which inwardly they disallow, few love God better than their goods. But I trust yet you are of these few, my dearly-beloved; I trust you be of the "little flock which shall inherit the kingdom of heaven;" I trust you are of the mourners and lamenters which shall be comforted with "comfort which never shall be taken away from you," if you now repent your former evils; if now you strive against the evils that are in you; if now you continue to call upon God; if now you defile not your bodies with any idolatrous service used in the Antichristian Churches; if you "molest not the good Spirit of God," which is given you as a gage of eternal redemption, a Counsellor and Master to "lead you into all truth;" which good Spirit I beseech the Father of mercy to give to us all, for His dear Son's sake, Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom I commend you all, and to the Word of His grace, which is able to keep you, and help you all, and save you all that believe it, follow it, and serve God thereafter.

And of this I would you were all certain, that all "the hairs of your head are numbered," so that not one of them shall perish, neither shall any man or devil be able to attempt anything, much less to do anything to you or any of you, before your heavenly Father, which loveth you most tenderly, shall give them leave; and, when He hath given them leave, they shall go no further than He wills, nor keep you in trouble any longer than He wills. Therefore, "cast on Him all your care, for He is careful for you." Only study to please Him, and to keep your consciences clean,

and your bodies pure from the idolatrous service which now everywhere is used, and God will marvellously and mercifully defend and comfort you, which thing He do, for His name's sake, in Christ our Lord. Amen.

1553.

JOHN BRALFORD.

“THIS POOR MAN CRIED.”

WHEN wilt Thou come again, dear Lord,

And all my burdens bear,
And heal my wounded heart? for I
Am very near despair.

When wilt Thou come again, dear Lord,

And give my heart relief?
Remove this darkness from my mind?
I'm weary of my grief.

I feel I dare not say to Thee,
Thou hast not been before,
And set my captive spirit free,
And burst my prison door.

I want Thee near again, dear Lord
Thy former love to feel;
To hear Thee whisper to my soul,
“Fear not, for all is well!”

I trust Thou wilt not tarry long;
Such midnight hours I feel;
No loving voice to whisper peace;
How lonely thus to dwell!

I feel my sins have been the cause
Of this dark night of grief;
With shame I now confess to Thee,
I am of sinners chief.

But oh, return to me again!
Forgive my every crime;
And let the blood which Jesus shed
On Calv'ry, purge my sin!

OH, beloved, think, I pray you, of the solemn hour in which you and I shall have to change worlds; and anticipate what it must be to have what the Church says in the Canticles concerning it—“His left hand is under my head, and His right hand doth embrace me,” while I fall asleep on His bosom. “Oh, death, where is thy sting?” Jesus has taken it out; and, in order to accomplish His grand work, He went down into the very territories of Death, to grapple with him there, and tear out his sting, that you might meet but a stingless messenger.—*Irons.*

NATHANAEL.

"Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile."—
JOHN i. 47.

IN those days of departure from the simplicity of primitive Christianity, it is of great importance to know in what primitive Christianity consisted, especially as in some quarters such loud appeals to antiquity are so frequently repeated. There is much exceedingly sweet instruction in what is revealed in the Word of God respecting the cases, calls, and characters of the early followers of the Lord Jesus. Nathanael was one of the very first Christians, and our attention is particularly called to him by the remarkable expression of the Lord Jesus concerning him transcribed above. When *He* says "Behold," we may be sure there is something or somebody worth looking at.

In briefly considering the circumstances connected with Nathanael's call, there are five points in the narrative which demand our attention—first, his *position*, described in verses forty-five and forty-six; second, his *portrait*, drawn by the unerring hand of the divine Limner in verse forty-seven; third, his *puzzlings*, expressed in the wondering inquiry, "Whence knowest Thou me?" verse forty-eight; fourth, his *profession* of faith, in verse forty-nine; fifth, his *prospects*: "Thou shalt see greater things than these," &c., verses fifty and fifty-one.

1. *Nathanael's position*.—Before Philip "found" him, he was in a state of ignorance, being unacquainted with Christ. From this condition he was called by divine grace through the instrumentality of Philip. We may here learn that Jesus frequently works by means. Instead of Himself calling Nathanael, when passing him just before, Jesus was pleased to use Philip, and overruled what might have seemed the accidental meeting between them to this end. It was by the orderings of Providence, in the accomplishment of God's purpose of mercy, that "Philip findeth Nathanael," and delivered the simple but emphatic message, "We have found Him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph." This is the sort of witness-bearing that is always owned of God, when men, anxious for others to find the same Saviour, can themselves testify, "*We* have found Him." It is the statement of a fact none can deny—the assertion of personal experience which no one has either the right or power to contradict. The ungodly may sneer at it as enthusiasm, &c.; but none can overthrow the testimony of those who speak of what they have known, and tasted, and handled, and felt. It is clothed with authority, and has the advantage of being above controversy. Nathanael did

not dispute the fact stated by Philip as to his having found Jesus; but a question arose in his mind whether He was the Messiah, because of the despicableness of the place whence He came. We need not suppose that this question had any other source than a sincere desire not to be deceived. Many false prophets had arisen at different times, and many had been carried away by their pretensions. Many "false Christs" have now gone forth into the world, deluding many. It is well, like Nathanael, to seek to make sure. Philip's reply was, "Come and see." Sound advice! By God's grace Nathanael was constrained to act upon it, and thus became a *coming* and *looking* one. All souls in this position are thrice blessed, and may behold in Nathanael one who occupied the same place long, long ago, and whose case is recorded for their encouragement. What Christ thought of Nathanael, He thinks of all those in Nathanael's position. All looking, longing, seeking, coming ones may see their character delineated in the picture Jesus drew of him; which brings us to consider—

2. *Nathanael's portrait.*—"Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." Now, this Magazine is read by a large number of persons, young and old. Jesus sees every reader. We wonder how many He sees coming to Him? Every such an one is described in the expression Jesus used concerning Nathanael. Dear friend—whoever thou art whose eye rests on these words—is your portrait here, "*an Israelite indeed*"? The Lord defines true Israelites, in the eighth chapter, thirty-ninth verse, to be those who "do the works of Abraham." We also learn elsewhere that it is not enough to have Abraham's *flesh*—there must also be the possession of his *spirit*. True Israelites not only adopt Abraham's language—use his *words*—they also do his *works*. What those works were, and how produced, we find recorded in Hebrews xi. 8—10, where the religion of the "Father of the faithful" is minutely described: "Abraham, being called to go out into a place which he should afterwards receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went." Separation from the world always follows calling. When God speaks, obedience instantly results; whenever He calls, it is effectually. Yet Abraham's obedience was accompanied with ignorance, for "he knew not whither he went." So with Abraham's spiritual children, who have "like precious faith" (including Nathanael). There is, particularly at first, a great lack of knowledge concerning the *end* the Lord has in view in His leadings and dealings. The immediate effect, however, of Abraham's call was, that he became "a sojourner," a "stranger and pilgrim on the earth, looking for a city which hath founda-

tions, whose Builder and Maker is God." This implies a dissatisfaction with earth and earthly things, which is, when conjoined to a looking for heavenly things, a sure mark of an "Israelite indeed," such as Nathanael was. The addition of the word "*indeed*" gives a great emphasis to the Saviour's description. It signifies "*really* as opposed to *pretendedly*," "*spiritually* as opposed to *naturally*." Many pretended to have Abraham's religion, on the ground that they had Abraham's nature. Many professed to be "sons of Jacob," because they were descended, after the flesh, from Israel's loins. Many claimed a spiritual affinity on the ground of a natural relationship. How often the Lord overturned all such claims in His addresses to the Pharisees ! It is just so now, but "no guile" exists in those who are "Israelites indeed." Guile signifies deception. There is only one class in the world not deceived in regard to religious matters—*i.e.*, the followers of and believers in the Lord Jesus Christ; yet these are the very persons who are most filled with fear and anxiety lest they should be deceived. From hence arise their doubts, questionings, and perplexities. We now come to notice—

3. *Nathanael's puzzlings*, as expressed in the inquiry, "Whence knowest Thou me?" Nathanael was not one of those who could take things for granted. The statement of Jesus rather astonished him. He did not quite understand at what time, or in what place, Jesus had first known him. He sought to bring matters to *the test*, and therefore this abrupt question burst from his lips. Let us note the answer of Jesus: "Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee." Jesus saw Nathanael before he began to follow Him, when he was sitting at his ease, quite contented with his then present state. This teaches us how the Lord's watchful eye and tender care is upon His people, when they are as yet strangers to Him, and also when they are first concerned to know the Lord. The time was now come for Nathanael to be taught this lesson, which deprives the creature of all cause of boasting, on the score of having looked to Jesus and come to Jesus *first*. If His eye had not first been fixed in love on us, we had never looked to Him. If He had not first come to us, and bade us live, we had never come to Him. Jesus is the Alpha as well as the Omega; the first as well as the last.

