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THE
GOSPEL STANDARD.

JANUARY, 1869.

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

ADDRESS TO OUR SPIRITUAL READERS.

How wide, how unspeakably wide, is the difference, how great, how infinitely great, is the contrast, between the spiritually-minded child of God, whose portion is above and whose heart and affections are in heaven, and the carnally-minded worldling, whose portion is below and whose heart and affections are on earth! This difference between them, both in its cause and in its effects, in its source and in its streams, is from God himself; and that is the reason why it is so wide, deep, and permanent. Its foundation was laid in his own fixed purposes, in the eternal good pleasure of his will, before the foundation of the world, was brought to light in time in the first promise given after the fall, and has had its manifestation and fulfilment in a greater or less degree in the experience and life of every believer from that day to this. Innumerable are the inhabitants of the earth; almost equally numerous and diversified are the classes, ranks, pursuits, and occupations of society; but amidst these crowds of men and this diversity of station, there are really two and but two different families, two and but two distinct seeds, who are as separate now in the mind and sight of God as ever they will be when time shall be swallowed up in eternity. It is true that this separation of the church from the world, of the clean from the unclean, of the living from the dead, of the children of God from the children of the wicked one, is often not so distinct and clear to our eyes as it is in the eyes of God, and as it should be in accordance with his revealed will. And yet we may say that to reveal this eternal line of separation as a vital truth in doctrine, to bring it forth in its various fruits and consequences into living experience in the heart, and to produce as well as enforce it in all godly practice in the life and conduct of all the saints of God, is the grand aim and object of that Holy Spirit under whose divine inspiration the Scriptures were written, and by whose gracious operations and influences they are made effectual unto our salvation and sanctification. And contrariwise to confuse, to obliterate, to nullify, and, if possible, to dig down and remove this divine barrier between the church and the world, either in doctrine by the

denial of truth and the promulgation of error, or in experience by slighting, despising, or misrepresenting the work of God upon the soul, or in practice by setting aside the precepts of God and substituting the ordinances of man, has ever been the aim and object of Satan and his agents from the day on which the first stone of this eternal wall of separation was manifestly laid on earth. Cain and Abel, the first murderer and the first martyr, stand in the very front of our Bibles as permanent types and representatives of these two seeds, and if now less prominent than they have been at various stages of the world's long history, they are nevertheless in the mind of God no less distinct. No language can be more plain or express than the testimony of God to this point in his holy word. Hence we learn that it was he himself who put the distinction between the two seeds; and the separation and enmity which were then thus laid and made between them have both subsisted in all the strength of their original constitution from that day to this, and will subsist until the end of time.

It is natural enough, and perfectly consistent with the words of the first promise, that this doctrine should provoke the enmity of the carnal mind; but to those who know and understand the Scriptures by divine teaching, to those who have received the love of the truth that they may be saved thereby, it is a point beyond all dispute or question, not only from the testimony of the word, but from the witness of the Spirit in their own consciences, and the verdict of their own long and well-tryed experience, both in its pains and in its pleasures. They know that it was the special grace of God which quickened them when dead in sin, and that it was his word spoken to their hearts with a divine power which called them out of the world that they might be a peculiar and separate people. To this point tended all their convictions, anxiety, and distress of mind on account of sin; for by this work of the Lord on their consciences, the bands which held them fast to sin and to the world that lieth in wickedness were cut asunder, and with them it was, "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed." (Gen. xix. 17.) As, then, by this divine work on their conscience, and as in obedience to this call they came out of the world and became separate from it, they found him faithful to his promise, that he would receive them and manifest them as the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. Under the shinings in of his blessed presence when his love was first shed abroad in their heart, they knew what it was to set their affections on things above, where Jesus sits at the right hand of God. The world was dead to them and they to the world; the power and dominion of sin were broken; lust and covetousness were under their feet, and they could run the way of God's commandments with an enlarged heart.

But as they are still in the body; as they are encompassed by

many, and some of them new and peculiar temptations; as snares of various kinds, and many of them very suitable and attractive to the flesh, are ever spread for their feet, they did not for the most part continue long in this blessed state. Sin began gradually to revive, being only stunned and not killed, and grace in proportion to decline. They had not yet learnt how to fight the great battle, and knew little of either the necessity or the use of spiritual weapons and of putting on the whole armour of God. The craft and strength of Satan as an angel of light, and the weakness of the flesh against the subtlety and power of his temptations, were much hidden from them. Need we wonder, then, that they were soon drawn aside and went, if not outwardly, yet inwardly astray; left their first love, and with it lost the spirituality of their mind, the tenderness of their conscience, and the warmth and fervour of their gracious affections? Now, what was the consequence of this declension? That they gradually sank more and more into carnality, barrenness, and death. And this was often much helped by surrounding circumstances and the peculiar position in which they were placed. With some, the increasing cares and anxieties of life in this day of incessant struggle and competition in every trade and profession, in order to obtain an honest livelihood; with others, the daily pressure of a large and engrossing business; with others, the domestic ties of a young and growing family, taxing well-nigh all their time and strength, and absorbing too much of their thoughts and affections; with others, the complying too readily with the worldliness of their own relations, some of them, perhaps, very near and dear in nature's bonds, or immediate members of their own family. To these frequent and more obvious snares which entangle the feet of so many, we may add neglect in constantly reading the Scriptures and giving themselves to continual prayer and meditation; slackness in waiting upon the Lord in the ordinances of his house; or accustoming themselves to sit under the ministry of the word as a mere exercise of the intellect or approbation of the judgment, without personal, diligent self-examination, and a spirit of prayerfulness before, in, or after the time of hearing, or anxious earnestness to profit by it either by falling under its keen edge when used as a sword, or embracing the truth in faith and affection as commended to the conscience. Many and various, indeed, are the means whereby the soul gets robbed of its spiritual strength, and loses the warmth and fervour of the divine life; but no one cause is more dangerous than the want of self-denial in the hour of temptation, and of strength to resist, even unto blood, striving against sin. How many have been gradually entangled in evil by not resisting the first approaches and allurements of sin, and have either brought a reproach upon the cause by some outward fall, or if preserved from that fearful disaster, have sadly destroyed their own peace and brought death and bondage into their souls. And even where there has been

much outward circumspectness of life, in how many cases has a spirit of slumber come over the soul, bringing with it numbness of conscience, coldness of affection, and a general deadness, stupidity, and lethargy of mind! We have long marked and observed these things, as well as have had some experience of them in our own bosom; and as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man, so we doubt not many of our readers see eye to eye and feel heart to heart with us in what we have thus far laid before them.

It has, therefore, struck our mind that we might do our spiritual readers, to whom we, as usual, address ourselves at the opening of the year, some useful and acceptable service if we took up this subject at greater length, and availed ourselves of the present opportunity to bring before them some such word of free and friendly counsel, admonition, reproof, or encouragement as the Lord might enable us to communicate and they might feel disposed to receive from us in his name and fear. In so doing we may have to touch upon some sore spots, to probe some deep and painful wounds, to use language that to some may seem harsh and severe, and to draw so narrow a line of separation between the living and the dead as may cause some to fear on which side they stand for time and eternity. But we shall endeavour, we hope, in the fear and as in the sight of God, to keep closely to his inspired word, tread, as far as we see and know them, in the footsteps of the flock, and bring forth nothing but what has been not only well weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, but also been tried and proved in the faith and experience of our own heart.

Good men in all ages have had to lament and lift up their voice against the evil to which we have alluded in our opening sentences—the breaking down of the barrier which God has set up between the church and the world; but never, perhaps, was the warning voice more needed than now; and glad should we be if it were more frequently and loudly sounded by those who stand on the battlements of Zion. The setting up of this barrier by the hand of God in his eternal counsels was not only an act of infinite grace but also of infinite wisdom. It was intended not only to rescue his chosen family from the depths of the fall, that they might be eternal trophies of his superabounding grace, but also as a means to preserve them in their time state from the path of the destroyer. He knew to what temptations they would be exposed in their pilgrimage through life, what snares would be laid on every side for their feet; he knew all the strength of sin and all the weakness of the flesh. He, therefore, cast up in the word of his lips a highway, a way of grace and truth, of faith and love; a way of holiness, in which the redeemed should walk, and on which no lion or unclean animal should be found. By his grace he sets their feet in this way, and they find it to be, though a strait and narrow path in which there is no room for the

flesh, a way of light and life, of union and communion, of love and godly fear; for it is the kindness of their youth, the love of their espousals when Israel is holiness unto the Lord, and the firstfruits of his increase. (Jer. ii. 2, 3.) Now, as long as they are walking on the king's highway they are safe, for he is their sun and shield, giving them present grace and the prospect of future glory. (Ps. lxxxiv. 11.) But immediately that they are drawn off it, they get upon unholy ground, the permitted domain of sin, Satan, and the flesh, and thus losing the felt presence and guidance of the Lord, often stray further and further till they wander on the dark mountains as lost sheep without a shepherd.

Many, very many, are here, and amongst them no small number who neither see nor feel where they are nor what they are; for it is a part of the very nature of the malady, like a heavy sleep or a bodily lethargy, to blind the eyes, stupefy the senses, and benumb the conscience. It was so with Ephraim of old. He was "broken in judgment" (Hosea v. 11), and, therefore, could not form a right judgment of his own state or standing. "Strangers devoured his strength and he knew it not; yea, grey hairs were here and there upon him, yet he knew it not." (Hosea vii. 9.) Nay, even when at last he saw his sickness and felt his wound, he took wrong courses to have it healed, going to those who could not heal him nor cure him of his wound. (Hosea v. 13.) He had joined himself to idols; and as his punishment God had said, Let him alone. (Hosea iv. 17.) One of the worst features of the Laodicean church was that she said she was "rich, and increased with goods, and had need of nothing; and knew not that she was wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." (Rev. iii. 17.) We shall not be surprised, then, nor discouraged if our words meet with little or no acceptance in the eyes of those who do not see into what a state they have been brought by the subtlety of Satan, the power of sin, and the weakness of the flesh. Yet in the hope that the Lord may bless a word of admonition to those who have ears to hear, we shall, with all boldness, and yet, we trust, in a spirit of tenderness, love, and affection, speak freely the thoughts of our heart upon a point which has often exercised, and still almost daily exercises, our own spirit.

The communication of divine life to the soul is the greatest of all blessings, as containing in its bosom every other blessing. Thus it is the fruit of election: "Whom he predestinated, them he also called;" the sure pledge of justification: "Whom he called, them he also justified;" and the anticipation of eternal glory: "Whom he justified, them he also glorified." It is sovereign in its first communication: "The Son quickeneth whom he will;" free in its reception: "Freely ye have received, freely give;" unquenchable in its nature: "Many waters cannot quench love;" eternal in its duration: "I give unto my sheep eternal life;" and unalienable in its possession: "I will never leave them nor forsake them." But it is subject to change:

“Because they have no changes, they fear not God;” sometimes sinks very low: “Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps;” sometimes mounts very high: “Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name.” But all its changes depend upon the movements of the Lord upon the soul: “Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong; thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled” (Ps. xxx. 7); and, therefore, whether it be high or low, must be resolved into the sovereign good pleasure of God.

But our present object is rather to treat of the life of God in the soul in its declension and decay; and to make the subject more clear, as well as to restrain our own pen from wandering, we shall consider it under these three heads:

I. *Its causes.*

II. *Its symptoms.*

III. *Its cure.*

I. In considering its causes, we may observe that we have already pointed out some of the more prevalent, and it is, therefore, needless to repeat them. But there are others of scarcely less magnitude, on which we have not yet touched.

Amongst them, we feel compelled to name the *prevailing ministry of the day.*

Looking, then, at it without personality or without wishing to give needless offence, there are two features in it which have much struck our mind as showing a lamentable deficiency. These two features are, 1, *a want of power*, and, 2, *a want of searching discrimination.*

1. Nothing in the ministry can make up for want of power. It may be perfectly consistent with truth. It may be unexceptionably clear in doctrine, sound in experience, and not defective in enforcing consistent practice. But, with all this, it may have the fatal defect of want of power; it may lack that peculiar savour and blessed influence, that indescribable life, penetrating authority, and heavenly weight, which rest upon the ministry of the word, when the Lord the Spirit speaks in and by it through his sent servants. It is said of the first preaching of the word: “And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.” And what was the blessed effect? “Great grace was upon them all.” (Acts iv. 33.) They preached with great power, and great grace flowed from it and through it. Of his own ministry, Paul thus testifies: “And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.” (1 Cor. ii. 4.) And, to what end and effect? That “the faith of his hearers should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.” He elsewhere testifies that the gospel which he preached “came to his hearers, not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.” (1 Thess. i. 5.) And the effect was that those who received the word of God which they heard of him, “received it not as the

word of men, but as the word of God, which effectually worketh in those that believe." (1 Thess. ii. 18.) Where this blessed power attends the word, there for the most part the life of God in the soul grows and thrives; for in it there is milk for babes and meat for men; in it there is instruction for those who are seeking the way Zionward, reproof for the disobedient, admonition to the simple and sincere, encouragement to the poor and needy, healing balm for the broken in spirit, consolation to the afflicted, and a word in season to the soul that is weary. But where this indescribable life, savour, and power are deficient in the ministry, a spirit of slumber creeps gradually over the hearers; deadness and barrenness in the pulpit produce deadness and barrenness in the pew; the souls of God's people are starved for want of food; and the necessary consequence is that a general sickliness and languor spread themselves over the church and congregation, attended with the decline and decay of every grace.

One of the worst features of this prevailing disease is, that those who are most deeply affected with it see and feel it least.

It creeps for the most part over the soul so insensibly, and its influence is so slow and gradual, that, to use a strong expression, it paralyses as it spreads. The Scripture, therefore, compares it to a deep sleep, which we know comes gradually on and gets heavier and heavier, till every sense is locked up in forgetfulness and insensibility. "The Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes." And upon whom was this deep sleep come? "The prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered." They who should have kept the people awake had fallen asleep themselves; and the watchmen on the walls slumbered with the inhabitants of the city. And this with the enemy at the gates. (Isa. xxix. 10.) It is also compared to the insensibility of the drunkard, who keeps drinking on till buried in drunken sleep. He does not feel when he is struck or hurt; and even when for a moment roused from his drunken fit, seeks again his cups and drowsy intoxication. "They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not. When shall I awake? I will seek it yet again." (Prov. xxiii. 35.)

2. But there is another no less lamentable want, as it seems to us, in the ministry of the day. It is not as *separating, searching, and discriminating* as it should be. There is a close connection between a powerful and a searching ministry, though they do not always meet in the same man and the same ministry. But, as a rule, wherever there is power in the preached word there is separation in it; for nothing so takes forth the precious from the vile, nothing so separates the living from the dead, nothing so blows away the chaff from the wheat as a ministry attended with the power of God. And as a separating ministry must needs try the living family of God (for the dead feel it not), so it will be ever to them a separating, penetrating, and often keenly-piercing word, especially if they

have tender spots and sore places. What a description does the Holy Ghost give us of the word of God in the hands of the Spirit, as searching the heart to its lowest depths and most secret corners and recesses! It is "quick," that is, as the word means, a "living," not a dead word, but a word full of, and, as such, ministering life; and "powerful," for the power of God attends it; and "sharper than any two-edged sword," for that can only pierce the body, but this goes further, for it "pierces even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit," thus discriminating between what is natural and what is spiritual; nay, more, penetrating through and dividing joint from joint, and, by breaking the bones, reaching their inmost "marrow," and thus becoming "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Heb. iv. 12.) Now, may we not be allowed, with all simplicity and godly sincerity, not wishing to give needless offence, and yet not shrinking from the cross, to compare this description of a powerful, searching, separating ministry with the ministry of the day, and to ask ourselves, be we minister or no minister, whether one resembles the other? We are not any man's judge. To his own master he standeth or falleth. But these are weighty matters, and if the general deadness and lethargy of the churches be at all traceable to the want of power in the pulpit and of a searching ministry, it behoves those who would be right before God to examine how far they stand clear in this matter.*

3. But as we are upon this point, we cannot forbear noticing another feature in the ministry which much fosters the spirit of slumber which has so much come over the churches, and that is, the *setting up of a low standard* of experience for church membership; the consequence of which is not only to flood the churches with doubtful characters, but to lay down as positive marks of grace what at best are but feeble symptoms of the life of God. "We must not discourage the weaklings" is the cry; "we must preach, 'Comfort ye, comfort ye my people.'" But not to discourage the weaklings is often to encourage the hypocrites; and to be always bringing forward comfort may be giving poison instead of medicine. An honest-hearted child of God loves a searching ministry. He does not want smooth things, for he dreads false comfort, and would sooner carry his burden than have it taken off, or go off the wrong way. Those who are ever calling out for encouragement often want to be encouraged in their sins or, at least, in their carnality and death. What they really need is to be thrown down rather than built up, wounded rather than healed, sent groaning home with an arrow in their conscience to make them roll on their bed in distress and anxiety rather than cry peace to their souls when there is no

* Our dear friend, the late W. Tiptaft, was very strong on this point in his last illness, and used often to quote the words, "The blood of souls stains deep."

peace. It is a false rest when they rest upon the encouraging testimony of the preacher rather than upon the testimony of God in their own consciences.

But we will not further dwell upon this point; we have said enough for those who have ears to hear, and too much for those who would close their ears against any word that might search and condemn them.

II. And now for a few words on the *symptoms* of this widespread epidemic, and let those who desire to fear God search and see whether they find in themselves any prevailing symptoms of this general complaint.

1. Out of numerous others, one of the first marked symptoms is a *declension of the spirit of prayer* in the soul. When the Lord first pours out the Spirit of grace and of supplications, it usually rises to a greater height than at any subsequent period. It would not be fair, therefore, or even just to ourselves if we measured our present spirit of prayer by what it was in days gone by. Those early days cannot be recalled. They were the days of our spiritual youth, and can no more return than the springtime of life to those who are advanced into the autumn of their years. But even if not tried by this standard, are we sensible of any manifest or marked decline of the spirit of prayer that has lately come upon us? Is it less earnest than it was? Is less sensible access found to the throne of grace? Is prayer and supplication felt rather as a burden, a task, a duty, a something that ought to be done, than a sweet privilege, a blessed mercy, a wondrous door through which the soul may pour forth its complaints, confessions, desires, longings, and breathings before the Lord? If the spirit of prayer has sensibly declined in our breast, it is a mark of having fallen into a spirit of slumber, or that we are held in some snare of sin or Satan.

2. Again, how is it with us as to *reading the word of God*? Is it done as a task, a performance, a duty to which conscience urges, and yet from which inclination draws back? And is this an habitual feeling? for we must not judge by occasional seasons of coldness and deadness, as the most lively Christians are subject to them. But as a general state of things, is the word of God dead, dull, and dry, and as such read with little interest, pleasure, or profit? Then are we fallen asleep, or sunk into carnal security. But contrariwise, is the word of God highly prized as a friend and companion in our secret retirements? Is there every now and then new and sweet light cast upon it? Does it open itself at times to our enlightened understanding as containing fresh and fresh treasures of heavenly truth? Does it touch our heart with admiration and love to him of whom it so blessedly testifies; soften and melt our spirit into meekness and contrition; raise up our affections to things above; loosen the hold of sin and the world; and bringing before us the things which are not seen as eternal realities, deaden and kill us to the things which are seen as the mere passing shadows of the day?

3. Another symptom of that spiritual declension of which we are now speaking is a growing *numbness of conscience*, rendering it less sensitive to the evil of sin, and to the danger of departing from the Lord. The fear of God in a tender conscience is a special new covenant gift and grace (Jer. xxxii. 40), is our choice treasure (Isa. xxxiii. 6), and a fountain of life to depart from the snares of death. (Prov. xiv. 27.) It brings into the heart a holy reverence of God's name and a deep sense of his glory, majesty, presence, and power; it bows down the soul before him in humility and self-abasement; fills it with hatred of sin and earnest longings and desires after holiness; is attended with contrition and godly sorrow, and produces meekness and quietness of spirit, submission, resignation, and patience. It is, therefore, our chief safeguard against the approach of evil; makes us watch our words both to God and man, to be circumspect in our movements, upright in our actions, cautious in our ways, and consistent in our life. But this grace of the Spirit, like other graces, has its growth and its decrease, its seasons of strength and of weakness, its times of activity and vigour, and of languor and decline. Now, when this grace of the Spirit declines in vigour, it loses in the same proportion its keenness of sight, its sensitiveness of feeling, and its strength of voice; and it is surprising how low it may sink in the soul, till it seems at times almost lost out of sight; its eyes closed, its quickness in hearing the voice of God gone, and its voice reduced to a faint whisper. What, then, is the consequence? The snares of death are not now departed from, for the fountain is not springing up with its living waters to keep the soul alive unto God and the conscience tender in his fear. This is the very opportunity for which the carnal mind has been looking and longing; for it hates and is weary of the restraints which grace puts upon it, and wants that indulgence and food which it can get only by sin. Now, then, is the time when the watchman has fallen asleep, for the master thief, the besetting sin, to enter in and prowl about the city; and he soon lets in his fellow thieves, until the whole gang of them fall to work to rob and plunder. The mind becomes filled with all manner of evil; secret lusts begin to work and to be indulged rather than resisted; all sorts of worldly schemes and contrivances for self-advancement or self-gratification occupy the thoughts; pride, covetousness, and worldly-mindedness make sad head, and the man, so to speak, is but a shadow of what he was. His tenderness seems gone, and with it the life and power of his religion; till little is left but the form, except that now and then there are revivings and awakenings just enough to show him where he is and whence he has fallen.

How many, even of those who truly fear God, are here, or have been; for perhaps there are very few of the living family of God who have not had, at some period of their lives since they were called by grace, some personal and experimental knowledge

of the path which we have thus traced out. These are the best judges how far our words are words of truth—not mere fancy sketches, but a description of deep and weighty realities, and matters of daily exercise and life-long remembrance. Much that daily passes in our own bosom, or that has exercised our minds before God we can never speak of or confess to men; but a word from others will sometimes touch the secret spot. And thus those of our spiritual readers who, through grace, have been brought out of this state of slumber in which they were once held into, as it were, a new and revived life of faith in the Son of God, will be best able to set to their seal how far our description is true, or our words contain needful cautions and salutary counsel.

III. But now let us attempt to show the *cure* of this prevailing malady, or rather the way in which it is brought about, with its fruits and effects.

1. The usual beginning of a revival of the soul from this deep sleep, as well as the means of its accomplishment, is a *stroke of affliction*. God has a chastening rod laid up in reserve for those of his family who depart from him; and sooner or later he brings it down upon their backs. Thus sometimes he sends a long and painful illness, or a distressing bereavement, or a severe family affliction, or some cutting stroke and heavy reverse in providence; and working, by his Spirit and grace, in and with these stripes of his hand, he awakens the soul out of its sleep. The eyes are now opened to see, and the ears to hear, the heart to understand, and the conscience to feel. And what a sight meets the astonished view—at times almost more than the soul can bear, for it seems as if the end would be hopeless despair. Now it begins to see where it has been, the sad state into which it had fallen, the snares and temptations in which it had been held fast, and the grievous state of carnality and worldliness into which it had gradually sunk. Nothing wrong might have been observed by man in the outward conduct; but each heart knoweth its own bitterness. There the root of all backsliding lies; and the soul well knows that God looketh to the heart, and if that is not right before him, nothing is right. Under, therefore, his afflicting hand it sinks, at times, very low, until its very hope seems almost removed as a tree. But as this is the work of God, and the means whereby he is bringing the soul out of its state of barrenness and death, he most kindly and graciously comes to its help; and the way he does it, for the most part, is this:

2. He revives *the spirit of prayer* which had sunk very low; and with this revival comes power to confess those sins and backslidings which lie with chief weight on the conscience. None but those who have passed through such or a similar experience can know how the soul thus dealt with abases itself in humble confession before the Lord; nor can even they describe its self-loathing and self-abhorrence, the low place it takes, the earnest longings and anxious desires for a word of mercy and

pardon from his gracious lips, or how it looks up to his gracious Majesty again and again, by night and by day, for a sense of his manifested love and favour. The soul is not asleep now; its deadness is gone; its coldness and barrenness removed, and it now is truly and really alive unto God. This is a reviving as the corn when the rain comes after a long season of drought, or a growing of the vine in the spring after the dreary days of winter, when there was nothing visible but the naked stem. (Hos. xiv. 7.) There is thus almost a returning to the days of its youth, and a renewal of the former life of God in the soul.

3. Now, coupled with this, as, in answer to prayer, the Lord draws near in the manifestations of his grace, there is also a *revival of faith* in the Person and work of the Son of God, and that of a simpler and clearer nature than before. Never does the suitability of Christ, or the riches of his grace, appear so great as to a soul awakened out of the spirit of slumber again to look unto him. How it wonders at and admires his long-suffering patience, his kind and tender forbearance, his wondrous grace in bearing so long with such base returns for all his goodness and mercy! How it admires and adores his glorious Person, sees and feels the efficacy of his most precious blood and righteousness, and the sweet secrets of his dying love! How tender is now the conscience of sinning against such mercy and such love! What a bitter and evil thing is sin seen and felt to be! What a discovery there is, too, of the hidden corruptions of the heart, of the danger of being entangled in any secret snare, and what a separation of spirit from the world and worldly things! Never till now did the soul seem truly and really to repent of sin with that godly sorrow which needs not to be repented of; never were there more earnest desires after holiness, spirituality of mind, and communion with God and his dear Son. Never was the word of God more opened to the enlightened understanding; its inspiration, wisdom, and truth more clearly seen, or its power on the heart more deeply felt. Never did eternal realities lie with greater weight and power upon the mind, and never did the things of time and sense appear more light, transitory, and vain. The soul now says to itself, "Let me never sin again against such goodness and mercy; let me never again drop into carnality, worldliness, and death." But still seeing and feeling more than ever the strength of sin and the weakness of the flesh, and knowing, painfully knowing, what it is to be left to self, it begs of the Lord to keep it as the apple of his eye, to hold it up in every slippery place, that it may not slip or fall; to shine upon it continually with the beams of his love, and ever to water it by his Spirit and grace. It desires ever to walk in his fear and live to his praise, to know his will and do it, and be found fruitful in every good word and work.

But we will not enlarge upon these points, as we have said enough upon them, and perhaps too much for the generality of

our readers, as we have been describing what may be to them a strange and unknown path. But we write for the spiritual, for those who know divine things by divine teaching, for we seek and desire their profit. It is not often that we can get what we may call a little close talk with our spiritual readers, or press those points home upon their consciences which often press upon our own. It is in writing as it is in conversation. How much of our intercourse with the people of God in conversation is upon mere outside matters and subjects in which there is not much heart and conscience work! What little close talk! What little coming into the real heart of the matter—those bosom secrets of true religion and vital godliness which we most feel before God! How we play upon the surface, skim the mere outside, talk at a distance upon divine matters, without that close getting into each other's hearts and consciences, or coming into those spots where the secret springs of all our spiritual life really lie. What poor, cold work, for the most part, what is called religious conversation is! How unedifying, disappointing, and deadening, rather than reviving, refreshing, and strengthening the soul by mutual intercourse, and creative of love and union by having nourishment ministered by the joints and bands of members holding the Head! (Col. ii. 19.) In our intercourse even with the real people of God, how rare are the seasons when we so see eye to eye and feel heart to heart that spirit melts into spirit, and the communion of saints leads up to fresh communion with God! It is with a desire thus to edify and profit the souls of our readers with whom we can converse only by pen and not by mouth, that in this opening year we meet and greet them affectionately with our Address. Receive it, dear friends, in the spirit in which, we hope, it is written and sent to you. It is meant for your good. We have, perhaps, touched upon a few sore spots and made some of you wince. But if we have wounded, it is that you might be healed; if we have probed some foul ulcers, it is that they might be cleansed of their filth and gore by the application of precious blood; and if we have somewhat rudely or roughly pulled away the veil and shown you your guilty shame, it is that you might see and know more of the robe of righteousness which is put upon those that believe.

We do not, we dare not, write flattering words to please the dead. Our mission, our errand, our ministry is to the living, and especially to those among them who are tried and exercised with temptations and afflictions whereby their soul is kept alive unto God. Let the dead bury their dead. Let the flatterers go on with their flatteries, deceiving and being deceived, building up their walls and daubing them with untempered mortar. We are bidden not to be a partaker of other men's sins, which we should be if we wilfully sanctioned such men and such things. Our desire is to be found faithful to the position in which we are placed, and to edify and profit the living family of God.

Commending you, whom grace has made and manifested to be such, to his wise and safe keeping, who alone can bless the writer or reader, and asking for your prayers upon our labours in your service. We are, dear Friends in the Lord,

Your affectionate Friend and Servant,

THE EDITOR.

ON THE NEW YEAR.

ANOTHER year has run its round;
Another New Year's day I've seen;
Thy favours, Lord, to me abound;
But how ungrateful, Lord, I've been.

How fruitless through the past, O Lord,
This truth, with shame I must confess;
The flesh could fruits enough afford,
But small the fruits of righteousness.

O grant, dear Lord, that I may bear
More fruit, if 'tis but groans and sighs;
For these I know will reach thy ear;
Yea, such thou'st said thou won't despise.

A groan I know will reach thy heart,
And fetch a blessing from thy throne;
But even this thou must impart,
Or, Lord, for thee I cannot groan.

O lay me at thy footstool low;
Like Mary weeping there I'd be,
Nor from this precious spot would go,
Until thou fetch me up to thee.

O blessed spot, soul-melting place,
To view thy bleeding heart, O God!
To gaze upon thy lovely face,
And triumph through thy precious blood.

If spared to live throughout this year
O may I triumph in thy name,
And every cross with patience bear
Until my soul is all in flame.

O precious flame of love divine,
'Tis this that makes our souls to sing;
'Tis this that makes our faces shine;
'Tis this that makes a worm a king.

THE Holy Spirit proposes, declares, and presents to us the only remedy, the only means of purification. What false ways have been invented to this purpose has been already declared; and every man is ready to find out a way of his own; every one will apply his own soap and his own nitre. Though the only fountain for cleansing be near us, yet we cannot see it till the Holy Ghost open our eyes, as he did the eyes of Hagar. He it is who shows it to us, and leads us to it. It is an eminent part of his office and work to "glorify the Son," and this he does by showing such things unto us. To have a true spiritual sense of the defilement of sin, and a gracious view of the cleansing virtue of the blood of Christ, is an eminent effect of the Spirit of grace.

—*Dr. Owen.*

NOTES OF THE LAST SERMON BY THE LATE MR. DAVID FENNER, JULY 5TH, 1868.

“Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.”—1 JOHN III. 24.

CHRIST dwells in the hearts of his people by his blessed Spirit, and thereby commands their hearts in the exercise of faith in him, whereby they are brought to dwell in him. It is a reciprocal and social indwelling between Christ and his people. And this is what we are to search after for the proof of the godly reality of the matter; that we have true faith in Christ in our hearts, and that Christ by his blessed Spirit has taken possession of our souls, and so dwelleth in us by the Spirit which he has given us.

This blessed Spirit is said to be a Spirit of faith; and all the children of God that receive the Spirit of God do receive that blessed Spirit of faith in Christ. Now we are called upon to examine ourselves in this matter: “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” Christ dwells in the heart, where he is within, by his blessed Spirit, and that blessed Spirit dwells in us in and by regeneration, and forsaketh us not. He is in the children of God as the Spirit of faith in Christ. It is said of the Old Testament saints that they “obtained like precious faith with us;” and then, as touching the same, of us towards them: “We have received the same Spirit of faith with them.”

There is an identity and sameness as it respects the faith of Christ from the creation, and will be unto the end of the world. There is but one true faith, the faith of God’s elect, and this comes in regeneration. All the elect of God, sooner or later, are born again, and none are born again but those that are made partakers of this faith; for sin is not the new birth; that which is displeasing to God is not the new birth. Well, it is said, “Whatsoever is not of faith is sin, and without faith it is impossible to please God.” Now, of regeneration, or the new birth, it is said, “Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Well, then, the main thing for us to search after and examine ourselves about is whether we be in the faith, and that faith in our hearts, and our hearts exercised in that faith towards Christ; for in the exercise of faith our hearts will certainly be engaged; for “with the heart man believeth,” and not without it.

The point, then, for us to look for is, “Do I find Christ in my heart by his blessed Spirit? Do I find, by experience, that I am a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ in truth, with that faith which purifies the heart to love righteousness and godliness and to hate all evil? Do I find that faith that overcomes the world, and so stamps vanity upon all that is in it in comparison of the object of faith, the Lord Jesus Christ, yea, that stamps a deficiency in all relative ties in comparison with

Christ?" "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." It does not mean we are to hate them as individuals. No, but in that they are opposed to God, we are to hate that opposition that is in them: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."

Well, now, to come to the point of the blessed Spirit being in us, of his dwelling in any person. This is an important matter; for "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his;" and if he do not belong to Christ, sad, sad indeed, and awful! This blessed Spirit none of those that are called the world (in distinction from the children of God) do receive. John says, "We are of God;" that is, children of God, born of God. "We are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness." Some copies read, "In the wicked one," that is, the devil; for where Christ does not rule in the heart and soul, the devil is there. Hence it is said of the Spirit of Christ, "Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive" (they cannot receive him), "because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." Where he is not, there is no spiritual breathing; I mean no prayer that God regards: "Attend, O Lord, at my breathing, at my cry;" for there must be unto such breathing spiritual life within, and prayer is the breath of that life. "Your hearts shall live that seek God."

Again. Where the Spirit of God is not, there is no hungering for evidence of interest in the blood and righteousness of Christ, and they, and they only, are pronounced blessed by Christ himself that do hunger and thirst after righteousness; and the Lord has commanded his blessing in Zion, "even life for evermore"—spiritual and eternal life. Therefore, there is no hungering, in a spiritual sense, in any one but such as are blessed of the Lord. "He has commanded the blessing in Zion, even life for evermore." There is the Spirit of life, and he moves the person to that groaning and concern for Christ and spiritual relief—after Christ and spiritual blessings from him, after him who has wrought redemption and salvation, and after blessings from him to supply the inward need of their souls; and they that are so exercised have the blessed Spirit within them.