The sweet way in which Jesus solved Nathanael's perplexity brought forth—

4. *His profession of faith*.—We may easily conceive with what a look of adoring reverence and love "Nathanael answered and saith unto Him, Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel." The rapturous expression, "Rabbi," means

something more than merely "Master" and "Teacher." It conveys the idea of appropriation, like most proper names ending in "i," and means "My Master," as "Ishi," my husband; "Ammi," my people.

Reader and writer might here pause and ask, Is Jesus really my Teacher? Am I His disciple? Do I learn of Him? Can I say with Nathanael, "*Rabbi*"? If Jesus is our Master, we hear His voice, fear His name, know His grace, obey His Word, love what He loves, and follow Him according to the measure of grace bestowed upon each. It is an unspeakable mercy to be taught of Him in any degree. Nathanael confesses his belief that a "good thing" had come out of Nazareth, and professes his conviction of the divinity of that glorious Person before whom he stood. Moreover, he recognized in Jesus—what men now so universally deny—*sovereignty and Kingly dignity*: "Thou art the King of Israel." A soul truly humbled at the feet of Jesus, learning of Him, will not stumble at His royal prerogatives, but will rather joyfully acknowledge His pre-eminence, not only as the Master and Teacher, but also as the divine and eternal Son of God, and the supreme King in Zion.

5. *Nathanael's prospects.*—Upon Nathanael making the wonderfully comprehensive profession of faith in his Lord, Jesus said unto him, "Thou shalt see greater things than these." The Lord Jesus proved Himself to be a divine Teacher indeed, for He now gives Nathanael instruction respecting what should be hereafter, telling him what his future prospects were. The Lord's words constitute both a promise and a prophecy, and have respect to the life that now is, and to that which is to come. As a saint proceeds along his earthly pilgrimage to his heavenly home, he (more or less daily) sees greater evils in his heart, and greater manifestations of the Lord's compassion and tender mercy. If, the further he goes, the greater a trial grows, that does but imply that greater help is experienced in the trial, and a greater deliverance (when it comes) out of it. We are exhorted to "covet earnestly the best gifts," and we may seek for greater light, more fervent love, an extension of knowledge, in keener spirits, and more stable peace in Him. The things which will be seen *hereafter* are infinitely greater than all that can be seen *here*, for "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." Suffice it to say, that every one who has been called, like Nathanael, to follow Jesus, and is found coming to His feet and looking to Him—every "Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile," who brings his puzzlings, perplexities, and hard cases to Jesus, being made willing to learn of Him, confessing his subjection to the Master, and humbling himself before the Son of God and the

King of Israel—has the prospect in the future, when the Lord shall come a second time “without sin unto salvation,” which Jesus so graphically described to Nathanael, when He said, “Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”

Steaforth.

E. C.

LETTERS FOR THE YOUNG.—No. XXX.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—We were pleased to receive yours, and to know that you are still pressing on, and after a knowledge of the one desirable Object, the Lord Jesus Christ, because, in possessing this knowledge, all the blessings and comforts of the Gospel are included, therefore are indeed much to be desired. But a soul that is longing and panting after the Lord Jesus Christ, feeling that he is, by his own sinfulness, utterly ruined without Him, and seeing that there is in Christ all that his soul needs, he is as truly interested in Christ as the soul that is filled with comfort. It is not the comfort that makes the Christian, but the new life, which is owing to the eternal union existing between Christ and the soul that is chosen in Him. The new life, and that alone, is sensible of the state the soul is brought into by sin, and is also capable of seeing, as taught by the Holy Spirit, the blessings that are revealed and laid up in the Lord Jesus Christ, so that there will be a true desire in that soul after Christ, and the consolations that are in Him; and he is also able to receive, as the Holy Spirit gives to him, the comforts.

The Lord Jesus says, “Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness,” and it may be said, happy are they that have sensibly received righteousness. The good news that Jesus Christ, with all His benefits, is for poor sinners, who have not a thread of Gospel righteousness of their own, but, on the contrary, feel that they are filthy and abominable in the sight of a holy God—that these may come just as they are, and that they are just the characters that Christ receives and blesses—this is the “strong drink” which is to be “given to those who are ready to perish,” and is indeed too strong for the poor soul to receive until the measure of faith is communicated by the Holy Spirit.

“King Lemuel,” in this chapter (Prov. xxxi.), I should understand to signify the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the good King that will thus deal with all His poor, heavy-hearted, and feelingly-perishing people. He will not give His Gospel wine to kings—to such as are full—“He filleth the hungry with good things, but the rich He sendeth empty away” (Luke i. 53). How contrary are our ways to the Lord’s ways! There is too

often in us a wanting something to come before the Lord with—some fitness—but Hart says—

“You can’t come too filthy;
Come just as you are.”

“Let them drink.” “Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely” (Rev. xxii. 17). It is a blessing to have that thirst that nothing but the water of life can satisfy, even though we feel, at the same time, we are the poorest of sinners.

That word you felt helpful, “He will regard the prayer of the destitute,” &c., has encouraged many besides you. By such ways and words the Lord keeps His people in the time of famine from utterly sinking, still following after and waiting for Him.

“And forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more.” What a mercy to be delivered from such poverty as the want of every good thing, and the misery of a guilty conscience! “He will not despise their cry.” We are ready to despise it, the world despises it, and we feel it is only worthy to be despised by the Lord’s people, and by the Lord Himself too; but the help comes in “looking unto Jesus.” In Him is to be seen every blessing that we are needing.

February, 1876.

Yours affectionately,

E. MORGAN.

A DREAM.

I WAS present (says the late John Clayton), at one of Mr. Newton’s Thursday breakfasts, and observing that our host had been for some time silent, I challenged him to give his opinion on something or other. “Well,” said he, “I will tell you one of my dreams if you like. I dreamed that I was crossing a sea. It was narrow, but very rough. After long struggling with winds and waves, I entered a still and beautiful harbour. I landed, and meeting a grave and affable person, I said, ‘Pray, sir, what is the name of this port?’ He replied, ‘The Harbour of Comfort.’ ‘And what is that stormy sea which I have just crossed?’ ‘The Bay of Care.’ ‘I suppose this beautiful port can be reached sometimes without such trouble as I have had?’ ‘Oh, no; it is the will of the Master of the port that it shall be reached in no other way. Through much tribulation you must enter the kingdom.’” “Surely, Mr. Newton,” said I, “you were making this beautiful comparison while you were silent.” “No; it came to me in a dream the night before last, and, when you rallied me, I was thanking God for it.” “I wish,” said Mr. Cecil, “that we could do awake what you do asleep.”

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THE SOWER.