Now, they who have not the blessed Spirit within them, what have they got? Why, they have the world for one thing. They have sin ruling for another. They have corrupt self for another; and they have the devil for another; for where Christ does not rule within, there Satan rules in the hearts of the children of disobedience. In the margin: "In the hearts of the children of unbelief," in those that are dead to God, and his spiritual service.

Now, as touching this blessed Spirit dwelling in us, there are evidences that will look forth from time to time, so we may observe something for our encouragement: "Search the Scriptures" (but the world will not do that), "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." Now the tendency of the blessed Spirit of Christ, and of the blessed word of God, is *a coming unto Christ*. Hence it is said, "To whom coming as unto a living Stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, 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." Their coming unto Christ is the motion of spiritual life, and the exercise of grace in the heart towards him. But that coming unto Christ may not be in the person a coming into his presence to enjoy him and be received by him. No; but it is a tendency mentally that way; it is a mental desire that way; it is a panting of heart towards him to come to him.

Now, observe this; for I do not expect all of you are strong believers in Christ, and so know it to your comfort and satisfaction that it is so; but you wish for evidence of interest in it. Well; now, are you exercised? Is there a cleaving to the gospel of Christ? Do you love it? If you do, there is an inward feeling in the heart towards Christ. Some of you may say, "How you cut me off." Stop; stop. There is real love to Christ in the desire to love him, as much as in the love of complacency and delight in him. This is the feeling: "O that I had his love to kindle that freedom in my heart towards him.

"The soul that with sincere desires
Seeks after Jesus' love,
That soul the Holy Ghost inspires
With breathings from above."

However dark he may be in his understanding, however he may fear he has no faith in Christ because he is full of doubts and fears that he shall fall short, however full of doubts and fears that the work of God in his soul is not the true work, yet he cleaves to the gospel of Christ, and says, "To whom else shall I go? Thou hast the words of eternal life; and having this persuasion, here I stand. O I wish I might come into his cause as truly belonging to it that I might enjoy his gospel unto the life of my soul." Well, are you afraid that you are not a true believer in Christ because you cannot see your faith? "Who is among you that feareth the Lord," that stands in reverential awe of sinning against him, "that walketh in darkness and hath no light?" Now it is in God's light that we see light, and that light shining upon the word of God discovers Christ; but when in darkness, and having no light, there may be fears that you shall fall short at last; but not so: "Let him trust in the name of the Lord;" that is, let him look to the Lord, lean upon the Lord, venture on the Lord; all which is

meant by trusting in him. Well; but he cannot trust the Lord unless he has faith; for there is no trusting that is worth a rush that is not of faith; but such a one has true faith, or he would not love the gospel of Christ as he does.

There is another circumstance respecting faith: "Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye"—receive him in your heart, receive him into the visible church of Christ. "Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye; but not to doubtful disputations." We are not to judge of him as he judges of himself upon his doubts and fears, but to receive him notwithstanding his doubts and fears; for, although there is nothing good in them, we may discover something good in the person that has them, for they bespeak that nothing can give satisfaction to his heart and soul but Christ, which shows he is a true seeker, and one that shall find what he is seeking for. What is it? O for evidence of interest in Christ! What did the angel say to the women at the sepulchre? "Fear not ye, for I know that ye seek Jesus." If Jesus is what you are seeking with all your heart and soul; if Jesus is the uppermost, the chief matter of your seeking, all will turn well and end well; therefore such should not be disheartened.

Then there is another matter that Christ speaks of to one of his disciples who, when he saw Christ crucified, came to the conclusion it was all over, he would never revive; and when it was told him Christ was risen from the dead, answered, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." Now, Thomas means, "I will not believe that he is risen from the dead, unless I can have tangible evidence of it." Well, when the disciples were assembled together, and Thomas with them, Christ entered the room, and, calling to Thomas, he said, "Thomas, reach hither thy fingers, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing." Thomas did not want that tangible touch then. O, no! Nor was it the mere sight of Christ as being raised from the dead that convinced Thomas; but Christ prevented Thomas touching him by his touch of Thomas's heart. And what was it? Why, he not only appeared as risen from the dead, but he also appeared to Thomas's heart the inward enjoyment of the godly reality of Christ as the Almighty God, the God-Man who had died in his manhood, but his Person the divine and eternal Jehovah; and therefore Thomas, instead of reaching out his hand, exclaimed, "My Lord and my God." Thomas spoke this freely; he spoke it from the godly reality of the matter within. Now, the Scriptures say, "No man can say Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost;" but Thomas said more than that, for he not only said, "It is the Lord,"—that was not the fulness of it to Thomas; but he also said, "*My* Lord and *my* God." No man can say Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost; nor can they say, "My Lord" and "My God." Then the Lord answered Thomas, "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed

are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." Christ did not mean, blessed are they that have not seen him with the natural eye, but with the eye of faith to claim him as their Lord and God.

Here, then, a true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, and blessed with his Spirit, may not have that clear, full manifestation of Christ being his Lord and God, his Redeemer, Saviour, and Salvation, because it may be hidden for a time from this knowledge. What may it be hidden by? Darkness of soul. Sometimes a soul may be under darkness for a long time, and yet there is that movement in it that nothing short of Christ can satisfy. Well, but in the dark they cannot see anything to comfort. Never mind. The Lord can see the darkness, and remove it. He is exercising the soul in it unto a full capacity for Christ; and when he has brought the soul to this point, he shall receive his salvation to enjoy and supply his need. The Lord is not working in you to be a nonentity. No, he is drawing you after him to supply your need. "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." And so, whatever the trials, afflictions, and temptations they may be in, they will get through all, and safe to glory; and so will every one that is after Christ and his salvation, Christ and his grace. Though they do not find it as yet to comfort, they shall enjoy it in his good time. Hence Christ says, "What things soever ye desire." He means the things of Christ, the things within the compass of his great salvation. "What things soever ye desire, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Believe that ye receive them as the gift of God to you, as belonging to you; for it is such as you are pronounced blessed in them, and ye shall have them in the Lord's good time to enjoy.

But, the seeking soul cannot get rid of one thing, and that is the body of sin and death. It cleaves to him, is present with him, surrounds him, and prevails against him. Mentally he would be and do but cannot; naturally and carnally he is and does that which he would not. "How to perform that which is good, I find not; for the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that do I." I do it. Well, then, can I be a child of God? Faith purifies the heart. But where is my heart purified? Faith overcomes the world. But where do I find that victory? Faith resists the devil, so that he flees away. But O I am beset with his temptations. He draws my heart and besets me there, and makes a very devil of me. How can I believe I am a partaker of the Spirit of God? Can ever God dwell in such a soul as mine? This made the apostle say, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" When he spoke in that way, he did not doubt his Deliverer, who would appear for him. No. But the manner in which he speaks denotes the craving of his soul to be delivered from the body of this death. Ah! That is the worse side of the matter, to be so dying towards God. Then he adds,

“I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.” The apostle implies by this that he did not expect deliverance in this life; therefore he was willing rather to be absent from the body and present with the Lord. Do you know what it is to have this exercise? Well, if you are a believer, if the blessed Spirit of God is moving in you, it is in a sense of spiritual poverty, and destitute state of soul, and after relief from the salvation of God, and God your salvation. It is after evidence of interest in Christ; it is a looking to the atonement that he has made by the shedding of his precious blood.

(To be continued.)

A LETTER BY THE LATE W. COWPER.

Beloved in and of the Lord,—Mercy, peace, truth, and love be multiplied.

It is needful for me to write, to pay the debt of gratitude I owe to you for your repeated favours.

Through mercy, I am still in the body, and, though often faint, yet pursuing, or, as Paul saith, “I press toward the mark for the prize,” and hope to be more than a conqueror, through never-changing love and precious cleansing blood, unto which my hope hath been raised more than thirty years, blessed be God; but I often feel what it is for my soul to be cast down within me, and what it is to dwell in Meshech, and a backsliding heart to fill me with my own ways. My changes have been so many and frequent from bad to worse, and sometimes for days and weeks together, that I have forgotten prosperity, and been ready to cry out, “The Lord hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me.” I find the old man of sin most incessant in his desperate workings. He ever has been, and is still casting up mire and dirt, and as restless as the troubled ocean. The bitter experience he daily forces upon me, the continual pains which arise from his pinchings, and his desperate frowardness to all that is bad, his incessant abhorrence of God and a good conscience; continually grovelling in the dust; ever hating the light, lest his deeds should be made manifest; grasping at the sharp razor which worketh deceitfully to cut the thread of communion and the throat of faith, if possible; yea, he has been, and still is such a rebel against grace that he would turn it out of the soul were he but the stronger. His very heart is hardened against prayer, and so determined is he to prevent it that he has often ransacked my soul whilst upon my knees with such evil and abominable things that a more base, filthy, abominable wretch surely never appeared in the attitude of prayer before Omniscience. When I bend the knee it is against his will; when I try to confess my sins he will not let me hate them, if he can help it; and if I call them by ugly names, he will make so much of confession and penitence until he swells me with pride, that I am ready to burst out into self-adulation. His hands were imbrued in Cal-

vary's blood, and his heart engaged in reviling the Person and agonies of Christ; but the history of him I am well aware you have better read than myself, and are not ignorant of his devices, which is a most unspeakable mercy, for he must be known to be hated. Where his works cause no grief, repentance unto life is not; but where grace discovers him, the law always curses him to his very centre; but where information about him is otherwise received, he is neither a deadly nor a daily plague. Where sin is not made sin, working death by that which is good, there cannot be an abhorrence of it nor a fleeing from it; nor can an unconvinced, unconvicted sinner feelingly need Christ as a hiding place; consequently there cannot be a real daily coming to his blood as a fountain, his obedience as a robe, his life as a mediator, his prayer as an intercessor, his precious death as a sin-destroying atonement; but in all these things Christ is as a root out of a dry ground, without form, without comeliness. Though, bless his name, he is still the root. Although the ground be dry now, when the poor dear child of God feels himself as dry as the mountains of Gilboa, as barren as the sandy desert, his liveliness has died away to a consciousness of death, and his soul, like the declining shadow, and dreading the approaching darkness, now will the enemy tempt him to measure himself by himself, and compare himself with himself, to make the poor soul think that his convictions are not from a real law work, and therefore not of God; but from the mere workings of natural conscience which the unregenerate may have who never had the Spirit and faith of Christ.

Thus, in deep declinings, the enemy will suggest regeneration is something very different to what we have received; and when the soul is in the dark, the adversary will set him to hunt up his evidences of a real work of grace; and so sorely have I been put to it at times that my soul has almost dwelt in silence without one good frame or one good feeling, and apparently upon the brink of despair; but, notwithstanding ten thousand changes, blessed be the Father of all mercies and the God of all grace, when my foot slippeth, his mercy holds me up; so that, by the grace of God, I am what I am, even in hope of eternal life.

I have no desire to be without spiritual and sanctified trials, for "tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope; and this hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost." O that the daily trials, troubles, and afflictions were more sanctified to deaden me to this vain, vexing, empty world, and to endear the precious Object of faith! But, alas! trials come and go, and leave me where and what I was. I have been at times tempted to bluster through conscience, and declare Christ remains the same, let me be what I will, and to call him by all the precious names he bears in the word, and to live upon a creed drawn from past experience, and so to live upon mouldy instead of daily bread; but I never found it to sit well with my

weak stomach, and it has frequently disordered my bowels. Indeed, I have found to talk and feel not is not much better than to say and do not. I have found to make a great bluster about Christ is often to make a great blunder about Christ. Some wanted him to show himself openly to the world, that they might have had the credit of such a patron, and been admired for admiring him; but Christ disappointed them, and so he will every man that runs before the Holy Ghost. My desperate evil heart has ever been too fast or too slow; and Mr. Hart well says:

“Haste grasps at all, and nothing keeps;
Sloth is a dangerous state.”

And well, through mercy, we know it. Paul says the Spirit helpeth our infirmities with groanings. Bless the Lord for the sweet and precious declaration; for where life and pain are, groanings must be. It was the body of this death that made Paul so wretched. He could not talk him down at pleasure, but was compelled to plod under his weight with pain and sorrow. “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver?” And, in prospect of the deliverance, he was favoured to thank God, through Jesus Christ, and then he returned to the subject of tribulation again. (Rom. vii. 24, 25.) Thus, whilst sins without and sins within, a corrupt nature and an evil heart, deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, are the daily load of the believer, his deadly, daily, hourly plague, he is often found loathing, hating, abhorring, and condemning himself, and wondering at the mercy, goodness, and longsuffering of God towards him; and, from his inmost soul, can declare God hath not dealt with him after his sins, nor rewarded him after his iniquities. To such a soul, O how precious are the renewings of the Holy Ghost, that holy anointing which teacheth all things, and is truth, and maketh manifest our abiding in Christ.

O how truly blessed is prayer! Under the Spirit of prayer, what near approachings! what humble confessions! what fervent entreatings, bless God, at times I have had; yea, such sweet seasons, that, for the time being, I have forgotten the world, and could hardly tell whether in the body or out of the body. How blessed the approach to our Father under the Spirit of adoption! How the soul admires his love and mercy, feels his Fatherly affection, and would sooner die at his feet than wilfully offend against him? What real affection, love, and thankfulness to the dear Son of the Father for his wonderful condescension in taking our nature and becoming a man of sorrows! How the soul loves to be at Calvary, bless the Redeemer for the atonement, and put on his righteousness! It lifts up its head above doubts and fears, and it rejoices in hope of the glory of God. I have found that when indulged with these sweets—these Bethel visits, precious blood so to prevail above doubts, fears, unbelief, and all the power of the enemy, that I have said, “Bless the Lord, O my soul, who pardoneth all thine iniquities, who healeth

all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruction, who crowneth thee with lovingkindness, satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle."

It is a great mistake men make that a man who has got saving faith can always exercise faith, and rest upon the faithfulness of God, and keep the devil and unbelief at arm's length. He that has natural faith may exercise his natural faith when and how he pleases; but he whose faith is of the operation of God is, and knows he is, dependent upon God to increase it. (Luke xvii. 5; Phil. i. 29.) The work of regeneration of the soul by the Holy Ghost does not make the favoured subject of it independent of the after renewing of the Holy Spirit. The seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord are often much needed by him. He sensibly feels the difference between a creed performance with his eyes shut and fellowship with the Father and his Son by the Holy Ghost.

May the dear and ever-blessed Trinity in Unity often fill us with joy and peace in believing, and give us to abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost. It is when strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inward man that we know that Christ dwells in our hearts by faith.

I hope you will forgive my long delay, which has been partly from many engagements, and a thorough want of a writing talent. We are still residing at the same place, and our congregation is a good deal increased. We are not without our troubles, and a good many of them, too.

Your epistles have been a comfort to me, and so I hope you will indulge me with another as soon as possible.

Upper Dicker, July 20, 1841.

W. COWPER.

HE WILL COME.

My dear Friend,—God willing, I shall see you at your house on the 18th of this month, as I am going to Allington once more. Mr. D. and Mr. P. have sent a very kind invitation. I hope all will be well.

I was greatly pleased with the letters you and friend F. sent, and am happy to find we are, through grace, sweetly united in one faith and one spirit, notwithstanding the devil's wiles and lying insinuations. O what a cleansing, purifying grace is charity! It wipes out all failings, and covers with its sweet mantle a multitude of sins. Gentle it is, and easy to be entreated; full of compassion, and bowels of mercy and pity towards the saints. Ah, dear brother, what a divine favour it is to be moved by its divine and heavenly drawings! "Draw me," said one; "we will run after thee." This precious cord of love cannot, though with strength like Samson's, be broken. It is stronger than death, mightier than the grave. Fires cannot burn it, nor floods drown it. O that we could live continually under its blessed influence; what a heaven on earth it would be!

But this world is not our rest; and this, by daily experience, we find, that it is awfully polluted. Heaven is our home, and the Lord himself is our Leader and Guide. The path is a path of much tribulation. Here we have no continuing city, but, through grace, we seek one to come. Here we mope along as mere shadows, and never continue at one spot; but Christ is the way, and the way is the end, and the end is the way. He is the way, the truth, and the life, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. Blessed be his dear name, we are not our own, neither are we anybody else's; but we are the Lord's, and are at his own disposal. Thus are we most safe and secure, however matters go.

I in reality long to see you. The devil has pressed hard at me, and pinched me sore since I wrote to you; but he cannot destroy life. This is above his stretch. It is in heaven, where moth and rust cannot corrupt, and where thieves cannot break through and steal. "My witness," says one, "is in heaven, and my record is on high." Then why should we fear a wet foot, when we have dry hose to put on? Let us, then, take courage, dear friend. Though the battle goes hard with us, though our armour fails, and our ammunition appears to be gone, the waggons are rumbling on, and will be with us in due time. A good supply is nigh at hand. The driver is skilful. He is excellent in wisdom, and knows the nearest way. He knows how and when to use the whip, when to stop and when to go. He keeps pace with time according to the counsels of eternity. He will not be a moment behind. He is most faithful to all his engagements, therefore he listens not. He is well equipped; his reward is with him, and his work before him. O then, dear brother, though he seems to tarry, let us wait for him, because he will most assuredly come, and will not tarry beyond the appointed time. The set time to favour Zion will come. Even so; come, Lord Jesus, quickly come. Amen.

Your unworthy brother,

Badminton, March 9th, 1837.

JAMES REED.

A LETTER BY THE LATE R. H. IRESON.

My dear Friend in the Lord,—Your last favour did not require an immediate answer. Time develops the state and character of men and things in a measure, and the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning us.

I should feel a pleasure if you could pitch your tent anywhere near mine, if the Lord's will. I love communion with saints, though it is but little I get by it. I was much favoured in your company when last at Langton with the Spirit to testify of Jesus. Every measure of power, light, life, and love, however small, is very precious, and leaves a lasting testimony that we are one with Jesus. It is well for you, dear friend, your lot is cast and your lines drawn, and you have a goodly heritage.

We are sometimes placed in situations that are not very pleasant to the flesh; but after all there is no satisfaction in anything but in the will of God. The Lord does sometimes stir up our nest, in order to make us inquire what it means; and then, when we can ascertain what that will is, we must arise and depart. Our places of abode and movements, both of the inner and the outer man, are all appointed, marked, and timed by the end. "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

"The way I walk cannot be wrong,
If Jesus be but there."

And now, dear friend, a little about my inner man, if I can find him and tell him. It is not well with my soul. I want more life and power within me; more fellowship and communion with Jesus. Of late I have had a heavy cross, a dark night, and a rough road. Pressed above measure, I have almost despaired of life, with many things without of various forms, a sealed book, and an almost silent throne. Unskilful in a life of faith, I do little else than make mistakes and pervert things. To be short, I want the crown and the banquet without the cross and the conflict. The Canaanite is still in the land, and the devil, my old adversary, ever ready with his snares, baits, and darts to overthrow me in stony places. I appear to suffer loss in various forms. The greatest loss is when I am left for a season without any power in prayer, or any heart for good things. My feet well-nigh slip, and I seem ready to fall and perish, and thus make shipwreck of all my profession, and founder at last. Blind and lame, halt and withered, on all sides, I am heartless, helpless, and almost hopeless. In this state of things, a crushing burden sometimes comes down upon me, and then a conflict; then prayers and supplications, and a deliverance. Blessed be his holy name, he is faithful to his word: "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." When I am overpowered by my enemies, and fall down, so that there is none to help, he comes and picks me up, and I go on my way again. I am put into a furnace that will try and prove all things. Hitherto I have found that nothing but experimental truth will stand the test. But through mercy I have not yet to learn whether Jesus be the Christ or not. He still answers me to his glorious name, when I call upon it, "I am that I am;" and upon the blood of incarnate Deity I found all my hope for salvation. Thus, dear friend, I sing my old song at the foot of the cross. What a mercy it is the hope of Israel is on high, and becomes my hope in the day of evil! I want Jesus to collect my poor, scattered mind, abstract it, gird and fix it upon himself. I have often thought that there is a glory and a mighty power in the gospel calculated to raise the believer up to a state high and exalted above sin, death, hell, the world, flesh, and the grave, in the immortal triumphs of the Son of God on the cross. These Beulah prospects and Hephzibah delights are rarely realised, I

think. I am a sorry disciple, a dull scholar, a lame traveller; nor can I be well trusted at present on these mounts. I seem to be safest with a great burden, humbled, and broken-hearted. But I am in quest of truth in all its forms and beauties, for the honour of the gospel, if the Lord will show it me, and lead me into it. The crystal stream of grace will not, I believe, admit the creature to foul the stream with any creature conditions. "Father, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee." And does not Jesus glorify the believer when he gives him grace to believe and suffer for his truth? And so it is that through many trials and much tribulation, we enter the kingdom?

My cruse is nearly run out. Accept these fragments in love for Jesus' sake; and if there is a sentence that he will smile on, he is worthy of all the glory of his own grace and truth. If I am allowed to have anything, if I am allowed to see anything, and if he does anything in me, it is all of his grace. Earthen vessels may hold good liquor, but cannot create or produce it. "In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing;" but I have light to see that it is sin that makes me my own enemy, stand in my own light, and be my own plague and a burden to myself. In this body I groan and sigh, at times, "O wretched man that I am!" My heart within me, at times, is desolate, and I am like a sparrow, an owl, a pelican, or a dragon, a solitary man alone. But all these things, doubtless, are good for me, and necessary. They teach me to value Jesus, when I may be allowed his company. It is no small favour to see Jesus, and worship him, and, bless his name, I have done this, and crowned him Lord of all.

King's Cliffe, March 10th, 1853.

R. H. IRESON.

WHO AGAINST HOPE BELIEVED IN HOPE.

Dear Sister in the inseparable Tie of Spiritual Affection,—
May the rich mercy, grace, love, and peace of God, that passeth all understanding, sweetly rest and abide upon your spirit.

I received your welcome letter very seasonably, and I can truly say its contents reached my soul with a sweet and savoury feeling. In reading it, I felt my soul so united to yours that I cannot but call you my sister; my sister in Christ, I want to say, but I fear to presume. These are great words; I dare not use them presumptuously. Ah, my dear sister in tribulation, we cannot always speak as we would. God, in his rich and unmerited mercy, has, I can but hope and trust, made our hearts so honest that we cannot speak what we do not sensibly feel. This is why I cannot now speak with that confidence that I could when I wrote to you before. O in those happy, happy moments, which I never can forget, how feelingly I could clasp in the arms of my soul all that loved the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, as my brothers and sisters. In those happy days, these words of Christ were very sweet and precious to my soul: "And every one that

hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, wife, or children, for my sake, shall receive a hundredfold in this life, and in the world to come life everlasting." I felt that all the sweetness of those words belonged to me; for my conscience bore sweet testimonies that my heart had forsaken *all* and every thing for Christ, and I could say with the apostle, that I counted all things dung and dross for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. O I often look back to those happy days, and my soul cries out with Job, "O that it were with me as in months past; when the candle of the Lord shined round about me, and when by his light I walked through darkness." Though everything now, as regards the body and natural things, appears much brighter than it did then; yet O! what is health, what is wealth, in comparison with the love of Christ felt in the soul? O what can be given in exchange for it?

"O what is honour, wealth, or mirth,
To this well-grounded peace?
How poor are all the goods of earth
To such a gift as this."

But this is a blessing we cannot command; a blessing we cannot purchase, or give anything in exchange for. If it could be had in exchange for any earthly comfort, how freely would I give up everything for it,—my health, my liberty, my all in this world; yea, and very life also; but it is a gift, a free gift. Nothing can purchase it. It is that love, which if a man would give all the substance of his house for it would utterly be contemned. But O! how little of this love is felt and enjoyed in this lower world! What clouds of darkness, confusion, and distress have come over my soul since I first enjoyed it! I can feelingly sympathise with you in those distressing feelings you speak of in your letter; I can weep with them that weep for sorrow of heart; I can mourn with them that mourn over a hard heart, a dead unfeeling soul, full of darkness and confusion. I know well what it is, by painful experience, to be shut up in unbelief. O! this cursed sin of unbelief! What power it has over the soul! How it shuts up the heart against the word of God, and against Christ, as it were with iron doors; barring the soul from all communion and fellowship with him. What a prison is unbelief,—a prison in which my soul, for the most part, is shut up. Since I wrote to you under the sweet enjoyment of the light of the Lord's countenance, I have felt the power of unbelief ten times stronger than ever I did before. O how I have sunk in my soul under the power of unbelief and the temptations of the devil! Doubting my own interest in Christ is not the worst I feel of unbelief now. Before Christ manifested his love to my soul, I thought it was an easy matter to believe in him as the Redeemer of his people, as the way, and the only way, to salvation. Could I but believe my own interest in him, I thought it was easy enough to believe all the rest; but I have learned since, by painful experience, that I have not one grain of faith to believe any part of God's truth,

unless the God of truth be graciously pleased to give it me. Bunyan well knew the destructive power of unbelief. He was made to deeply feel it. How beautifully he writes of it in his "Holy War." Speaking of the twenty thousand doubters that came against Mansoul, with old Incredulity at the head of them, he says that the very nature of a doubter was to put a question upon all that Immanuel had said. There were the grace-doubters, the election-doubters, the persevering-doubters, the resurrection-doubters, and the felicity-doubters. O what an army to come against a poor benighted soul! I often fear this army will overcome my soul at last. I am certain it will, unless the Lord fight for me, unless almighty persevering grace hold me fast to the end. But this was made a sweet word to me a short time ago: "Though we believe not, yet he abideth faithful. He cannot deny himself;" which seemed to open itself to my mind in this manner, that every poor soul who was quickened by the Spirit of God, and made to live upon the Son of God, was vitally united and made one with God, so that God to deny such a soul would be to deny himself, and as a sweet hope had been given me that Christ had been formed in my heart, therefore God never would deny me, though I often in heart denied him, and called all his works in question.

O! the greatness, the richness, the freeness, and the fulness of the love of God! Who can begin to comprehend it? Well might Hart exclaim:

"O what wonders love has done;
But how little understood."

What a sweet feeling I had once from these words: "A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity." How sweetly my soul was drawn out in love and praise to that dear and precious Friend and Brother. But I need write no more of it, as I have sent you some verses which I wrote at the time I enjoyed the blessing. I often tremble lest I have been presumptuous in speaking or writing what I have done; but when the dear Lord is pleased to touch my heart with his love, I cannot help calling him my own God, my dear, my sweet, my precious Lord God and Saviour. I am then lost for words to speak his praises; I am lost to find a name near and dear enough to apply to him.

"But ah! when these sweet visits end,
I to my own sad place return."

But I must conclude. Write as soon as you can, if you think me worthy of a word of encouragement. Your letter was encouraging to me, because I found that you were in the same dark thorny path that I was.

Warbleton, Jan. 31, 1844.

J. S.

GREATNESS and preciousness do not often meet together; and many things are great, but then they are not precious; and many things are precious, but then they are not great; but in the promises of God to his church and people, greatness and preciousness do meet.—*Pearse*.

Obituary.

A SHORT MEMORIAL OF THE LATE LADY HAZLERIGG.

My dearest mother was born Feb. 17, 1784, and departed to her rest in Jesus Oct. 25, 1868.

In her earlier days she knew not the Lord, though she was not without some convictions which made her envy at times the beasts that perish. She was left a widow when still young, and survived my father about fifty years; and she had to experience a widow's trials and sorrows.

In her 65th year, in 1848, the Lord of her peace began to work effectually upon her soul. She was convinced of her state as a sinner, and as a lost sinner felt her need of a Saviour such as Christ is. In due time the Lord was pleased to comfort her. As her own letter to me expressed it, she was enabled to lay hold of Christ as her righteousness, and to view God in Christ as her Father. From this time, though often tried, and having to pass through many conflicts with indwelling sin, she was generally of a hopeful turn of mind; never being suffered to any great extent to cast away her confidence. God was pleased to do great things for her, and sweetly guide her, little by little, into his blessed truth; and those who knew her will be able to testify of the sweet humility and childlikeness of spirit so graciously bestowed upon her. Her heart was ever open to receive in love the true children of God; and though often chilled by what she saw amongst persons professing godliness, she retained her warmth of affection to the end to those who belonged to Christ. She loved to have them about her in her last afflictive illness; to them principally her heart cleaved, and she desired by them to be conveyed to her resting-place in the grave. On one occasion, when seeing myself riding to do the Lord's work, these words dropped into her heart: "Where thou goest I will go; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." This determined her to live at Leicester, and provide me a home.

At one time she was much exercised upon the doctrine of election. She wanted to be rightly instructed, but felt perplexed. She consulted a professed minister of the gospel, who informed her that God elected on the ground of the foreknowledge of faith in the elect. This did not satisfy her mind; but during the following night the Lord sealed instruction upon her. He spoke these words sweetly into her heart: "You believe because you were elected; you were not elected because you believe." This settled the matter; the truth was made plain. The Lord also showed her that she was a daughter of Abraham, a believer in Jesus. This was a very sweet sealing time to her soul. Indeed, the savour upon her spirit produced by this manifestation was perceptible to others.

The Lord, at times, in his great goodness, was pleased to instruct her even by dreams. She often referred to one in which

it seemed to her there were two rings on her fingers ; one mere tinsel which she wanted to retain, but could not, it seemed to flee away from her ; one pure gold, with a jewel in it ; this she was enabled to preserve in spite of everything. This jewel to her was her faith in Christ. She has told me that afterwards, in times of temptation, she has caught herself almost unconsciously putting her thumb upon the finger where the ring was, as if to preserve it.

My dearest mother for a time attended the ministry of the late Mr. Chamberlain, and I believe profited considerably by it. Not seeing the ordinance of believers' baptism, she joined his church, and continued in communion with the people until Mr. Chamberlain was finally laid aside by infirmity. From this time she either attended at Trinity Chapel, Alfred Street, or on my own ministry in a neighbouring village. She greatly profited under various sermons she heard. Indeed, I have heard her speak of good and profitable times under most of the ministers she was allowed to listen to. She was so favoured by the Lord with a spirit of humility in the things of God that if she did not seem to profit, she was inclined to impute it to something in herself. Indeed, I have known her, if the minister was bound and could not get on so easily in his work as usual, solemnly examine herself to see whether her own state might not in some degree be the cause of it, through a grieving of the Spirit of God. The savour of some sermons and the texts from which they were preached seemed to abide with her, more or less, almost all her days. I might give many instances, but will merely mention Ps. cvi. 4, 5: "Remember me, O Lord, with thy favour that thou bearest unto thy people. O visit me with thy salvation," &c. Also Luke i. 46, 47: "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." Also one of the last she ever heard, 1 Cor. vi. 6-11: "But ye are washed," &c. To this last she would at times sweetly allude on her death-bed, laying a peculiar emphasis on the words, "But ye are washed."

About five years ago my mother had a most alarming attack of fainting, so that her life seemed to hang by a thread ; but the Lord was most gracious to her soul. The frame of her mind seemed best represented by the lines of Toplady's, which she often quoted :

"Lord, it is not life to live,
If thy presence thou deny :
Lord, if thou thy presence give,
'Tis no longer death to die."

She was even afraid of being restored again, lest she should again sin against the Lord. The Lord also gave her these words :

"Yes, I to the end shall endure,
As sure as the earnest is given."

She would often say to us, "And I have received the earnest."

She spoke very sweetly to those about her, and said she felt able to leave all and give all up to Christ, Christ all in all, having the pre-eminence. Right hands, right eyes, all must go for him. It was very sweet to converse with her, the fear of death and undue care about others were so greatly subdued, as though she could leave her all where she left her soul.

She had prayed much on the Tuesday before this illness, to be enabled to glorify the Lord. Hymn 643 had been very sweet to her the previous Lord's day. She said she felt to love all the Lord's dear people, and desired to send her love to all who asked after her, and likewise wished me publicly to return thanks for the Lord's goodness to her.

From the date of this alarming attack, my mother seemed constantly to bear about in herself a sentence of death. She lived from day to day as one who felt that at her age death must before very long be conficted with.

On the 2nd of last July she was taken with that which in spite of partial rallyings proved to be her last illness. At first she was somewhat dark in her mind, and felt the want of the Lord's presence; but on the day following the Lord sweetly visited her. She signified that death would be only going to a Father; and, as she gently whispered to me, she "need not fear that." He also told her he would provide for those she left behind; and so she said she "need not be concerned, though anxieties would come in." She told me she was half dozing at the time. "I slept," she said, "but my heart waketh." When my brother, sister, and myself were all around her, she seemed much affected, and lifting up her hands said, "I have but one wish to make." We listened intently; she continued, "That we may all meet in heaven."

On the 19th my mother had a day of remarkable refreshment from the Lord, and called me to her bedside at night to have a few words of prayer and thanksgiving for the Lord's mercies to her, and the refreshment he had given.

From this attack my mother partially and temporarily rallied; but the blow was unquestionably struck which was destined to carry her to her grave.

About the 20th of September my mother became very ill again, and from this time to the end of her days on earth there was a progressive failing of the vital powers, accompanied with much pain, and extreme restlessness, which she bore with sweet resignation to the Lord's will, often speaking of the Lord's goodness to her in taking down her earthly house so gently. On Sunday night, the 27th, she was very ill, and being unable to rest in bed, sat up in her chair. She then made me sit by her, and tell her the text from which I had been speaking, Heb. xii. 22-24. The part which most struck her was that about "the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel." This was sweetly blessed to her in the night afterwards. She saw and felt how the blood of Abel called to God for vengeance, but that of Jesus for pardon, love, and peace. She

was brought to a sweet resignation to the Lord's will, and a willingness to leave all, and be with Christ, as far better.

It was about this time that she called me to her bedside, and whispered, "I do not think death will be my loss."