A SERMON PREACHED BY MR. HULL,

JANUARY 18TH, 1880, EVENING.

"Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation."—ISAIAH xii. 2.

DID you ever feel anything of God's grace and love in your heart in such a measure as to make you glad? or has He ever caused you, at times, to desire a real experience of His mercy and covenant blessing? Brethren, it is a mercy to find there is something in our religion that rises up again and again, thirsting for God—something that does not wear out, and that does not become contemptible in His eyes. The Lord's people may often question their evidences and waymarks, as to whether they are of God; but if they have once tasted that the Lord is gracious, they will want the experience of these things again and again. If we have no enjoyment of the good things of God, what does our religion do for us? If the joy of His salvation is never experienced in our souls, how can we love to talk of it? But, if we have had some experience of it, oh, how we long for the visits and the favours of the Lord! How our heart goes out with the words of the Psalmist, "Show me a token for good, that they which hate me may see it, and be ashamed, because Thou, Lord, hast holpen me and comforted me."

Our text contains a confession of faith and confidence, as the result of the fulfilment of the promise made in the first verse, where a day is spoken of when the seeking and waiting ones obtain mercy and consolation of the Lord, for which they praise Him with joyful heart and lips; and we may do well to inquire whether we, from a like experience, can make a like confession—whether we have been so taught of God as to thus honour Him. We are, naturally, very apt to indulge notions of our own—a kind of natural religion which springs up in the heart—and it takes a great deal of the Lord's teaching to rid us of these notions. If the Lord had left me alone, I should have been to this day among those who want to put something of their own to the work of Christ. They will not have Christ alone; they are too proud to be beggars at mercy's door. But sure I am, God will do with those whom He takes in hand as He did with me—pull them down till they will be glad for Him to do something for them in a way of free mercy. Then, when Christ comes, He has no need to ask if the

sinner will receive Him. He does not have to beg for admission to the poor, wretched sinner's heart. Oh, no; the door flies open; and why? Because He is of all others the Guest that is most welcome; for, as I said this morning, their fear and trouble is, lest He will not be a Guest with them. How foolish people are to talk about such striving to keep Christ out of their heart, when they are only too glad to receive Him! Why, if this chapel was on fire, and Christ could be reached by going through the fire, they would not hesitate to do so!

Perhaps I have a poor, anxious sinner here to-night that longs to be saved, but fears Christ will not receive him. I know your fears may be many and great; but I can testify, for your encouragement, that God has been better to me than all my fears, and what He has done for me He can do for you; and, from my own experience of His love and mercy, I can testify that He is "able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him," and—

"The vilest sinner out of hell
Who lives to feel his need,
Is welcome to a throne of grace,
The Saviour's blood to plead."

Oh, that I could so represent Christ to your faith to-night that you might exclaim with Thomas, "My Lord and my God!" Do you think that those who so desire to receive Him would shut their hearts against Him? Oh, no; neither will they ever attain true rest till they have realized Him by faith as their salvation. It was told good old Simeon that he should not die until he had seen the Lord's Christ, neither did he; but when he embraced the Saviour in his arms, he was ready to die at once, and said, "Now, Lord, lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." He will be found of them that seek Him is a truth declared in the Word of God; and He will be as good as His promise, therefore you shall possess the blessing you seek, poor sinner. And there is another thing—He will never let you rest until you obtain it. "Oh," you may say, "but I feel so faint, I fear I shall never hold out." Ah! and you may not only fear you will never hold out, but that, if you once had any real religion, it is now all gone. But the Lord revives the feelingly dead. His people die many times in their feelings, but He is "the Resurrection and the Life;" and if He only puts His hand in by the hole of the door, their affections begin to move Christward and heavenward at once.

Sometimes we find young Christians are greatly troubled because they cannot trace such a clear beginning of the work of grace in themselves as in some others; and not only young Christians are tried about it, but some who have been in the way

for years. They are but weaklings in faith, and feel to have no firm standing in grace; and one portion in the Word of God often tries some of them greatly, which is this—"Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth"—never come to a settled persuasion about their interest in Christ and the covenant of grace. They do not seem to "go on to perfection." Mind, I am not speaking of perfection in the flesh, but of attaining to what Paul speaks of—"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." These weaklings often wonder what kind of religion theirs can be when, after so many years hoping and fearing, they have not yet attained to any settled persuasion of their calling. But let me ask, Can you be content without it? Can you rest short of the Lord Jesus Christ? Oh, no; these fears will often stir your soul up even to an agony at times. "Oh," you will say, "if my religion should not be the work of God, what will become of me at last?"

Now, some of the Lord's people may be learners thus, even to the end of their days. But, though they may not attain to the establishment they desire, there is one thing they are well established in, which is this—

"If ever my poor soul be saved,
'Tis Christ must be the Way."

They know there is no other way, and they will say, "If Christ is not my Redeemer and my Lord, then I have no hope before God. Take away His blood and merit, and all the foundation of my hope is gone." But this never can be, for that foundation is laid lower than the ruin of the fall for His people's hope; and, low as they may sink, the Lord Jesus Christ is underneath them, and will bring them up, sooner or later, to sing praises to Him who loved and saved them.

Well, since many of the Lord's people are not as well established as others, it is the work of the ministers of Christ to endeavour to encourage them. Thus, in Isaiah xl. it is said, "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." Now, these poor fearful ones, the Lord bids His ministers to encourage. They are to speak to them of the salvation of God, God's gracious covenant design and work, as manifested in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. And what a wonderful design it is! Do you ever think of that great design—that work of mercy? What a mercy for us

when we can turn to that which is the product of infinite wisdom, designed by One that has almighty power to execute and accomplish everything according to the purpose of His eternal will ! And God has designed that all His people shall be brought to know Him, from the least to the greatest ; and, in order that this might be carried out according to the covenant of grace made by God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, the Lord Jesus Christ espoused His people before the world began, as He said, "Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me." And what a wonderful word that is—"That they may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me" ! And then He adds, "Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world"—that is the foundation of our hope. As the Apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, says, "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." They sinned, but God had provided grace for them in Christ ; and thus, in the second Epistle to Timothy, Paul says, "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling : not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." Here is the secret of eternal love, poor sinner. If God has blessed you with mercy, that mercy was laid up for you from before the foundation of the world—it was laid up in Christ for all whom He received as God the Father's gift. And then what did Christ do ? Why, He came from heaven to answer for their sin. He took our nature in order that He might stand before God, the Bearer of their iniquity—

" He took the dying traitor's place,
And suffered in his stead ;
For man (oh, miracle of grace !)
For man the Saviour bled."

This was God's design, that His Son should assume human nature, and make atonement for them with His own blood ; and that, having fulfilled all righteousness in their behalf, the enemies of God might be reconciled to Him by the active and passive obedience of their Surety, who said, "Lo, I come ; in the volume of the Book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God." He came to do His Father's will ; and what was that ? To redeem His people from the curse ; to reconcile them unto God ; and He did it in His own body on the tree by the shedding of His own blood.

Now, if you know anything of the mercy of God, and the precious blood of Christ, cannot you sometimes sing—

“ Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me ” ?

But, although that grace was so surprising at the first, you still will have to learn its heights and depths, its breadth and length, by degrees ; for you can only understand by continual experience that blessed truth, “ By grace are ye saved, through faith : and that not of yourselves ; it is the gift of God ; not of works, lest any man should boast.” And thus, by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, you become established and grounded upon this Rock and Foundation which God has laid in Zion—“ Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever ”—and are enabled to say with the Church, “ Behold, God is my salvation.”

Then comes forth that blessed declaration of confidence, which is produced by the repeated testimonies of the Holy Ghost, “ I will trust, and not be afraid.” David said, “ The Lord is my light and my salvation ; whom shall I fear ? The Lord is the strength of my life ; of whom shall I be afraid ? ” So, when we are assured that this God of salvation is our God, we can say, “ Though a host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear ; though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.”