On Oct. 1st she became very much worse, indeed in the greatest peril. For a time she seemed in some anxiety about her state, and asked me if I was sure she was right.

I said to her, "What is your hope built upon?" Her countenance brightened as she replied, "On Jesus, the Son of God." She told me the thought of the glory of heaven almost overpowered her. "O the great sinner I am," she cried, and wondered how she could be fit; but then suddenly, as if recollecting herself, exclaimed, "O the fitness is in Jesus! He is seen, not me." Then she cried out, "My Father, my Father in Jesus Christ." She said, too, she was willing to depart and leave all, though she still had some anxieties for us.

On Oct. 2nd my mother became still worse. I sat up with her the night preceding, and towards morning, after getting into bed again, she gently called me to her, and whispered, "The Lord has just said to me, 'It is well with the righteous.'" She was filled with joy and peace with God. She repeated one of her hymns so feelingly, 422nd:

"Who can describe the joys that rise?" &c.

She said she could then repeat all her hymns as feeling them. She felt she could not sleep for thinking of these things. She spoke of the cross of Christ, and said it broke her heart to think of his love to her. She wanted to cry, but not tears of misery; for she ought rather to laugh than cry. She said it would be but going home. She continued in a very blessed frame of mind most of this day. When the physician came to see her, and asked how she was, he was quite startled by her reply, "O I am better." And when, in some astonishment, he said, "Why, Lady Hazlerigg, to hear you speak we should think you were quite well," her gentle answer was, "But is it not better to be getting nearer home?" Even our anxieties for the body could not restrain her from testifying of the Lord's truth and goodness to her, and the needs be of a real religion in a dying hour.

From the beginning of this illness to the end she never seemed carried away, as we were at times, by undue hopes. She felt it was for death, and often said warningly to others, "What should I now do if I had to begin to seek the Lord?"

(To be continued.)

It was a sweet saying of an ancient father: "The name of Jesus is Mel in Ore, Melos in Aure, Jubilus in Corde" (Honey in the mouth, melody in the ear, and a jubilee or joy in the heart).—*Venning*.

God in the church discovers the glory of all his attributes. It is in a man's house where his riches and state are seen. It is in the church God makes himself known more than in all the world besides. (Ps. lxxvi. 1).—*Charnock*.

FEBRUARY 1, 1869.

THE
GOSPEL STANDARD.

FEBRUARY, 1869.

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

NOTES OF THE LAST SERMON BY THE LATE
MR. DAVID FENNER, JULY 5TH, 1868.

(Concluded from page 24.)

"Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us."—1 JOHN III. 24.

AGAIN. Do you ever find a spiritual movement when you are hearing the gospel? Have you found it more than bare words? Has it come with a divine unction to your hearts? Have you felt that anointing that has joined it to your heart and soul, and so it has attracted you to the blessed gospel in affection to it: "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me?" And have you been led to call upon the Lord for a blessing to come through the gospel to your heart, and you have found access at a throne of grace, and an echo back to your soul? What did you find then? Were your affections asleep? O no! David says, "I love the Lord, because he has heard my voice and my supplications; therefore will I call upon him as long as I live." Love to Christ will knit the heart unto his blessed gospel.

"He it is that loveth me," and then Christ adds, "My Father will love him." It does not mean the Father's love is stirred towards him because of his love to Christ. No; for it is the Father's love which is at the bottom of it all, for there is not a spark of the Father's love to any one but in Christ. As Hart says:

"Worship God, then, in his Son;
There he loves, and there alone."

Then Christ says in another place, "Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me," and "That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them and I in them." So that the Father's love to the objects of it is in Christ the Mediator between him and them. And it must be there, and there to be revealed by his righteousness and death, by the sacrifice that he made unto all the attributes of God unto their perfect satisfaction and harmony. Otherwise it could not touch any heart; but through Christ, and through Christ alone, it does. Hence Paul says, "Nothing shall separate us from the love of God which is in

Christ Jesus our Lord." There you must seek his love, and there only.

Well. Here is the true criterion of believing in Christ: "Unto you, therefore, that believe, he is precious." None know his preciousness but those who have true faith in him. "Unto you, therefore, that believe, he is precious," and such believing will meet in the heart and affections. He is come, and his preciousness flows into the heart; faith cleaves to him and embraces, and faith flows out in love to him. "Thou art all my desire, and all my salvation. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth I desire beside thee." He is in the heart. And what is he there? Why, your hope, your hope for eternity. "It is Christ in you the hope of glory." But though we have faith and hope in him while here below, which brings down heaven to us, "for faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," yet faith and hope will not be with us in heaven; for there is no need of faith and hope where vision and fruition are—the vision of his open presence to the full, and fruition in the everlasting enjoyment of him. But here below, faith and hope go to heaven for us, and bring down heaven to us; so that we may have a clear hope by faith and a heart enlarging in hope. "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."

Now, a child of God, having this experience, may be led in a way for his trial. Here is the world, here is the flesh, here are his relative ties, and here is the devil with all his allurements. This is one side; but here is the other, which is Christ, the hope of glory, which I shall be sure to have in eternity as I now have him by faith and hope.

What are all the allurements of time and sense? O! they are all a maze, all that is hurtful as it respects eternal things and matters, as it respects Christ in the heart the hope of glory. But while we are here below we may go to heaven for the things that he sends down: "Every good and every perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." There is nothing comes to us but what comes through Christ, and there is no happiness that we shall have when we get to glory but we shall have it in Christ; for glory is the fulness of all blessings and enjoyments in him. The apostle says to the Ephesians: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus," where in the margin we read, "Hath blessed us with heavenly things." Now, some of these *things* we may have while here on the earth; such as faith, hope, love, repentance, and all the spiritual life of the soul, to make us more spiritual, godly, and heavenly minded.

And there are not only heavenly *things*, but heavenly *places* for us. Now, the spiritual blessings are in Christ Jesus, and

the heavenly places are in Christ Jesus also. But we do not expect to jump into these heavenly places from the earth without passing a change; but we may expect to receive the blessings that are in Christ, to draw our hearts from earth to heaven; as it is said: "Set your affection on things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God." And he has all his family about him there.

The children of God, when they get to glory, will not be separated as they are here, a thousand miles apart. O no. "He hath made us to sit together (as one family) in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Well, we don't know what these heavenly places are; but they will be something that "eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God hath prepared for them that love him," for them that wait for him, for them that seek him, for them that long for him, for them that desire heavenly things while they live on the earth, that they may live not on earth but in heaven; and then, when the change comes, they will say, "Here I am, ready, ready."

This is our ordinance day, blessed be the Lord; and we are exhorted to attend unto it as unto the Lord's death: "As oft as ye eat of this bread and drink of this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death till he come." In the margin it is in the imperative: "Show ye forth the Lord's death till he come." So that when this ordinance is attended to, that which is spoken should not be foreign to the subject, but it should be a dwelling on the Lord's death. He that died in his human nature is the Lord Jehovah. As Hart says:

"The mighty God Jehovah died
An ignominious death."

And therefore the death of the human nature being what we are all interested in, and blessed partakers of what redeemed us all unto the Lord and gave satisfaction unto all his attributes; and here it is that we may have access to God and freedom with him. Yea, his love may flow through Christ into our hearts to be sweetly enjoyed; because when Christ died it was the death of him who is the Lord, who died in his human nature. "He was put to death in the flesh." And therefore the atonement for sin, the complete work of redemption, and the complete salvation of the redeemed, all flow through this, that there is but one Person of Christ, and that Person the same Person that he was before he took the human nature. He was the almighty God,—a Divine Person, but now he is the God-man, and so Mediator between God and man, and therefore the complete redemption and salvation of his people, of the millions for whom he wrought the righteousness, suffered, and died.

Now it is called the Lord's death, and the table before your eyes is called the Lord's table; and the symbols upon it (the bread and the wine) represent the Lord's death: "As oft as ye eat of this bread and drink of this cup, ye do show forth the

Lord's death till he come." And he has provided it in this world for us to attend unto as long as the world stands. When he gave the bread to the disciples, he said: "Take, eat. This is my body, which is broken for you. This do in remembrance of me." "After the same manner he took the cup, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood which is shed for many for the remission of sins." All which shows that this ordinance is to stand as long as the world lasts; for we are to show forth his death till he comes. It is to be done in obedience unto him. And we are to approach his table by faith in him; so that, when we approach his table, we are to approach it through the benefits of his death. This should be our one desire, that when we partake of the symbols of his death we may feed on his body as broken for our redemption, salvation, and pardon, and drink of his blood unto the same, and unto the benefits of his death. What is it? The springing up of spiritual life; for he says, "He that eateth me even he shall live by me." "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me and I in him." Therefore this is what we should long for, and we cannot be too earnest: "Covet earnestly the best gifts;" and that is one of the best. It is called the Lord's Supper, because he provided it, and because he has promised to come and sup with us, and he does not come alone, for he brings his Father with him: "If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." The Father, in his paternal love by the Spirit of adoption, enabling us to say to him, "Abba, Father! thou art my God and Father!" And therein our enjoyment of Christ's abode in our hearts: "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." The Spirit of Christ will make this clear, our love will wax warmer and warmer unto Christ, making him exceeding precious to us; for Christ said to the Jews, "If God were your Father, ye would love me." Adoption will draw our affections to Christ; adoption felt will warm our love to Christ!

Well, now, who are they that are welcome to the Lord's table? They that are strong believers in Christ? Yes, they are; but not they only: "Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye." Dr. Gill says it means, "Give him the hand, which was the primitive mode of receiving members into the Church." "Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye;" receive him in your heart, receive him to the table of the Lord. Well; but he may say, I have doubts and fears that I am not the character for the Lord's table. Receive him, for God has received him. Do not conclude of him as he concludes of himself, by his doubts and fears; but receive him, notwithstanding all of them.

Well, every hungry soul that is after spiritual provision is welcome to the Lord's table, and every one that can appeal to the Lord as Peter did: "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." Yes, these surely may come with

freedom. And so may every one that the Lord loves. "He loves them that hunger and thirst after righteousness. Again, he loves them that fear the Lord, that tremble at his majesty, in awe of sinning against him. You may feel unworthy of the favour, unworthy of the privilege, unworthy of the blessings, as if they did not belong to you, but the more deeply you feel your unworthiness and destitution, the more qualified for it. As Erskine says:

"Most qualified are they in heaven to dwell
Who feel themselves most qualified for hell."

The more sensibly unworthy, the more welcome. O that the blessed Lord may be with us, and go with us to his table, and be with us at it! O that he may stir our hearts and minds to himself, and draw us to himself there, and so draw us that he will communicate to us; so that when we leave the table we shall go away cheerful, refreshed, strengthened, free, and encouraged, our faith and hope increased, Christ desirable to us, longing to be more spiritual, more godly, more heavenly minded, that partaking of the blessings of the Lord may not only lead us in gratitude to God, but that it may lead us into more spiritual life, that Christ may be our salvation as well as our desire. As David says, I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only;" and Paul, "I am determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified." Therefore, to know Christ and him crucified is the essential of the matter.

O, may we pray to have a deep experience of it, that therein Christ may become exceeding precious to us, the delight of our heart and souls, that we may grow in grace and the knowledge of him. This is what I long for. O that I may grow up in him and you grow up with me.

"BLESSED IS THE MAN THAT FEARETH ALWAYS."

THE thing is to distinguish between legal and evangelical fear, the fear of the wicked who fears the punishment only, but feels no love to the Lord; and the fear of the child who loves, or wishes to love, the Lord, and fears, because of the sin and enmity felt to be still in the flesh, which wars against the spirit, that his spot is not the spot of the child of God. You dare not say you do not love the Lord; but you are afraid, because you look to what you feel yourself to be, and not enough to what Christ is, as made of God to you, that your fears are not holy fears. You fear to offend God, or grieve his Spirit, or bring disgrace upon his holy name. You fear because you find yourself weak. (Thank God that you are a sensibly weak one!) You fear because you cannot be as holy as you wish. (Thank God that you have an appetite for God's own righteousness, and that only Christ's righteousness will satisfy you.) Do you hate sin only for the punishment threatened against it, or because it is

the abominable thing which God hates? and does it make you grieve, wound your conscience, and bring your soul into trouble? If so, thank God. May the Lord give you the full assurance of faith. "Give diligence, to make your calling and election sure." That word diligence shows it is no easy matter.

W. L. R.

SUCCESSFUL BEGGING.

My dear Sister in the Lord Jesus,—Many thanks to you for your kind letter and its contents. I have often thought of writing a line to you; but I am become such a fool in writing that I seldom do anything to it more than I seem obliged to do, and then I mostly am so ashamed of it that it is a trial to send it.

I am sorry for your affliction in your head, and your other trials which come upon you; but it is a mercy to find a God hearing and answering prayer in the time of need. I am a beggar, and so was Lazarus, and the Lord lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill. Begging is a trying employment sometimes; at other times I love it very much. To be a successful beggar, I must have a teacher. The Lord alone can make a good beggar. He is the Lord of beggars, and loves the beggar's knock. I have to beg that I may beg aright. I beg that I may be kept begging mercy every hour, for none can need it more than I. I beg to be healed, for my wounds often stink and are corrupt, because of my foolishness. I beg to be humbled and kept low at the Lord's feet, for my heart is often stiff with pride. I beg for faith; for my heart is a sink of unbelief. I beg for strength; for I have much to do and much to bear, and have no strength for anything. I beg the Lord to open my eyes; for I am very blind. I beg the Lord to comfort me; for I am often very wretched and miserable. I beg the Lord to lift my head above my enemies round about me; for they often seem very high, and I am very low. I beg that I may hear the Lord's most blessed voice; for I often call and he giveth me no answer. I beg him to wash me and make me clean and sweet; for I am very filthy, and loathe my own breath. I beg to be made beautiful and comely; but I am still very black and very ugly. I have to beg for a chapel, and beg for a congregation, and beg for a text, and beg for a sermon, beg for the Lord's presence and for a blessing upon the word and upon the people. I have to beg for the weak and the wavering, and the fallen and the offended; for my deacons and my friends, my sons, and my daughters, and my wife, and for our Queen, and for our country. So mine is a large business, and I wish I could say, "most successful."

Well, although I have much to lament and deplore, yet my incoming from this branch of trade is so considerable that if I was but right minded in the matter, it would take every moment of my time to pay the tax that is due to my sovereign Lord, King Jesus.

I do not forget you altogether, but am sometimes permitted to remember you at the throne of grace, and sincerely wish to do it more and more effectually too. And may the Lord give you a heart to pray for me and for mine!

The place I speak in upon Sundays, in Artillery Lane, is a chapel that was originally built for the French refugees, and would seat, I suppose, 500 people if there were proper sittings for them; but it being used for a school, of course the sittings are deficient. Yet it is a good place for speaking, and the attendance is more than we had at Mitchell Street.

My daughter is still laid up, but I have this morning carried her into the front room to lie on the sofa. This is more than she could bear for the last twelvemonths.

Yours affectionately, for the Lord's sake,
Islington, July 24, 1854.

JAMES SHORTER.

*GREAT IS THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS: GOD
MANIFESTED IN THE FLESH.*

God incarnate! Here's a mystery;
Angels cannot fathom this.
Throughout all eternity,
Here's a sea of boundless bliss.

God incarnate! What compassion
Dwells in Jesus' bleeding heart;
O the precious consolation
He to sinners does impart.

'Twas for sinners; yea, the vilest,
That he bled on Calvary's tree,
That through him they might be guiltless,
That through him they might be free.

See him groaning, gasping, crying,
Shuddering in the arms of death;
Hear the multitude reviling,
Listen to his praying breath!

"Father, Father, O forgive them,
For they know not what they do!"
Here's a dying, bleeding virtue;
Sinners, sinners, 'twas for you.

Now behold the sun in darkness;
Midnight darkness veils the skies;
Now the powers of hell are shaken,
And the sleeping dead arise.

Rocks asunder now are riven,
And the veil is rent in twain;
Monarch he of earth and heaven,
Yet by feeble hands was slain.

Jesus, full of all compassion,
Let me feel thy power within,
Slaying every lust and passion,
Every base in-dwelling sin.

MEDITATIONS ON DIFFERENT PORTIONS OF THE WORD OF GOD.

MEDITATIONS ON THE SECOND CHAPTER OF THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

(Concluded from page 383, Vol. XXXIV.)