But perhaps some of you are saying, “ I would I had that faith, but I am tossed up and down by trials, and my heart is full of fears.” I thought, when you were singing the last verse of that blessed hymn, “ Oh, that the Lord might do for some of you what He did through it for me in the year 1864.” When in great adversity, darkness of mind, and so afflicted in body that, to all human appearance, I must soon be in the grave, I went into the cemetery at Leicester ; and, as I looked upon the graves and tombstones, I seemed to read my own doom to die. As I read the inscriptions one after another, rehearsing the lamentation of the husband over the wife, of the wife over the husband, of children over their parents, and of parents over their children, “ Oh,” I thought, “ what havoc death makes ! What a cruel monster he is ! ” Oh, what misery and woe has sin brought into our world ! Mr. Hart might well say—

“ Oh, thou hideous monster, sin !
What a curse hast thou brought in !
All creation groans through thee,
Pregnant cause of misery !

“ Thou hast ruined wretched man
Ever since the world began ;
Thou hast God afflicted too ”—

(in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ)—

“ Nothing less than that would do.’

While I sat reflecting upon these things, I mentally gave myself up for death, feeling sure it must be my lot soon to die; and I did not know how it would be with me then, being at that time spiritually in the dark. I wanted then, as I want now, to die right—to die in peace with God—and I hope I shall. I was a learner in the school of Christ, and I have since felt that it was well the Lord put me into that school of affliction; but my evidences were beclouded, and I could not then, neither can I now, be satisfied with beclouded evidences. I want the witness of the blessed Spirit to make me happy now, and I am sure I shall want it when death comes. Well, in that hour of sore trial, I looked death in the face, and it filled me with dismay. I looked inside, but could find no comfort there; I looked outside, and all was dark and comfortless there. But, while I sat in that sad and disconsolate state, that verse was brought home with such sweet power, and I thought to-night, while you were singing it, “What a mercy these things lose none of their sweetness as they are made over again”—

“If Thou, my Jesus, still be nigh,
Cheerful I live, and joyful die;
Secure, when mortal comforts flee,
To find ten thousand worlds in Thee.”

As I have told you before, that made all straight in a moment; there was not one thing in my lot out of place. I felt sure that I was in the Lord's hand, and that He loved me, so as to work in me and for me all His good will and pleasure. Oh, what a mercy it is to come here, if it is only once in a lifetime! What a clearing up of accounts! What a clear shining of the hope of eternal life as we draw nigh to God in these secret places! It is better felt than expressed. Sinner, do you know these things? If not, do you desire to know them? or do you expect to get to heaven without knowing anything of them?

I am afraid some of you did not think much about the words you were singing whilst you were doing so. I often wonder how some people can, in such a light way, sing the solemn words they do, when they know that they have no experience of them, and are with fleshly glee pursuing the downward road to hell at the same time. Oh, sinner, remember you and death will meet some day; but whether the Lord Jehovah and you will meet then as friends is the question. Whether you will, as one redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, and feeling His mercy in your soul, stand before Him then, is a question you will do well to consider. The Lord so blessed me at the time I have named, and many times since then, too, with the testimony of His love, as to give me a humble confidence that, when heart and

A SERMON.

flesh shall fail, He will be the strength of my heart and my portion for ever. And sure I am that the fulness of the Lord Jesus Christ is enough for any poor afflicted sinner, and He will be the joy of the redeemed in time and through all eternity. What a blessed confidence this is for a child of God to possess ! There is no peradventure here, for those who have the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost know that the Friend of sinners is sufficient for every time of trial, affliction, and tribulation into which they may come.

But what a solemn thing, sinner, to come into the article of death without any lively hope in the soul, without any sure work for eternity ! Oh, look well to your religion, for, as sure as you and I are face to face to-night, God will take away all the religion you may have, except that which comes from Him. And if you have a religion which will take you to heaven, God will surely put it into the fire and consume everything which is not of His Spirit. But His own work, even though it goes into the fire, will come out of it. Instead of being consumed, it will be the brighter ; as Job said, " When He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." These exercises are all to teach them to live by faith upon Christ, from whose fulness they receive a sufficiency of grace, according to His promise (2 Cor. xii. 9) ; and in all their afflictions, fiery trials, and sore temptations, they will prove that blessed promise to be true, " As thy days, so shall thy strength be ;" and, as they find the strength of Christ is made perfect in weakness, they will sing of Him, as did the Church, " The Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song." Thus, as He gives them, by the witness of His Holy Spirit, to realize a well-grounded hope in Him, a portion in that covenant which is " ordered in all things and sure," an interest in the blood of Christ and in His perfect work, they feel to have a firm foundation under the feet of their faith. And what can they desire more than God has given them in Christ ? The Gospel sets forth a suitable and free salvation, as designed by God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost in the covenant of grace. And what does all this testify ? Why, that God thought of us in mercy, provided for us in mercy, and went before us in the matter of salvation before we knew anything of His goings or doings in our behalf. It was in His own eternal mind, and is the outcome of His loving heart toward us.

And now let me come a little closer. Can you say of Jehovah-Jesus, " He also is become my salvation " ? Can you remember when, in your unregenerate state, you were hastening the downward road to hell ? And, if God had left you to your just desert, there you would have ended your course, for His Word declares, " The end of these things is death ;" " The wages of sin

is death : " and such would have been the portion of many of us here to-night, who have a hope in His mercy, if God had left us to ourselves. But what has He done for us ? Why, the day came when He got before us, stopped us in our course, opened our blind eyes, sent trouble into our hearts, and made us to know that we were sinners, deserving wrath and hell. But, blessed be God, He not only came near to show us our sin, but He also made us to bow at the throne of His grace with the cry of the poor publican, " God be merciful to me a sinner ! " and ere long He gave us to know that it was His good will and pleasure to deliver us, and that the Lord Jesus Christ was sent for this very purpose, for He says, " The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach glad tidings to the meek ; He hath sent Me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. " What wisdom shines in God's great design of mercy ! How sweet have Newton's words been to me—

" Thou didst once a wretch behold,
In rebellion blindly bold ;
Scorn Thy grace, Thy power defy ;
That poor rebel, Lord, was I.

" Once a sinner, near despair,
Sought Thy mercy-seat by prayer ;
Mercy heard and set him free ;
Lord, that mercy came to me."

That is just how God lets His mercy down into the heart of the seeking sinner, according to their cry, and they feel it comes from Him, because it is according to His own promise, " Call upon Me in the day of trouble ; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me ; " and, when that mercy reaches their heart, they begin to sing of " sovereign grace o'er sin abounding."

Now, this knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ was a part of the great design of the covenant of grace : " They shall all know Me, from the least to the greatest. " And, when you receive Him into your heart, do you not receive Him of God ? and have you not said, " Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift " ? God first put you into His Son's heart, and then put His Son into your heart, and thus He becomes your salvation. And He not only has put them into the heart of Christ, and Christ into their hearts, but He raises them up to sit together in heavenly places with Christ, that they may become one manifestedly.

Now, is not this wonderful grace ? And so the Church says, in the latter part of my text, " He also is become

my salvation." Not only has God said that Christ should be the salvation of His people—not only that His name should be called Emmanuel, "God with us"—but those who receive Him by faith can say, "The blessed Spirit has revealed Christ in my heart, and given me a felt interest in His precious blood and righteousness. Yea, He has given Himself to me. 'Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation;' therefore I am no longer my own, but the Lord's." To all such we would say, you have indeed obtained mercy, "wherefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are His."