IN resuming and, we hope, concluding our exposition of the chapter before us (Eph. ii.), we would draw the attention of our readers to the wonderful contrast presented to us in it between the natural and original state of a sinner, and especially a Gentile sinner, as sunk in the depths of the fall, and manifesting in his life and conduct its dreadful fruits and effects, and the state of a sinner redeemed, restored, and saved by free and sovereign grace. As sunk in the depths of the fall, and manifesting in his life and conduct its awful fruits and practical effects, he is dead in trespasses and sins, walks according to the course of this world, is under the dominion and influence of Satan, the prince of the power of the air, has his conversation in the lusts of the flesh, fulfils the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and is by nature a child of wrath, exposed to, and deserving the terrible and eternal anger of God as a consuming fire. What a picture is here drawn of the state of man by nature, and especially of those Gentile sinners to whom the Epistle was addressed. But how true a description also of what *we* ourselves were in days past, when dead in sin, and how *we* walked, lived, and acted before we were arrested in our mad career by sovereign and distinguishing grace. It is good and profitable often to call to mind and ponder over our base original, and what our state by nature was, that we may see in it, as in a glass, the awful depths of sin and ruin in which we were sunk. It is thus that we see, in the light of our own experience, as a confirmation of the word of truth, what death of soul Godward; what reckless, callous insensibility to his will and word; what total want of godly fear; what determined resolution to have our own way and carry out our various plans of pleasure or profit; what wilful rejection and proud scorning of all control, possessed our whole minds, even if we were not abandoned to excess of crime or all manner of open and outward ungodliness. It is thus also that we learn to wonder at and admire the lovingkindness, tender pity, and infinite compassion of a blessed Redeemer who had mercy upon those who had no mercy upon themselves, and who, but for his grace, would have gone on adding sin to sin and iniquity to iniquity until they dropped into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. Israel was bidden to confess, "A Syrian ready to perish was my father" (Deut. xxvi. 5); and when the Lord would, by a most striking and effective figure, specially represent to the church of old the riches of his grace, he paints her as a helpless, forlorn babe, "cast out in the open field, to the loathing of its person in the day that it was born" (Ezek. xvi. 5),

that by the contrast of this miserable condition with his pity and love to her, and the fruits of it, he might recall to her mind the unparalleled debt of gratitude due to himself, and her base returns for all his favours and lovingkindnesses bestowed upon her. Shallow professors, and formal, dry, dead preachers may cry out against it as poring over ourselves, brooding over our miseries, making an experience of, or even priding ourselves upon our corruptions; but we are well satisfied that a believing sight and sense, and a feeling, experimental knowledge of the depths of the fall and the state of ruin, misery, and degradation into which it has personally and individually sunk us, must ever precede a spiritual, experimental knowledge of the efficacy of atoning blood as applied to the conscience and the heights, lengths, depths, and breadths of pardoning love as revealed to the soul; and that those who are ignorant of the one are ignorant of the other. It is, indeed, for want of being deeply and thoroughly exercised upon these solemn matters, and because they have known and felt so little of the dreadful evil of sin, of the holiness and justice of God, and of their own utter helplessness to deliver and save themselves, that we have so many self-righteous, presumptuous, light and trifling, vain and empty professors amongst us. Had they really seen and felt what man is by nature and practice, and had their souls been long and deeply exercised with a burden of sin and guilt, and then been blessed with some manifestation of mercy and love, how it would have cured them both of their self-righteousness and of their presumption, driven out of them, or at least much subdued, their light and trifling spirit, and left such a deep, solemn, and permanent impression on their mind of what they have been and are toward God, and what he has been and is toward them, as would have wrought in them a solidity, humility, contrition, and brokenness of spirit, a tenderness of conscience, separation from the world, and spirituality of mind, of which at present we see so little in the professing church of God.

But now having looked down into the horrible pit and miry clay into which sin has sunk us, in common with the whole human race, let us, with the apostle, take a view of the other side of the question, and see to what heights of blessedness sovereign grace has restored and raised the elect of God. How wonderful is the contrast between the depths of the fall and the heights of the recovery; between the misery of man and the mercy of God; between the state and character of sinners dead in sin and saints blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. But as in our exposition of the chapter now before us we have already attempted to unfold the spiritual blessings and exalted privileges described by the apostle, and to trace out one by one the mercies and favours to which the saints are advanced spoken of in it, we need not go over that ground again, or even briefly recapitulate them, as it would be but a repetition of our previous papers. We shall, therefore, at once

address ourselves to the exposition of the remaining verses of the chapter.

Our readers will remember that the point at which we paused in our last paper was to show how the saints of God, and especially the Gentile saints, were "no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with saints, and of the household of God." (Verse 19.)

The point, therefore, to which we are now come, is the way in which they are built up, that they may be a habitation of God through the Spirit.

i. The first thing which we have to unfold is that which lies at the basis of the whole, viz., the *foundation*: "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." (Eph. ii. 20.)

It will be observed that they are here said to be "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets." This does not mean that the apostles and prophets form themselves the foundation of the spiritual building, as if it were *actually* and really built upon them, but that it was laid *ministerially* by them. No man, or order of men, however distinguished by ability, gift, or grace, however called or favoured of God, could be a foundation able to bear up the church of Christ. Neither Peter, nor Peter's successors, true or false, could be the rock on which Christ has declared he will build his church. Such a foundation would be sand, not a rock against which the gates of hell should not prevail, and those who trusted in it and built upon it would come under the curse: "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm." (Jer. xvii. 5.) Christ, and Christ only, is the foundation. This point is well explained by the apostle himself in another epistle: "According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. iii. 10, 11.) He here speaks of himself as "a wise master-builder," that is, a skilful architect who knew both the certainty and value of the foundation, and the fit materials for the superstructure. According, then, to the grace of God which was given unto him, instructing him into a spiritual and experimental knowledge of Christ by a revelation of him to his soul (Gal. i. 16), and bestowing upon him the gift of utterance to open his mouth boldly, and make known the mystery of the gospel (Eph. vi. 19), he ministerially laid the foundation by preaching Christ and him crucified. He, therefore, plainly tells us that "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." This foundation God laid *actually*, according to his own words: "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, precious corner stone, a sure foundation; he that believeth shall not make haste" (Isa. xxviii. 16); but Paul laid it *minis-*

terially. Thus when we read of "the foundation of the apostles and prophets," and being built on that foundation, it does not mean that the apostles and prophets were themselves the foundation, but that they laid it ministerially when they declared, by the word of their testimony, in the language of Peter: "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner." (Acts iv. 11.)

This foundation, then, was laid by "the apostles and prophets" when they testified in their ministry of the Person and work of Christ, preaching him as the Son of God (Acts ix. 20), and set him forth as the Rock, the only Rock, on which the church is built. If we carefully read the various sermons and discourses of Peter and Paul recorded in the Acts, we shall clearly see how in them all Christ in his sufferings, death, and resurrection is laid as the foundation of all forgiveness of sin, and of all hope of salvation (Acts ii. 32-39; iii. 26; iv. 10-12; xiii. 38, 39.) There is no difficulty, therefore, in ascertaining the meaning of the word "apostles." They were those who were entrusted with a peculiar mission, and an office distinct from all others. Thus among the specially-gifted members of the body of Christ, enumerated by the apostle, they occupy the first place: "And God hath set some in the church; first, apostles." (1 Cor. xii. 28.) Such were the twelve disciples: "And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples; and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles" (Luke vi. 13); and such was Paul, who declares of himself that he was "an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and by God the Father, who raised him from the dead." (Gal. i. 1.) The apostles were distinguished from all other teachers and officers in the church by having their commission and doctrine immediately and directly from Christ himself. The literal meaning of the word apostle is "one who is sent." Thus they were, in a peculiar and especial way, sent by Christ himself, either by express call when he was on earth, or, as in Paul's particular case, by express revelation from him in heaven. To them was also given a power to work miracles as proofs of their divine commission; and they only could, by the laying on of hands ministerially, give the Holy Ghost. (Acts viii. 14-17; xix. 6.) They also alone had authority to plant churches; nor was their mission confined to any particular church; but they had power and authority in all the churches to preach the word and administer the ordinances, give counsel, advice, reproof, exhortation, and censure, either personally or by letter. None, therefore, but they could write, under divine inspiration, Epistles to the churches to form a part of the sacred Scriptures. The foundation, therefore, laid by men so eminent in grace, endowed with such divine authority, and furnished with such extraordinary gifts, must needs be a foundation laid in the power of the Holy Ghost, and worthy of our faith and acceptance.

But the apostle speaks of this foundation as laid also by "the

prophets." By these we understand, not the prophets of the Old Testament, though we would not exclude them, according to Peter's testimony (Acts x. 43), but the prophets of the New; for the apostle tells us, in a passage already quoted, that they occupied a position in the church next to the apostles: "And God hath set some in the church, first, apostles; secondarily, prophets." He also speaks in almost similar language in the epistle now before us: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets." (Eph. iv. 11.) By the word "prophets," however, we are not to understand, in the usual sense of the term, men who predicted future events, though there were such in the primitive church, as Agabus (Acts xi. 28; xxi. 10), but preachers, as we now term them, who are called "prophets," because they spoke in the name of and from the Lord, being, as it were, his mouth. This, indeed, is the true and proper meaning of the word "prophet;" his distinguishing character being that he speaks for God, being his mouth (Jer. xv. 19), and one to whom the word of the Lord has come. That he predicts future events is but a secondary part of his mission, and connected with his primary office, more as a confirmation than its chief intention. In this point of view, therefore, the prophets of the New Testament resemble the prophets of the Old, who spake such words, whether predictions or not, "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Pet. i. 21.) We see this very clearly from the language of the apostle in another place: "But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all." (1 Cor. xiv. 24.) By prophesying is evidently meant here, not predicting future events, but preaching with power to men's consciences; for it is in this way that the unbeliever is convinced of sin, judged as guilty, and the secrets of his heart made manifest. Prophecy, therefore, in the true and proper sense of the word, includes instruction and consolation, reproof, and, indeed, the whole work of the ministry: "Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. If anything be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted." (1 Cor. xiv. 29-31.) For these reasons, therefore, we understand the prophets who are said, in conjunction with the apostles, to have laid the foundation on which the church is built to be the prophets or preachers, not of the Old Testament, but of the New, and thus to include those servants of the living God who preach the gospel as being divinely commissioned and enabled to do so by the teaching of the Holy Ghost and the authority of God.

But now let us look at the expression, "Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone."

The meaning of this expression, which frequently occurs in the New Testament, is, we think, often misunderstood. It is taken in the first instance from the declaration concerning our Lord in the Psalms, which he in the gospels (Mark xii. 10; Luke

xx. 17) specially claimed and appropriated to himself: "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner." (Ps. cxviii. 22.) The "head of the corner," or "the chief corner stone," the meaning of both expressions being one and the same, signifies not the stone which stands at the top of the building, uniting the corners of the two walls just under the roof, but the broad foundation stone, which is firmly fixed at the very bottom; and it is called the "corner stone" or the "head" or "chief of the corner," because being laid as a huge and broad stone for a foundation of the whole building, each wall meets upon it at the corners, it equally supporting and upholding them all. The two walls which thus meet together represent Jew and Gentile; but each of these walls equally rests upon the broad foundation stone which is common to both, and not only supports them separately but unites them together at the corner, where each meets and rests upon it. It is the expression "head" which has caused the misapprehension of the word "corner stone" to which we have alluded; but the word "head" in Hebrew properly signifies the first or chief; and thus as the foundation is not only the chief stone as supporting the whole, but the first which is laid, so our gracious Lord is not only chief in dignity, but was laid first in place, for the church was chosen in him. In all things he must have the pre-eminence. Thus he is first in dignity, as the Son of the Father in truth and love; first in choice, God choosing the elect in him; first in suffering, for what sorrows were like his sorrows? first in resurrection, for he is "the first-fruits of them that slept;" first in power, for "all power is given unto him in heaven and in earth;" first in glory, for he is gone before to prepare a place for his people; and we may well add, he is first in their hearts and affections, for he that loveth father or mother, son or daughter, more than him is not worthy of him.

But the chief point of the passage now before us is the way in which the Lord Jesus is the chief corner stone to those who are built upon him; and in it we see the connection between the foundation as laid ministerially by the apostles and prophets, and the actual foundation itself, which is Christ the Lord. And to understand this connection better, take your own case, or that of any other poor guilty sinner quickened into divine life and looking about him on every side for something to support his guilty soul, his troubled mind, his fearful anxious heart, his burdened spirit. If he look up, what does he see but the justice of a holy God? If he look to the law, what is there in it but curse and condemnation, misery, wrath, and bondage? If he look to his past life, what is it but one continued course of wickedness and sin? If he look into his own heart, what does he find it but "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked?" What, then, shall he do? Where shall he go? On what can he build his hope? Now, when Christ the foundation is set before him as laid in the Scriptures of truth by the

apostles, or is preached in his hearing by one of God's prophets, and by the application of the word to his heart, he is enabled to believe for himself in the Son of God, then he comes off himself to rest upon Christ the foundation. It is thus that the very first stone of his hope is laid upon Christ. This is effected by the shining in of divine light into the soul, giving him a knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Cor. iv. 6.) And as he thus beholds, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, he is delivered from the power of darkness and is translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. (2 Cor. iii. 18; Col. i. 13.) He now finds a foundation, on which his soul can safely and happily rest. Having tasted that the Lord is gracious, by the discoveries of his Person and work, and the manifestations of his mercy, and being drawn by the cords of a man and the bands of love (Hos. xi. 4; Jer. xxxi. 3), he comes unto him, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious; and by coming unto him, is lifted up, so to speak, out of sin and self, out of bondage, darkness, and confusion, and is set down upon him as a tried stone, a sure foundation; and thus finds rest and peace. To rest thus upon Christ as a foundation carries with it the sensible approbation of God; for he has laid this foundation in Zion, that it might be "a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation." (Isa. xxviii. 16.) As the child of God, therefore, by faith rests upon Christ, he has the testimony of the blessed Spirit in his heart that it is a sure foundation, and that he that believeth on him shall not be confounded, either in this world, or in the world to come. (1 Pet. ii. 6.)

ii. Having thus spoken of the foundation as laid *ministerially*, by the apostles and prophets, and laid *actually* by Jesus Christ being himself the chief corner stone, the apostle goes on to show how the living stones are built up upon and in him: "In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord." (Eph. ii. 21.)

By "the building," we are to understand the whole church of Christ as comprehending all the members of his mystical body, chosen in him and given to him before the foundation of the world. But this building is raised here below, before it is taken up to be eternally in all its completeness above; and thus, though there is an eternal union between the Lord Jesus Christ and his people, which is the foundation of every other, there is also a grace union in time as each successive member is brought forth and is baptized by the Holy Ghost into his mystical body. The union between Christ and his people is represented in the Scripture sometimes by the figure of a vine and its branches, sometimes by that of a body and its head, sometimes by that between a man and his wife, and sometimes, as in the passage before us, by that of a building of which he is the foundation, and they the superstructure. It is with the latter we have now to do.

The union between the foundation and the superstructure is very close and intimate naturally, but in the case of Christ and

his people embraces a closeness of communication, of which no earthly, material building is capable.

1. First, then, it is one of *support*. Every stone in a building has a virtual union with the foundation on which it rests, for if that foundation were removed from under them, every stone in every part of the building would at once fall to the ground with a crash. So, could the foundation which God has laid in Zion be removed, the gates of hell would prevail and the whole church sink into eternal perdition. But here is the blessedness of "a sure foundation," that every stone which is built upon it is so supported by it that it cannot fall as long as the foundation stands.

2. But besides the union of support between the foundation and the stones which rest upon it, there is, in this case, what is not and cannot be found in a material building, a union consisting in *mutual life*. This is very clearly and sweetly brought before us by Peter: "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, 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." (1 Pet. ii. 4, 5.) In a material building both the foundation stone and those which are built upon it are dead. There is, therefore, between them no other union but the union of support. But in the spiritual building, there is a union between the foundation and the stones built upon it, not only of support, but of life: It is this which makes the union between them so close and intimate. The Lord Jesus is "a living stone," inasmuch as in him is life (Jno. i. 4); and this life is a mediatorial life, given to him, that he may give it to us; "for as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." (Jno. v. 26.) It is as the possessor of this mediatorial life that, "the Son quickeneth whom he will" (Jno. v. 21); and by the reception of this life, out of his fulness, our souls are made and maintained alive unto God. (Jno. i. 16; v. 40.) This mediatorial life he now lives and exercises at the right hand of God. He therefore said to John in vision: "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (Rev. i. 18); and to his disciples he gave this promise before his departure from them: "Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also." (Jno. xiv. 19.) As, then, we are severally quickened into spiritual and eternal life, we come unto him, who is a living stone, ourselves as living* stones, and being lifted up, and out of the foundation of dead self, to rest upon him, as the foundation which God hath laid in Zion, we become built up a spiritual house. (1 Pet. ii. 5.) The life which is in the foundation

* The word "lively" (1 Pet. ii. 5) should have been rendered "living," it being just the same word in the original as "the living stone," spoken of in the preceding verse.

spreads and diffuses itself through the living stones which are built upon it; and as this life is felt in them and by them, it makes them cling closer and closer to the Rock, with all the weight of their souls, and all the strength of their affections. And as they find the foundation firm and good, and able to bear them up, amidst all their trials and temptations, for it is "a tried stone," they embrace it more and more in faith and love, and thus give back the life which they receive in prayer, praise, and adoration.