"Oh," says some poor trembling sinner, "how is it with me? Am I interested in this great design, this Gospel of mercy?" Well, I will tell you how the Lord made it plain to me, and may the Lord give you the like favour. I was one day walking along the road in much exercise of mind, fearing I should never have the secret of salvation made satisfactorily clear, so as to say, "My Beloved is mine, and I am His," when the Lord dropped that word into my heart, "Ye are complete in Him," and it was as though the Lord the Spirit put me into Christ, and Christ into my heart, so that I could look up and believe that Christ was mine and I was His, and I could then, as I often can now, quote those lines of Newton's as my own experience—

"But since my Saviour stands between,
In garments dyed in blood,
'Tis He instead of me is seen,
When I approach to God.

"Thus, though a sinner, I am safe;
He pleads before the throne
His life and death on my behalf,
And calls my sins His own.

"What wondrous love, what mysteries,
In this appointment shine!
My breaches of the law are His,
And His obedience mine."

And the experience by faith of that blessed transfer gave me liberty to enter into Christ as my Hiding-place, and Christ was thus made unto me "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." Here is the blessed mystery of grace and peace, and God makes it known to seeking sinners. Oh, that you may know what the Church expresses in these words, "He also is become *my* salvation"!

The Lord add His blessing, and He shall bear the glory.

IS POPERY ADVANCING?

CARDINAL MANNING should know, and he says that "the priests of Rome find controversy superfluous, since the work of perversion is done ready to their hand by the disciples of Dr. Pusey." He also says, "The multitudes worshipping in churches which might almost be taken for ours is very great. They use our devotions, our books, our pictures and piety." Thousands who would not for the world set foot in a Romish church, read descriptions of High Masses, and requiems, and consecrations, processions, pilgrimages, and canonizations. The air is full of it. Call it what you will—a plague of flies, of frogs, or of boils. Referring to this movement, the *Weekly Register*, in a leading article, says, "It no doubt will progress until the day when High Mass will once more be sung in Westminster Abbey."

Again, Cardinal Manning—and remember he is as active as he is arrogant—has declared that "there shall be no peace for England until the Coronation Oath and the Act of Settlement, which secures a Protestant succession to the throne, shall be rooted out."

It is high time we were aroused out of our lethargy, and began seriously to think of our prospects, and of our children's prospects, considering what Popery is in reality, namely, a conspiracy against the human race spiritually, morally, and civilly. It is the greatest enemy to God and godliness, and its aim is nothing less than universal dominion over the bodies, souls, and consciences of men.

And to secure all this, strenuous efforts are being made and powerful agencies employed. Missions are organized for the several districts into which the country is divided. Money is freely subscribed, families are located to act as call-birds, churches are built, schools for the young established, and various (professedly) charitable means adopted to influence those who may be beguiled thereby. And what are we, as truth-loving Protestants, doing in the face of all this? Oh, it is to be feared that the means God has given us, and promised to bless, are not only greatly neglected, but lightly esteemed by many who say, "The Lord will save His own." This is a truth we know, but He is pleased to use means for the accomplishment of His purposes; and our prayer is, that His people may be more alive to the necessity of diligence as well as faith in these matters. How many are there to be found who will spend a shilling per month in the circulation of that truth which exposes the evils of Popery? Fellow-Christians, let us labour as well as pray against the foe.

THE PATH OF EXERCISE.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I hope you will not think me unmindful of you, or that I am indifferent to your correspondence, as I have not written in reply to your kind letter, dated as far back as October. I know the adversary is ready to suggest many things that may give him an advantage over us, and our poor nature is so susceptible of the many evils and errors he tempts us with; and, if not aware, we are sometimes led some distance into the snare before we find out our companion.

I think I have found it profitable, because very humbling, to reflect on much past folly. What an easy prey I have often been—what a light, ignorant fool! As dear Warburton used to say, “a football for him.” And how amazing that grace appears that has caused me to escape! What a wonder I am to myself at times! But for grace, what had I been? Hart says—

“Oh, what a fool have I been made!

Or rather, made myself!

That mariner's mad part I played

That sees, yet strikes the shelf.”

I have not ability to describe what I see and feel at times. Much of what I mean is wrapped up in those portions—“And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?” and, “I am escaped with the skin of my teeth;” also Psalm cxxiv.

The Lord will have us know that it is grace indeed which saves, and His power that keeps us; and He lets us see, by temptations and trials, what else would escape our sight. As Hart says—

“How very foul and dim are we!

And God how pure and bright!”

Then His work of saving us appears marvellous, and mercy shines through it all; and, contrasted with our unrighteousness, if I may so say, it appears awfully glorious.

I seem to desire much more than before to be assured that what I have is grace indeed; to make sure my calling and election, as Peter speaks; to be ready for the change which will soon come, when present things, some of which we so dote upon, will be sorry shadows, and only mock us. How merciful the Lord is to our unrighteousnesses! “He has chosen base things.” How mortifying and painful to be so *indeed*, though easy in word; yet what mercy appears, at times, in knowing and feeling our real state! What a necessity it lays upon us! How hungry we become for the living Word! How we sigh and cry for

spiritual comfort, and feel a heart in such prayers as David's—
 "God be merciful unto us, and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us"!

It is a great mercy to feel our need of mercy and grace to increase with our years. It shows our Teacher is divine, and means to do us good in our latter end. He empties whom He fills, and pulls down whom He designs to build up, and He destroys what we would preserve. His methods and means are often quite contrary to our expectation or desire, and self starts its objections, and proud flesh lets out its rebellion: "This seems all wrong. 'All these things are against me;'" and, though we have had so many times to lament and confess afterwards our base unbelief and foolish fears, yet we still are fools and base, and God is faithful still, and His compassions fail not. Oh, mystery of love! What a mighty, mysterious Saviour! He is truly precious to believers. Oh, for grace to love Him more, and stay upon Him always! Oh, could I cease from self; but its black face will show itself in everything, and never so black or base as when it would be something. Satan is worst when he assumes the angel, and self is worst when he wears a white face; and if we play the fool, it is when we dress him up, and set him off for admiration.

March 1st.—I intended to send this before I left home, but was hurried away at last; and I find my little calls enough for my littleness. Berridge fits me—

"Oh, Lord, with shame I do confess
 My universal emptiness,
 My poverty and pride," &c.

I intended much more, but, as Rosa is sending, I send this to make weight. With Christian love and affection,

Yours truly,
 C. MOUNTFORT.

Walsall, February 16th, 1869.

JEHOVAH.

IT expresses self-existence and unchangeableness. It is the incommunicable name of God, which the Jews superstitiously refused to pronounce, always substituting in their reading the word "Adonai," meaning Lord. Hence it is represented in our English version by the word "Lord," printed in capital letters. *Jah*—properly an abbreviation of the name "Jehovah"—is used principally in the Psalms. It constitutes the concluding syllable of "hallelujah"—praise Jehovah. God gave to Moses His peculiar name, "I AM THAT I AM," bearing the same fundamental signification as Jehovah.

NIGHT THOUGHTS BY A WATCHMAN.

PERFECT DAY.

"THERE shall be no night there." Have you noticed that this precious and inspiring testimony is repeated within the compass of a few verses? (Rev. xxi. 25 ; xxii. 5)—first, to show that there is no cause for alarm. The gates of the heavenly city are open continually, for there is no night there—no need for the gates to be closed to prevent the entrance of thieves and robbers. There is no foe in that blessed country, and therefore no fear. And, second, to teach us that the immediate presence of God and the Lamb is the soul's perfect bliss. The light of God's favour is heaven; and this He will never withdraw in any degree. The contrast of this is perfect night, where Christ, the true Light, has never shone. There, there is total spiritual darkness, and endless cause for fear. But the Day-spring from on high hath visited us. We who have had a glimpse of His face have been warmed by His rays, and brought forth some fruit to His honour. Yet, while this is the region of the shadow of death, of day and night, of cold and heat, of summer and winter, there will be, from time to time, the morning without the sun. God will bring a cloud over the earth. However, it will never again be total darkness with those who have been once truly enlightened, for He has said, "When I bring a cloud over the earth, the bow shall be seen in the cloud" (Gen. ix. 14). The bow is to be seen in the cloud; but we do not see it *while we are in the cloud*. It is when it has partly or wholly passed over us that we behold it. The light must be on the cloud, and we ourselves on the light side of the cloud, in order for us to see the bow. Here it must be variation continually, in order to prove God's faithfulness. The cloud and the bow, the darkness and light mingling, produce the token of His covenant, and we are thus reminded of His faithful promise. Yes, the trial of faith and the confirmation of faith are joined. There is usually a dark cloud near when we see a bright bow; and when He brings a cloud around, be sure you look for the bow.