In the mind of God, in his eternal purposes and determinate decrees, every stone of this spiritual house already has its fixed place. There is an expression in the prophet Ezekiel which may illustrate this. The man of God is shown in vision "the frame of a city." The city was not yet built, but it was to be built, and he saw the frame of it already set up and complete. (Ezek. xl. 2.) It was, therefore, to his mind's eye, as if the city were already complete, before a single stone of it was laid. So it is in this spiritual house. The whole frame of it, as complete as it will be when "the head stone is brought forth with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it" was ever before the mind of God; and thus every stone, as it is successively added to the building, occupies in its fixed and predetermined place in the church militant and suffering below, as it will in the church triumphant and glorified above.

8. But we may also observe that the union between the living foundation and the living stones which are built upon it gives the latter *union and communion with each other*, as well as with the foundation itself. This point is beautifully brought out in this epistle by the figure of a body in union with its Head: "But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ; from whom the whole body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." (Eph. iv. 15, 16.) The whole body is here spoken of as "fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth." In almost similar terms the apostle speaks in another place: "And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God." (Col. ii. 19.) We here see the union of the different members of the body with each other through their union with their common Head, and that this union with him not only gives them union with one another, but is also a means of inward grace and strength, nourishment being ministered to the body by the joints and bands of the different members. It is in this way that all the building is "fitly framed together," each living stone being in union both with the foundation and with its fellow living stones, and thus having life and grace diffused through the whole as a means of mutual support and nourish-

ment. They are not loose stones lying about the mouth of the quarry, nor severed members, but compacted together by cement, as stones, and by joints and bands, as members; and thus they mutually strengthen and nourish one another by the life derived from their common Head. What motives to love and union!

What a beautiful representation is this of the church of Christ! and though it is much hidden from our eyes, and so obscured by sin and unbelief, and the low state of things amongst us, as often to be scarcely visible, yet it is not less real. We never can fully know the blessings and benefits which we owe to our brethren in the Lord, and especially to those of them with whom we are brought into immediate spiritual contact, by church fellowship or other band of union. Their conversation, their example, their prayers, the various ways in which they minister to our natural or spiritual necessities, the secret restraints from sin, the encouragements to believe, the springings up of hope, the drawings forth of love and affection the sympathy manifested by them in trial and affliction, and the sweet persuasion that we have of the power and reality of their religion—all these helps and aids to the life of God in the soul spring out of the union which there is between the living stones with each other. And were the church of God more blessed and favoured with life and power, were there in it more sensible union and communion with the Lord, so that there was a larger, fuller, and deeper communication of the life that is in him, the more would the benefit and blessing of the mutual union of his members with each other be known and realised. It was so in those early days when “the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul.” Then was the body more closely and sensibly knit together, and larger nourishment was therefore ministered to it by the joints and bands. And as union is strength, so this mystical body was then more closely compacted together by that which every joint supplied, and thus they were strengthened by each other’s example, sympathy, prayers, counsel, exhortations, and, when needed, by rebukes and reproofs, to suffer persecution and the loss of all things for Christ’s sake. But when love waxed cold, then the body declined in strength, and, as it declined in strength, the joints and bands were less firmly compacted together, hanging, as it were, loosely, like a dislocated limb or a paralysed arm; and, for want of their former closeness, nourishment was not ministered as it had been when the members were in nearer union and communion.

iii. Now, this may prepare us to understand how “all the building groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord.” It grows so in two ways: 1, By the constant accession of fresh stones; and 2, By the personal individual growth of the stones themselves.

1. It is in the first way that every natural and material building is made to increase. As stone after stone is added to it, the building makes progress until at last it is complete. But the

larger the structure, the choicer the materials, and the more beautiful the architecture, the longer time it almost necessarily takes to finish. Compare, for instance, the building of the palace at Westminster with the running up of a house in a London suburb; for so it is with this spiritual building. Innumerable are the living stones which compose it, for they will form at last a multitude which no man can number. Slowly also, but surely, invisibly to man, but not less really with God, are the living stones brought out from the quarry, and laid upon and united unto the foundation.

But as we have already sufficiently opened this point, we shall now attempt to show how the building groweth into a holy temple by the spiritual increase of the individual stones in it.

2. Growth is the sure mark of life. We see this in vegetation, in the animal creation, in the growth of our own bodies, and of every other thing in which there is life. Where, then, there is the life of God in the soul, there will be a growth in that life. Paul says to the Thessalonian church: "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly" (2 Thess. i. 3); and Peter says, "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. iii. 18.) There is "an increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col. i. 10), and "a coming in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." (Eph. iv. 13.) It was for this increasing knowledge of the Son of God that Paul stretched every desire of his soul when he followed after, if that he might apprehend that for which also he was apprehended of Christ Jesus; and thus reaching forth unto those things which were before, he pressed toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. (Phil. iii. 12-14.) This is not what is called progressive sanctification, as if the flesh got holier and holier, for that is still ever "the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;" but this is a growth of that "new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." After this growth in grace, this closer conformity to the image of Christ, should we ever be striving with all the powers of our soul; not satisfied with a low and lean state before God, but with unceasing prayer and supplication, begging of the Lord that we might be "filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that we might walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." (Col. i. 9, 10.)

It is only as we are thus taught, led, and blessed that we can enter into the meaning of the words with the consideration of which we shall close our present Meditations: "In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." (Eph. ii. 22.)

These words will apply both to the whole body of Christ

viewed collectively, and to each separate member of that body viewed individually. In this double sense we shall now, therefore, consider them.

i. View them first, then, as referring to the whole body of Christ as complete in him. We have shown that the church of Christ, viewed as a body, is spoken of as "compacted together," and that, viewed as a building, it is "fitly framed together." In this fulness of the whole and the harmony of the parts, as in the human body and as in an architectural building, much of its beauty consists. A body of which a member is deficient or disproportionate, and a building incomplete as a whole or deficient in symmetry in its parts, alike disgust and repel the eye. But who can conceive or describe the beauty and harmony of that body of which Christ is the Head, and of that building of which he is the chief corner-stone? Both are now imperfect, for the body is still wanting some of its members, and the building some of its stones; but each, though, in fact, they are but one, being but figures, not the reality, shadows, not the substance, will one day be complete, for the church of Christ is gradually growing up into its full proportions.

Now, the object of this building, so beautifully and fitly framed together, is that it might be "a holy temple in the Lord." The glory of the tabernacle was the presence of God in it, as dwelling on the ark between the cherubim; and, therefore, when the ark was taken "the glory of the Lord departed from Israel." (1 Sam. iv. 21.) So was it also in the temple erected by Solomon. When the Lord came into his temple, we read "that the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord; so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God." (2 Chron. v. 13, 14.) We thus see a connection between a temple and the habitation of God in it. It is his indwelling presence which makes the temple both holy and glorious. God sought for himself, so to speak, a habitation, a visible dwelling-place, that he who inhabits eternity, who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see, might yet present himself visibly to the eyes of men, and not only so, but might have a permanent dwelling-place among them. He therefore said to Moses: "Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them." (Exod. xxv. 8.) This sanctuary typified, in the first instance, the sacred humanity of our blessed Lord, in which dwelleth all the fulness of the God-head bodily; for he in his human nature is "the true tabernacle which God pitched and not man." But in a secondary sense the church, as being the mystical body of Christ, is also the temple of God, for in it he dwells by his Holy Spirit. It is the place of his habitation upon earth sanctified by his power and glorified by his indwelling presence.

2. But what is true of the church collectively is true of every individual member separately. Every gospel church here below

may be considered as a holy temple in which God lives and dwells. The apostle, therefore, writing to the church at Corinth "as the church of God" (2 Cor. i. 1) says to them: "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." (2 Cor. vi. 16.) It was because the church of God at Corinth was collectively the temple of the living God that he dwelt in them and walked in them.

Now, what the church of God is in its completeness in Christ, as it will be in heaven above, and what it is in its visible and militant state on earth now, so is every individual member of that church in this time state; and it is this solemn truth which makes the words before us to have such a forcible application to every individual believer. Not only, then, is a church, that is, a gospel church, builded together by the ordinances of God's house, by a continual accession of living members, and by a growth in grace of each individual member, to be a habitation of God through the Spirit, but every one in it who fears and loves God is builded into it for the same blessed purpose, that God may dwell in him and walk in him, making his body his own temple.

But, alas! how little is this realised and acted upon. Were pastors, were deacons, were members of gospel churches more deeply and powerfully impressed with the solemn truth that they are builded together, that God himself might dwell in them through the Spirit, how much more careful they would be than they now are to maintain purity of doctrine, truth and reality, life and power in experience, and godliness and holiness in life! What a reverential fear would possess their minds, that they might not defile the Lord's temple, or sin against and before so holy and all-seeing a Guest! As a modest woman guards her chastity, or one who loves cleanliness in person, dress, and house shrinks from and hates dirt and filth, so will a conscience made and kept tender and alive in godly fear dread the defilement of sin and guilt. And as we shall all have to answer for ourselves, "to die," as one said, "alone," and as religion is a personal matter, how careful should it make each individual believer so to walk before God and man that he may have both an inward and outward evidence that his body is the temple of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. vi. 19), and that he is a habitation of God by the Spirit! If he realise this, and live under its solemn weight and influence, how careful he will be not to defile that body which is the temple of the Holy Ghost; how desirous and anxious not to defile his eyes by wandering lusts, nor his ears by listening to worldly and carnal conversation, nor his lips by speaking guile, or indulging in light and frothy talk, nor his hands by putting them to anything that is evil, nor his feet by running on errands of vanity and folly; but to view his body as a member of Christ (1 Cor. vi. 15), and therefore sanctified to his service and to his glory.

We would gladly and willingly pursue this sacred and holy theme, as it is one of daily, hourly application; one which deeply concerns our state before God and the peace of our own consciences; but we forbear, as we think we must have sufficiently drawn upon the kindness and attention of our readers. Yet we cannot bring our task, though we hardly like to call it by such a term, to a close, without remarking that if we have rightly opened the mind of the Holy Ghost in our Meditations upon these two chapters, it will be seen how every doctrine which we have endeavoured to open, every truth to unfold, every branch of experience to dwell upon and enforce, have each and all a sanctifying power and influence upon the believing soul; and thus we would fain hope that, through the blessing of God on what we have written, it may leave its sanctifying influence upon every heart that truly desires to know, experience, and live "THE TRUTH AS IT IS IN JESUS."

REVIEW.

Recollections of the late William Huntington; together with Selections from his Writings, Anecdotes, Remarkable Incidents, &c. By William Stevens, one of his Hearers.—London: Gadsby, Bouverie Street. Brighton: Stedman.

Few men have had to encounter such a storm of contempt, slander, enmity, and opposition as that eminent servant of God of whom these Recollections are given to the public by one who was well acquainted with him, and who, like most of those who sat and had profited under his ministry, entertains undiminished for him the warmest affection and deepest respect. The only doubt amongst those who despised and hated him was whether he were a fanatic or an impostor; and some very quietly and curtly settled the doubt to their own full satisfaction by pronouncing him to be both. This seems to have been the opinion of the late Lord Macaulay, who, in his "Essay upon Lord Clive," speaking of the mysterious horror with which the peasantry of Surrey looked on the stately house which he was building at Claremont, brings in, in a very malicious way, what he must have read in Mr. Huntington's "Kingdom of Heaven Taken by Prayer." These are the exact words of the brilliant, though not always truthful, essayist:

"Among the gaping crowd who drank into this frightful story (viz. that the reason why the walls were made so thick was to keep out the devil) was a worthless, ugly lad of the name of Hunter, since widely known as William Huntington, S.S., and the superstition which was strangely mingled with the knavery of that remarkable impostor seems to have derived no small nutriment from the tales which he heard of the life and character of Clive."

Now, it is not necessary to point out the misrepresentations contained in this passage. "Ugly" he might have been, for he himself tells us that "pride itself could never persuade him to

think that any such thing as beauty had ever fallen to his share, and that his being destitute of this vanishing shadow had been matter of grief to him in the days of his vanity." Yet it seems a strange idea to condemn a man for his face, which he did not make himself, and which is at best but a mere outside shell that may encase a beautiful kernel. But "worthless" he was not, at least at the time when he heard the story about Lord Clive, for he was then suffering persecution from his fellow-workmen, and loss of employment from his master because he would not work on the Lord's day; nor was he "a lad," for he was a married man with two children; nor was he at any time after he made "a profession of godliness a knave," for no man lived more honestly or paid his debts more honourably, almost starving himself in the days of his poverty that he might owe no man anything; nor was he "an impostor," for he knew in whom he believed, and had both a testimony in his own conscience and the consciences of those who knew and loved the truth that he was an upright, highly favoured servant of the Lord.

This, however, is only a faint and feeble specimen of the reproach and calumny which were heaped upon him from all quarters, reaching him even after his death, and spread all over the world, through the wide diffusion and universal admiration of Lord Macaulay's writings. But in his case there was this peculiar feature, that his greatest opponents and most violent calumniators were the preachers and professors of his day. There were no doubt peculiar reasons which drew forth an enmity against him and a storm of contempt and scorn by which few have been assailed as he was. His views of the Law, at that time novel, his bold declaration that it was not a rule of life to believers, his strong and stern denunciation of the legal preachers of his day, the keen way in which he ripped up their arguments in his controversial writings, and the uncompromising language in which he laid bare their erroneous views, unmasking at the same time their profession and showing how ignorant they were, not only of the truth of God but of any saving light in their own souls, provoked their wrath, and goaded them almost to madness. Knowing nothing for themselves of the sweet liberty of the Gospel, of a revelation of Christ, of a living faith in his Person and work, or of any union or communion with him, and resting all their hopes, if not professedly, yet really on a broken Law, or at the utmost on the bare letter of the word, they were naturally stung to the quick to see all their religion brushed away by him as a spider's web. He took away their gods, and what had they more? He broke up their idol and with it fell both their countenance and their hope.

What course was then left to them? If they wrote against him, he was as a controversialist so unrivalled in his knowledge of Scripture and the use of it, so acute to discern the whole state of the argument, so keen in his dissection of their legal views, so fearless in his attack, and so thoroughly persuaded

that God was with him and would stand by him, that none of his opponents could stand before him. We are free to admit that he did sometimes mingle his own spirit in his controversial writings with that Spirit of grace and truth by which he was undoubtedly led; but he himself, who knew best his own spirit, would not allow this, and we shall, therefore, leave the point.

He tells us that "God gave him so uncommon a spirit of meekness at his first setting off to preach that he found himself rather too tender to declare the whole counsel of God." "I was more fit," he says, "for the character of a nurse than for that of a soldier. But when these Arians came to tear up the very foundation of my hope, that spirit of meekness gave way to a fiery zeal. When I came in private before God, my soul was overwhelmed with contrition; but when I got into my pulpit, I was clad with zeal as with a cloak."

As, then, his opponents could not overthrow his testimony on grounds of Scripture and truth, and as they had nothing to say against his life and conduct, for that was most circumspect and exemplary, they turned all the current of their reproach against his views upon the Law, as if by them he had removed the very foundations of morality. Not knowing in and for themselves the constraining love of Christ, the sweet and sacred influences of the Holy Spirit, the springing up of godly fear as a fountain of life, or anything of that sacred power whereby the child of God is led into all holy obedience to God's will and word, and kept from evil that it may not grieve him, they set up an image as a mark for their arrows, which was nothing but the imagination of their own mind. Every young sprig of divinity, as he speaks, had a word against the Antinomian, against his horrid doctrine, his dreadful views, his licentious sentiments, and what a wide door his preaching and writing opened for all ungodliness. It was impossible to convince these men of their mistake. They were honest, many of them, as far as they went, but in levelling their arrows against his doctrines it was not so much the doctrines themselves as the consequences which they in their ignorance drew from them, that they attacked. They did not see that the Law for which they so zealously contended was a ministration unto death and not unto life, of condemnation not unto justification, of bondage not unto liberty, and that its fruits and effects were not to produce obedience unto holiness, but to provoke and irritate the carnal mind and thus stir up and put power into sin, so as to deceive and slay the soul under it. Now, Mr. Huntington, on the contrary, held that the Gospel, in its truths, promises, and precepts, was the rule of life in the hands of the Spirit; and that from it and not from the Law flowed not only pardon and peace but holiness in heart, in lip, in life.