The disciples feared as they entered the cloud, although the Lord was with them. Oh, the entering into a dark cloud, even in forethought only! How chilling to our poor fearful hearts! Nevertheless, painful as it was to Peter, James, and John to enter the cloud, it was here they saw the true light; and here it was ordained they should hear the voice which came to their Master from the excellent glory, confirming His Sonship and removing their fears. Was it not in this very place, where they feared as they entered the cloud, that they said, "Master,

it is good for us to be here" ? Has it not oft been so, that the place of fear has been the place of joy and strength ? They had never seen the Lord as they saw Him then. Surely, they could then say, "The true Light now shineth." However, this was but a visitation of the Sun of Righteousness. They had not entered into the perfect day as they now are realizing it with Him in His glory.

Here it ever will be, as it ever has been, light in the darkness, the bow in the cloud ; but when we get to that city of God, there will be no darkness nor fear. Our ignorance will be done away and our fears lost. There the bow ever remains bright, without the attendant cloud causing fear and darkness. The bow is still to be seen in the higher and better world, but there it is round about the throne continually—not as here seen in the clouds of earth for a few moments at a time. The brightest bow ever seen in these regions rapidly passes away. There the Angel, *i.e.*, Messenger, of the eternal, unbroken covenant appears with the cloud and the bow, but not in darkness. The darkness is quite removed, and His face is seen "as it were the sun" (Rev. x. 1 ; iv. 3).

"No cloud those blissful regions know,
For ever bright and fair ;
For sin, the source of mortal woe,
Can never enter there."

Two things are needful to secure for ever this perfect day, this state of unvarying brightness and bliss. There must be perfection and perpetuity. Here, however bright the day, as soon as the sun has arrived at noon he hastens on, and soon hides his glory in the shades of night ; but there, where the day is perfect, there will be no fear of an approaching night. What a wondrous surprise it would be were the sun to stand still at noon for one year only ! The sun is, when at its height, but one of the creatures of God, ordained of Him to serve man ; but in the eternal world of joy the Lord God giveth them light, and will never withdraw His brightness. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the *perfect day*" (Prov. iv. 18).

Now, in this state, we could not endure continued day. Change is best for us. Even the clouds which enwrap and chill us are necessary ; but then our condition will be so improved, so perfect, that full and perpetual day will be quite congenial to, and appreciated by, the spirits of the just. There being no darkness nor change around, neither fearfulness nor weariness within, eternal day will not, cannot, oppress us. If it were possible to grow faint, or to entertain a fear, the perfection would be marred. A perfect place and a perfect state make heaven.

Is this the heaven you desire ? Is sin and a sinful nature that which you wish to be freed from ? and the holy presence of God and the Lamb, the place you hope to enter into when death calls you away from earth ? Have you ever been enabled to say in spirit—

“ Weary of earth, myself, and sin,
Dear Jesus, set me free,
And to Thy glory take me in,
For there I long to be.

“ Burdened, dejected, and oppressed,
Ah ! whither shall I flee
But to Thy arms for peace and rest ?
For there I long to be.

“ Empty, polluted, dark, and vain
Is all this world to me ;
May I the better world obtain,
For there I long to be ” ?

If this is at times the language of your heart, then surely you are being prepared for that better world where there is no night. Could you not, even now, when you see the bow in the cloud, the token of covenant favour, cheerfully part with all that which heaven excludes ? Heaven’s citizens are glad that “ there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie.” Perfect holiness and understanding is the devout wish and expectation of the saints, and in this they will not be disappointed. How ignorant and far from holiness is the most advanced Christian while in this world ! What will it be to know as we are known, and bear the full image of Christ ?

And oh, what will it be to be shut out from this brightness and glory, and to be shut up in the regions of darkness and death, where Christ will never be seen nor God known only as a righteous Judge ?

Reader, is holiness and Christ your desire now ? Do you delight in the service of God, and love His people ? or do you prefer the company and deeds of the wicked ? If the ungodly are your companions, and unholiness your delight, “ be sure your sins will find you out.” God’s eye and hand will never let you go. They will follow you into every hole and corner till you appear before His glorious throne, where you will have no excuse for your conduct ; and then will begin your awful night. As you have loved darkness, so will you inherit for ever the sad, sad choice of your heart. What are the thoughts of your heart ? What hope have you for the future ? Every soul will enter, by death, either the abode of perfect bliss or that of untold woe.

Perfect day, or the blackness of darkness, awaits each of us. "How wilt *thou* do in the swellings of Jordan?" "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness." His evil character and conduct will cleave to him for ever. May the Lord enable you to "flee from the wrath to come." Remember Christ died, "the Just for the unjust," to bring us to God. There is no other way whereby you can escape the condemnation of God, which is the just reward for your sin. If you live and die an unbeliever, void of an interest in this great truth of the death of Christ for the sins of His people, you must perish in your sin. "But the righteous hath hope in his death." Christ cheers him in his last moments on earth, and meets him first in heaven with—

"Come in, thou blessed, sit by Me ;
With My own life I ransomed thee ;
Come in, thou happy spirit, come ;
Thou now shalt dwell with Me at home ;
Ye blissful mansions, make him room,
For he must stay for ever."

W. B.

GOOD COUNSEL TO MINISTERS.

DISPENSERS of the Gospel ought to use holy prudence in dealing with those whom they are to instruct. Next to our Lord Himself, Paul is the most admirable example of holy wisdom, tenderness, compassion, and zeal, to all ministers of the Gospel. This the instructions given to his two beloved sons, Timothy and Titus, sufficiently testify. His care, pains, travail, and watchfulness, his patience, love, compassion, and zeal, who can declare or worthily admire? By these means he removed, or at least rendered ineffectual, the great prejudice in favour of Judaism; kept up in his hearers a becoming caution against the insinuations of seducers and false apostles; raised their attention, prepared them every way for instructions, and won them over to Christ. Blessed Jesus! what cause have we to mourn, when we consider the pride, covetousness, ambition, negligence, self-seeking, and contempt of Thy flock, which are found amongst many of them who take upon themselves to be dispensers of Thy Word, whereby the souls of men are filled with offences against Thy holy ways!

OWEN.

I SEE and acknowledge the harbour which we must put into in all our ill weather. It is to Thee, O God, that we must pour out our hearts, which only can make our bitter waters sweet.—*Bishop Hall.*

OBITUARY OF SAMSON FUNNELL.

"THESE all died in faith" is the testimony of the Holy Ghost in the Word of truth concerning those who, in former days, left the Church militant for the temple above; and vast multitudes since then have passed to that upper world of bliss, of whom the same may be said. Among the latter we may, most of us, reckon some intimate and dear friends, whose conversation, fellowship, and love we highly valued on account of the godly savour of their spirit, and the blessed communion we enjoyed with them in the things of God. They now "rest from their labours," and have done with the fight of afflictions, cares, and sorrows of this mortal life.

Happy souls! They now see His face and serve Him who was all their hope and stay while in this vale of tears. We do not grudge them their happiness, but we miss their fellowship; and their memory being fragrant in our hearts, we sigh over the gaps made by death in the circle of our spiritual friends. Some of those whom we thus miss were not only honourable, but useful members in the Church, where their presence and help seemed to us to be still desirable; but their Lord, and ours, has been pleased to call them up higher, where they now dwell for ever near Him. May their removal from our midst below have the effect of stirring up our minds to greater diligence in the things which concern our eternal well-being, and to more active service in the Lord's cause.

Our late beloved friend, the subject of the present notice, was one who had a warm place in the hearts of many of the godly who were favoured to know him. He stood well in the Church at Ebenezer, Hastings, for a goodly number of years; prayed for and sought her peace; was anxious to promote her prosperity; and, as an active servant in her cause, he used the office of deacon well for nearly twenty-five years. We can say but little of his early days, as no connected account of the beginning of the Lord's work in his soul can, as we had hoped it would, be obtained; therefore, having waited longer than we should otherwise have done, hoping to gather some additional matter, and finding that what we wanted is not forthcoming, we have resolved to give a brief statement respecting his Christian character and conversation, as he was known to us and other friends, who loved him as a well-taught, deeply-exercised, and spiritually-minded Christian.

He was born at Lewes, March 8th, 1820, of Christian parents, and was brought up to regularly attend with them the ministry of the late Mr. Vinall, senr. At about the age of fifteen, he left home to enter upon a situation at Battle. While living there,

when about seventeen years of age, he, in company with an elder brother and another friend, went to look over the Abbey, but his brother noticed that he was but little interested in the things which were to be seen there, and, after they returned to their lodgings, he was missed for some time, and upon his brother going to his bed-room, he found him there with the Bible before him, in tears, and quite absorbed in what he was reading. He afterwards told his brother he felt the Lord to be so precious that he was lost to all about him. A now aged friend of his, who became very intimately acquainted with him soon after the circumstance we have just named occurred, remembers his saying how precious the fifty-third of Isaiah was made to him, and indeed his conversation so savoured of the grace and love of Christ that the friend, who was then in a low and languishing state of soul, felt it to be a keen reproof to him in his then cold-hearted state.

At this time our friend had removed to Hastings, and was attending the ministry of the late David Fenner, which was made very useful to him, and by which means he became united in spirit to the minister, and found a home among the people with whom he was connected till the time of his death. He was baptized by Mr. Fenner, and united with the Church, September, 1842, and was called to fill the office of deacon, November, 1857.

Our late dear friend was truly called to walk in the path of affliction, tribulation, and manifold trials, and of him it could be said of a truth—

“The Christian man is seldom long at ease;
When one trouble's gone, another doth him seize.”

But these afflictions, bodily, relative, and circumstantial, were the means of so exercising him in soul as to not only make him a meet companion for the poor and afflicted of the Lord's family, but they also brought out very prominently that meekness of spirit, tenderness of heart, and godly humility which only are the fruit of afflictions sanctified by the grace of Him who is able to make all things work together for good.

For many years he was subject to heavy and repeated attacks of rheumatic fever, the last of which, some seven years before his death, told very seriously upon his already weakened frame. He was twice married. His first wife, a very godly woman, died in 1861,* leaving three children, one being only a few weeks old.

During the summer of 1870 scarlet fever entered the family, and he was laid low with a very severe attack, and while he was

* See “Letter by a Lately Departed Friend,” in the SOWER for April last, page 113.

prostrate, three dear children, by his second marriage, were speedily carried off by its fatal effects. In the midst of these distressing circumstances, the mother gave birth to her third son, so that she, our friend, and their afflicted children, were all separated from each other; and, when the children were buried (two of them being taken to the grave at the same time), the afflicted parents had not the mournful satisfaction even of seeing them removed to their last resting-place, the heart-saddening sound only of what was taking place coming painfully to their ears.

It was invariably noticed by friends who visited him in the different afflictions he endured, that he was not only calm and cheerful, but also so sweetly helped and strengthened by the Lord that resignation and peace of mind were very strikingly displayed in his spirit and conversation. In some of his most severe trials, the Holy Spirit so applied the promises to his heart that he could say, "Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." This was blessedly so at the time of the death of his first wife, when that helpful promise was given him as he entered the dark cloud of trouble, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee;" and so fully did he realize the truth of this that his whole soul seemed to be taken up with the contemplation of divine faithfulness and love, and he was frequently known, after the day's work, to sit up till between one and two o'clock in the morning reading the Word, and, like Jeremiah, eating it, and proving it to be the joy and rejoicing of his heart.

Then, again, in 1870, when that heavy wave of affliction passed over him, he found the everlasting arms to be underneath, and the consolations of Christ to be so abundant that he could adopt the language of the poet and say, "Be still, my heart, these anxious cares," &c.; and it really proved to be a time of help, wherein he was able to say, as expressed in another hymn which he also found to be specially appropriate—

"Here I raise my Ebenezer,
Hither by Thy help I'm come."

This special display of the Lord's loving-kindness was so marked that the name of the child born, as previously stated, during that time was called "Ebenezer."

In 1875, the severe attack of rheumatic fever, which we have before said told so seriously upon his already weakened frame, laid him prostrate for a considerable time; and, during this affliction, another child was taken away by death. But here again he found the Lord to be his stay and stronghold, and, although his bodily sufferings were very great, and his being laid

aside from business gave cause for much anxiety of mind, yet the peaceful calm in his soul was such that no murmuring word was heard to escape his lips, and many friends who called at times to see him said it was not like going into the room of one so afflicted and in such trial. Even when not joyous in spirit, his conversation savoured much of faith and hope in God, to whose will he ever desired to feel resigned. We frequently visited him in this affliction, and often found it refreshing to our spirit to converse with him on the things of God, and to witness the sweet calm he enjoyed as lying passive in the hands of Him who had given him an assurance of His Fatherly affection and goodness in speaking to his heart those precious words, on which he so frequently delighted to dwell, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him; for He knoweth our frame, and remembereth that we are dust;" and thus he found in his afflictions that the Lord so tempered them with mercy and loving-kindness as to make them truly blessings in disguise. He often remarked to us that he was well assured the Lord knew what weights were needful for him to carry, in order to keep him low at His feet; and, in the service of the sanctuary, he used, when taking a part, frequently to give out that hymn—

" Poor and afflicted, Lord, are Thine ;
Among the great unfit to shine," &c.

He knew much of the inward conflict between flesh and spirit, grace and sin, faith and unbelief, and would frequently quote with feeling those words of Mr. Hart's—

" Unbelief's that sin accursed,
Abhorred by God above ;
Because of all opposers worst,
It fights against His love."

He was often brought low by these inward foes, but he knew the Lord Jesus to be a tower of strength and a refuge in time of trouble. He loved to hear Him set forth as the Lamb slain, the righteousness and hope of His people; and, when favoured to hear the Gospel under the sweet anointing of the Holy Ghost, his face would beam with gladness, while often tears of compunction and joy would run from his eyes. He was most truly a lover of Zion, one who prayed for and sought her peace and prosperity, which loving and consistent course he was by grace enabled constantly to maintain to the end of his race. In his constant attendance upon the means of grace, his attachment to the truth, the house, and people of God, he set an example which might cause many lukewarm or worldly-minded professors to feel ashamed.

His presence in the sanctuary was most welcome to his friends, many of whom have frequently experienced great encouragement and help when he has publicly approached the throne of grace, the anticipation of which exercise was often a severe trial to him, as he once acknowledged in a letter to a friend who was exercised about the same thing. He says, "I can truly sympathize with you in this matter, for no one can understand the trial it is, save those who are thus exercised. I have many times begged of the Lord that He would raise up some one to take my place, on account of feeling so ignorant, blind, stupid, and carnal; and yet with no better feelings than these I have often been called upon to speak in prayer before the Lord's people. Nevertheless, it is sweet to pour out our hearts in prayer before the Lord when He graciously bestows the spirit and power of prayer to enable us to ask for those things which are in accordance with His mind and will."

We had hoped that one so acceptable and useful in the cause of Christ would have been preserved to us for some years to come, but our God, who cannot err, determined otherwise, and to us most unexpectedly, after a few days' illness, called him to Himself. Our dear friend was with us in the house of God the 29th of January last, but complained of having a cold, which afterwards so increased upon him that, on Tuesday morning, after going down to business for only a few minutes, he had to return to his room, and the general symptoms became so unfavourable that his dear wife and several friends felt fearful lest rheumatic fever should again ensue. But when the doctor saw him, he at once pronounced it to be a case of congestion of the lungs, with other complicated forms of disease, but quite hoped he would soon recover. We called in to see him, and found him, as usual, very cheerful, but not very expectant of a quick return to health. We read the fourteenth chapter of St. John's Gospel, and petitioned the Lord on his behalf. He quite enjoyed the reading and prayer, and spoke of the blessed things the chapter contains, as reminding him of former times and the testimonies he had received of the Lord, and expressed a strong desire that the affliction might be sanctified to him, so as to yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness, and that he might be blessed with grace to feel thoroughly resigned to the will and way of the Lord.

When we again visited him (on February 7th), his cough was very trying and his breathing heavy, but he still bore the same calm and resigned demeanour; and when we conveyed a substantial token of kindness from a friend who highly esteemed him as a Christian, he seemed quite overcome, and spoke sweetly of the Lord's goodness and the kindness shown by friends. He said the Lord had given him that promise, "In blessing I will bless

thee," and he felt a strong desire to leave himself and all that concerned him in His hands. He had then been in bed four days, and the doctor still hoped he would soon be restored; but when we called on the 9th, he was much lower and afflicted with drowsiness. Still he conversed with cheerfulness, and said, as we left the room, "I know that even now, if it is His will, the Lord can restore me, but I desire to be resigned." We, however, were so reluctant to part with him that we could not bear to think of his being taken from us, though, at the same time, we and others felt a peculiar heaviness upon our spirit when trying to plead in private with the Lord for his recovery.

When we found on Friday morning, the 10th, that he was no better, but the weakness and drowsiness had increased, anxious fears were aroused as to the result. We saw him for a few minutes, and found him in the same peaceful frame of mind, but almost unable to converse. He spoke to us very affectionately as we were leaving the room, and said, "Give my Christian love to Mrs. H——." On returning about two hours afterwards, we, to our great surprise, found him in the last conflict. He having been just previously, at his request, moved out of bed, was suddenly seized with syncope; and, as he was being put into the bed again, he was heard to say, "Dear Lord, I fall before Thee;" and, as we entered the room, we heard him repeat several times, "The precious blood of Christ." We said, "You have many times spoken of that precious blood, and have found it to be, as Mr. HART says, 'invaluable blood;'" and he replied, "Yes, it is 'invaluable blood.' Oh, that precious blood of Christ! It was shed for me;" and in a few moments he had breathed his last, and entered into His presence, where there is fulness of joy, and where sorrow and sighing are for ever done away.

On the day of his burial, a numerous assembly of friends gathered round his grave with loving and mournful interest, to view his mortal remains laid in the dust until the morning of the resurrection, when the body will be raised in incorruption, fashioned like unto the glorious body of Him who redeemed him from all evil, and delivered him out of all his afflictions.

His dear widow, who for the last few years has been in a very weakly state, and five children, also three by the first marriage, survive to mourn their loss. May He who is the Husband of the widow still be the strength and stay of her who is thus bereaved, and, as the Father of the fatherless, be the God and the Guide of the children for whom he offered up so many prayers.

THERE is no condition so low but may have hope, and none so high as to be out of the reach of fear.

LETTERS FOR THE YOUNG.—No. XXXI.

DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,—You will think me a long time before I answer your kind note, but I know you will excuse me when I tell you I have been so busy that I have had no opportunity of doing so before. You are not forgotten by me, for I often have you in my thoughts when busily engaged at work.

I am glad to hear that you are anxious to learn about Jesus Christ and His great love to sinners. You could not wish to know anything that would do you as much good as a right and personal knowledge of the blessed Redeemer, and I trust that you may, by the Spirit's teaching, have this knowledge imparted unto you. This, my dear, alone can make you truly happy in time and throughout eternity. You have asked me to tell you about these things, and I will gladly comply with your wish, as far as I am able, for it is indeed, at times, a most delightful subject either to talk or write about. But, when the most has been said, how little we know of the love of God, and you know the Bible tells us, "God is love;" but it also says that He is "a just God and a Saviour," and that He "will by no means clear the guilty." These are very solemn words, dear, for we are all guilty, for "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." And then you have often read that passage, "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life;" and this is the only way that God will save sinners—through Jesus Christ. You will recollect that the Lord Jesus said to the Pharisees, "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Christ is the Great Physician who alone is able to heal the poor sinner who is sick of his sins, and whose heart is broken because he feels he has sinned against God, and can do nothing to make atonement for his soul.

My dear girl, the Lord Jesus delights to bless and heal such poor souls as these, for He has said that He "healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." What great compassion, is it not? But His heart is full of love and tender mercy to all who mourn with godly sorrow for sin, and look to Him for pardon and peace. He says, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out;" and if you, my dear girl, are truly sensible of your lost condition, and feel sin to be a burden to you, do not fear that Jesus will not hear your prayers; but try to spread your state continually before Him in prayer, and I am sure that He will listen to you. And then, if you cannot find words, the Lord looketh at the heart, and He knoweth all your desire. Remember how Jesus noticed the prayer of the poor publican in the temple, when he cried feelingly, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" Many persons

who can make long prayers God does not regard at all, that they draw near to Him with their lips, while their hearts | four from Him; and of those it is said, "their sacrifice is an abomination; but unto the Lord." How solemn that is! But "God is a Spirit," and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth; and the Holy Spirit teaches all the Lord's people how to pray, and what to pray for. They cannot teach themselves aright; and, if you have your school hymn-book with you, read hymns 247 and 278, with others near to them, and perhaps they may suit your case.

But I must bring my letter to a close. I hope you are improving in health, and I shall be pleased to hear from you again. I pray that the Holy Spirit may reveal Christ, the hope of eternal glory, to you and in you. Do not forget that the Holy Spirit alone can teach you these things to profit.

Accept my warmest love and best wishes, and believe me to remain,
Your affectionate friend and teacher,
Coventry, June, 1867. M. B.

A CONCLUDING ADDRESS TO OUR READERS.

DEAR FRIENDS,—In concluding our labours for another year, we desire to record with thankfulness the goodness of the Lord, who has not only helped us, amidst much weakness of body and nervous tension, to prosecute our labours, but also granted us some cheering marks of His divine favour, while we have also been greatly encouraged by the kind testimonies, sympathies, and help of numerous friends, who not only read the SOWER, but, deriving spiritual profit therefrom, and believing it to be well adapted to promote the spiritual benefit of others, they seek, by spreading it abroad, to scatter those truths which are clearly revealed in the everlasting Gospel, and which are able to make the sinner "wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." We earnestly entreat all our readers to put forth fresh efforts in this good work; and we hope, with the Lord's help, to fill the SOWER with such matter as shall make it a weighty witness against Popery, infidelity, and that enslaving, soul-destroying, and God-dishonouring system of "free-thought," which so abounds in many professedly religious publications, and which is taught from so many pulpits, by men who are considered to be authorities in the denominations to which they belong.

We fear that this spirit—so adverse to the settled principle and sound doctrine of the Gospel of Christ—is spreading even more rapidly than Popery, and is more likely to become the