We are great admirers of Mr. Huntington's writings. From his works and those of Dr. Owen we have derived more instruction, edification, encouragement, consolation, and we may add

conviction, counsel, reproof, and rebuke, than from any other source, except the word of God; and indeed it is because the writings of these two eminent men are so in harmony with the Scriptures, so breathe the same spirit, and are so impregnated with the same heavenly wisdom, that they are so profitable to those who know and love the truth. The Spirit of God speaks in and through them, because what they wrote they wrote under his special influences, and out of the treasure of a good heart brought forth those good things which make them so weighty and so valuable. Mr. Huntington's greatest work is probably his "Contemplations on the God of Israel;" but for our own private reading, we prefer his "Posthumous Letters" to any of his other writings. In them we see the man just as he was in his private moments before God; in them he pours forth to his various correspondents the treasures of wisdom and grace with which he was so largely endowed and blessed. There we see him not as a warm controversialist, nor a keen disputant provoked and irritated, as he sometimes unduly was, by the slanders of his enemies, or the errors of the day, against which he contended with such earnest zeal; but we see in them the breathings of a tender, kind, and affectionate spirit, mingled with such openings of the Scripture and the various branches of living experience as make them full of instruction and edification. As a letter writer he strikes us as unrivalled. Even apart from the subject of his letters, the ease, flexibility, originality, strength, and variety of his language is something marvellous. You never find in them anything dry, dull, and prosy; you are never wearied with long, obscure phrases and periods from which it is hard to extract sense or meaning; but his language flows from his pen with all the freshness and clearness of a summer brook, so transparent that you can see at once to the bottom and as free from mud and mire as when it first gushed out of the hill side. As his correspondents were very numerous, and as they were in different stages of the divine life, his Letters, taken as a whole, touch upon and unfold every branch of living experience, from its first movements in conviction to its fullest joys in deliverance and consolation. Some of his correspondents were very young, both in age and experience. Some, like Mr. Charles Martin, for instance, had only just begun to set their faces Zionward; some had been long and deeply exercised with trials and afflictions; some were contending with sharp and powerful temptations; and some, like himself, after having been much favoured and blessed, were engaged in a perpetual conflict with a body of sin and death, had to labour under the weight of a daily cross, and to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Now, as he had travelled all these paths, and knew for himself more deeply than they did the various exercises, desires, sensations, feelings, sorrows, and joys of a believing heart, and was favoured with a most wonderful gift in unfolding from the Scriptures and his own experience every feature of the divine life, he could

suit his letters so as to meet the case and state of every correspondent. There is, therefore, we believe, scarcely a feeling, a sensation, or a movement of divine life in the heart which he has not touched upon or described as no other but he could do, and this with a life and power, a clearness, decision, certainty, and authority which carry with them an indescribable influence that seems to penetrate into the inmost soul. We read them again and again, and ever find something in them to instruct and edify the soul, strengthen faith, confirm hope, or draw forth love. He seems to have been singularly fond of writing to his friends, and would sometimes spend nearly a whole day in his little cabin in this use of his pen. Where he felt union, it was strong. There were few, perhaps, comparatively speaking, who had crept into his heart; but if once there, they were there for ever. Those who spoke of him as harsh, austere, and stern, only knew him as opposed to errors and evil doings. They knew nothing of the man as spending hours and days in prayer and meditation, on his bended knees, before his dear Lord and Master, with flowing eyes and a broken heart. They knew nothing of his confessions in secret, his earnest wrestlings, or of the sweet union and communion with which, in answer to them, he was blessed and favoured.

And there was much in his peculiar position as a public character which misled their judgment of him. He lived at a time when our country was in the greatest peril that it ever was since the Revolution of 1688. France was, or had lately been, in the throes of her first Revolution of 1789, in which, with the overthrow of ages of corruption, and the sweeping away of that feudal system which had filled the land with oppression on the one hand, and misery and beggary on the other, there was hidden under the pleasing words "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity," a spirit which afterwards broke out in the destruction of everything sacred, and the eventual crushing of liberty itself. This spirit of the French Revolution passed over into England, mainly through the writings of Tom Paine; and as there was still a great deal of the old feudal system in this country, with its evils and corruptions, it spread itself like wild-fire among all ranks. So subtle was this spirit, it so allied itself with what were called "the rights of man," and put forth liberty with such great swelling words as its main object, that very few saw the deceit, and hailed it as the dawn of a glorious day in which all tyranny and oppression would cease, and the voice of freedom alone be heard like the turtle in the land, or the angelic salutation to the shepherds be realised. Burke was almost the only statesman of the great Liberal, then called the Whig party, who had a clear insight into the true meaning and real spirit of that Jacobin doctrine which in France ripened into the Reign of Terror, and all the terrors of the guillotine. Mr. Huntington as a preacher, like Burke as a statesman, was gifted to see into and denounce, from the pulpit and from the press,

this Jacobin spirit which had spread itself widely through the whole dissenting body, and had infected very many of his own church and congregation. It would require a volume (and a most interesting volume it would be, if a writer should ever arise sufficiently gifted to unfold the state of England at this critical period) fully to explain all this. Suffice it to say, that never at any period of our history since the Revolution has England been in greater peril from intestine strife, weak ministries, corruption in every department of the State, and a gigantic enemy on the opposite side of the Channel ready to invade our shores with an overwhelming force.

But enough of this. The only reason why we have touched upon these points is to show that those who would understand the position which Mr. Huntington occupied as a public character, standing in the very front of the battle, and with fearless boldness denouncing the Jacobin spirit, and insisting upon obedience to constituted authority, can only do so by some acquaintance with the history of the period. If ever his life should be written, of which we see little prospect, it must be by one who can not only enter into his views and experience, character and position as a man of God, but is well acquainted also with the history of a period the recollection of which has much passed away, but which has left deep and permanent traces behind it on the present generation. Much of the bitter feeling which was manifested against him flowed from this source, for it was a point on which he was very determined both in word and action, especially after the fire had broken out in his own congregation through the preaching of a minister in his pulpit who had come up from Devonport, then called Dock, and of whose views as well as character and conduct he was at the time ignorant.*

But if he were despised and hated by his enemies, who in truth were the enemies of God, he was proportionably loved and

* We have heard that a near relation of this minister, who was at Devonport during the time that Mr. Huntington was preaching there, and who knew his character, was so troubled in mind about it that he was obliged to get up in the middle of the night and knock at his bedroom door, which, after some delay, Mr. H. opened; and when he had heard what he had to say and witnessed the trouble of his mind, he sent him off to order a postchaise and four to be ready at 4 o'clock next morning, into which he put himself, and travelled up at the same speed all the way to London. Whether this anecdote be true or not, and we believe it to be true, it is well known that he left Dock abruptly, and came to London, when he found it too certain that the Jacobin spirit had spread itself like a fire through his congregation. In the book before us, Mr. Stevens alludes to this, and says that he heard it stated from the lips of one of his members whom he knew well, that the person to whom we have alluded was the preacher's own son. Mr. Stevens adds, "I believe this was the greatest ministerial trial he ever had, for the person to whom I have referred as my informant knew that he would sit in his vestry, called 'The Cabin,' and weep for hours on account of it."

esteemed by his hearers and friends. Indeed, the feeling entertained toward him by many of his hearers was almost idolatry. We remember hearing a good woman say, to whom he had been much blessed, that when she looked at his house, she almost worshipped the smoke that came from the chimney of his study. This she confessed was but idolatry, yet it showed the strength of her feeling. And, indeed, there was much in the man, independent of the grace that rested upon him, and his wonderful gifts in the ministry, to make him the centre and object of the greatest esteem and affection. He was gifted with a noble, liberal mind, abhorring covetousness, and giving away his money with a most profuse liberality. Though born and bred in so low a state, yet he was one of nature's gentlemen; and we have heard from those who intimately knew him that there was a dignity in his person, manners, and appearance which commanded respect. He was also naturally of a warm, affectionate spirit, and in his conversation there was a playfulness, though no levity, and a humour without jesting, which made his company very pleasant. That he was most hospitable in his own house, we can see from his letters, in the invitations which he gives to his friends to come and make themselves at home with him; and when he saw and felt the grace of God in them, and he would have no other company or other companions, he would converse upon the things of God with such wisdom, tenderness, contrition, knowledge of the Scriptures, and so open up every point from his own experience, that it was most blessed to hear him converse. Not but that he had his angry, peevish fits; not but that his natural temper was not one of the sweetest and most equable; but at these seasons he kept much to himself, and fought the battle alone with his own spirit, with many prayers and tears before God.

We have had the pleasure and privilege of knowing at various times some of his friends and hearers, and what we have thus written about him has not been at a mere uncertainty, but been gathered both from what we have read in his writings and from what we have heard from those who knew him. And we are free to confess that we have generally found in his hearers and friends a savour, a life, a feeling after, where not full enjoyment of those divine realities, in which the power of vital godliness so much consists, that we have not found in others.

One of these attached hearers and friends is the author of the little work before us, which he has published, chiefly for the purpose of vindicating his name and memory by referring to his writings. He also furnishes much interesting information on various points, to understand which requires a little explanation of the names of persons referred to in his books. It will, therefore, be read with interest by those who esteem and love the memory of Mr. Huntington; and if it serve the purpose of leading to a wider and fuller extension of his writings, and

the removal of any prejudice against them, it will, we believe, quite fulfil the intention of the writer, who in his preface thus speaks the desire of his soul:

“Should what is now collected be the means of producing a desire in the heart of any to know more of Mr. Huntington’s writings, the labour will not have been done in vain. Yet my chief object has been to encourage the hope and strengthen the faith of the children of God. To him that doeth truth with God and his own conscience, and earnestly prays that his heart may be right in God’s sight, the various and deep experience of divine teaching which these extracts contain may, by God’s blessing, be profitable and consoling. In them is set forth the private religion of one who lived and walked with God in peace and equity. I have often said and I now declare it again, that no one can know what Mr. Huntington was as a man or as a Christian minister unless they are well acquainted with his writings, more particularly his correspondence. In the ‘Posthumous Letters,’ in the ‘Contemplations on the God of Israel,’ and other epistles to the late Mr. J. Jenkins, he freely lays open his consolations and the trials of his faith, both as a private believer and what befel him in his public ministrations.”

Obituary.

A SHORT MEMORIAL OF THE LATE LADY HAZLERIGG.

(Concluded from page 36.)

Oct. 3rd. My mother, being a little better to-day, seemed rather depressed than elated by it; and said this was not like getting nearer home. Before going to sleep for a short time at night, she had these words given to her:

“For we, as souls in Christ, are made
As pure as he is pure.”

She remarked that she was apt to forget this, and look too much to self.

Oct. 4th. My mother, again much worse, called me to her, and asked, “Is there such a hymn as this:

“‘Jesus, lover of my soul,
Jesus crucified for me?’”

adding, “These words have just revived me. What did he not suffer for me? and I so impatient under suffering!”

I would here remark that my mother, so far from being impatient, was, as one of her attendants said, a pattern to us; but she was afraid that the wearying restlessness caused by her disease might have something of impatience about it.

Oct. 5th. My mother said she wanted to weep because of the Lord’s goodness to her. She also said, “Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me.” “Jesus wept” was a word sweet to her.

Oct. 6th. She asked my sister in the night whether there was such a word as this, which expressed her feelings:

“Hangs my helpless soul on thee.”

Oct. 8th. My mother said to me that she was hanging between life and death, waiting the Lord’s will. “God,” said she, “is

love; but only in Jesus. In him is my fitness." This thought of her fitness in Christ has been a great relief to her, and had much sweetness. This morning, when lying awake, she said she was very happy, thinking over her hymns.

I may here remark that my dear mother had for some years been in the habit of committing to memory such hymns as particularly struck her. In her hymn book there are sixty marked as thus learnt by her. The last was Berridge's:

"How watchful is the loving Lord!"

Verses of this and other hymns so learnt by her were made very precious on her death-bed, and two lines of one were again and again, with much power and feeling, repeated by her, chilling, I confess, our hope of her recovery:

"He comes to set my spirit free,
And as my day my strength shall be."

She also read her Bible through once a year for the last 11 years, and the good Lord often blessedly instructed her in so doing. Her last reading was Isa. xxxviii.: "In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death."

My mother being better, I attempted to fulfil a part of my engagement at Gower Street, from the 11th to the 14th of the month; but on my return found her worse again.

During the night of the 15th, she sat up in her chair, and had some conversation with my sister and myself. She said to us, "Weep not for me." She told us she had had a dream during the earlier part of her illness, but she must not tell us it then; we could not bear it now. She afterwards told it me. She had time after time one night seen herself laid out at the foot of her bed, all in white; and, what had always struck her, *so peculiarly white*. She said to me, she desired in all things to say, "Thy will be done;" but felt, being so far on her journey, it would be rather hard to return. She was content, nay, desirous to depart; and could leave all earthly cares. She seemed at one time to wish to be left alone to die; but said the Lord was teaching her to walk by Scripture rule, and she saw it right to use means, and the capability of relieving the body was the Lord's merciful dispensation.

Oct. 17th. I had a sweet conversation with her. She told me she had caught herself saying yesterday, "Come, Lord Jesus; come quickly." She felt it was going home. "Home! There is something sweet in the thought of home." She had been enabled during the night to recollect the whole of one of her hymns, 422nd. She repeated it to me so sweetly; it was a sermon. When she came to, "The purchase of his agonies," she said there she "felt overcome, to think of having pierced the Lord of glory." She wished me to go to London again, and do the Lord's work, and leave her with the Lord. "The soul," she said, "is safe; and as to the body, you have done all you

can for that. I shall be your crown in the day of judgment." She repeated these lines with much unction:

"For sinners, Lord, thou camest to bleed,
And I'm a sinner vile indeed.

Lord, I believe thy grace is free——"

She paused, and said, "Yes, free.

"O magnify that grace in me."

What should I do but for free grace?" She spoke of watering free grace with tears, and again and again spoke of the Lord's goodness in making her journey home so easy. She told me she had nothing to plead but this: "God be merciful to me a sinner, for thy dear Son's sake." She spoke most sweetly and instructively to me about going to town; indeed, there was a surprising dignity and authority in her words, considering the wonderful sweetness and gentleness of her character. She begged, nay, almost commanded me not to think of her, or neglect the Lord's work on her account; for a man must leave father and mother for the Lord's sake. "Jesus," she said, "stayed at Jerusalem, and left his mother when about his Father's business; and he committed her at last to John, and I had committed mine to a greater than John."

Speaking of her many temporal comforts, she said, "I have a Dives's portion, but not a Dives's spirit; a beggar at the door might have that." She said she wanted to have no will, but for hers to be swallowed up in the Lord's. She was full of pity for her carnal relatives. All bitterness seemed taken out of her heart. She felt she could pray for them, and knew nothing was too hard for the Lord.

In much anxiety, but feeling constrained even by her own wishes, I again went to London; but on Tuesday, the 20th, I received a telegram to say how much worse she was, and, by the physician's directions, to call me home immediately. I found out afterwards that my mother wished me to be telegraphed for to come home after the evening service. She still wished the Lord's work to be done, though nature could not but make her feel it was sweet to have me with her again. I sat up with her through the night, which she said was to her a very peaceful one, although she had little rest. She told me in one of our conversations about this time some things in her former experience, how once she was much tried as to whether she had been sufficiently convinced of sin; when these words dropped into her heart: "Envy, malice, hatred." She pleaded guilty, and felt that all these evils dwelt in her flesh. When she first came to Leicester, she used to grudge herself the bed she lay upon, remembering that the Lord Jesus had not where to lay his head. Once, as she was in her own room, and much tried, she walked across it, saying, "I can bear this no longer; I must go back;" when these words dropped into her heart: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." She

more than once asked me if I knew of any of the Lord's poor who were ill and wanted comforts, for she wished to share with them the temporal mercies the Lord supplied her with.

During the night of the 21st she had these words: "My times are in thy hands." She wanted patience to wait the Lord's time, but thought the gracious Saviour would not tarry much longer.

22nd. This was one of the sweetest times I almost ever spent with my mother. Too ill to lie down in bed, she sat up in her chair. I felt a great inclination come over me to pray with her, though it seemed she was almost too ill and worn out to attend to it. Still I knelt down, and the gracious Lord poured upon our hearts a Spirit of supplications, and we once more united our prayers at the throne of grace. She was sweetly revived in spirit, and quoted a verse of Toplady's which had often been sweet to her:

"Yes, I to the end shall endure,
As sure as the earnest is given;
More happy, but not more secure,
The glorified spirits in heaven."

The gracious Spirit had led to words in prayer exactly meeting the exercises of her heart. She was tempted to think she should not hold out to the end. After this, with her dear head resting on one of my hands, she went off into a calm, placid slumber, and said after it the Lord had given her a verse:

"And when in Jordan's swelling
May I be helped to sing,
And pass the river telling
The triumphs of my King."

She seemed very happy; said a light had again broken in upon her soul, and an obeying light too. She wanted to do God's will. She awoke out of another short slumber, and whispered to me, "All is light within—spiritual light."

23rd. Though my mother was better again this morning, these words, which were with me, prevented much exhilaration of hope:

"Faith has an overcoming power;
t triumphs in the dying hour."

And also these, expressive of the songs of those in heaven who praise God:

"In such unutterable strains
As none in fettering flesh attains."

After this she again became much worse.

24th. This was a most solemn day and the last but one of my dear mother's earthly pilgrimage. In the afternoon I read to her Toplady's hymn:

"A debtor to mercy alone."

At the last verse especially her countenance brightened up, and her spirit evidently responded to it. I then read Medley's, hymn 178rd:

“Jesus, before thy face I fall,” &c.

She said this was one of her favourite hymns.

Shortly afterwards we thought she was dying. She fell into a state of half unconsciousness to and abstraction from the things around her. It was the time of Jacob's trouble; the conflict of her soul was evidently tremendous. We stood around her bed as spectators, but could not be partakers in one of the most solemn struggles with the powers of darkness. No language of mine can possibly describe what took place before our eyes; the horror with which the temptations of Satan were repelled, the glory which beamed in my dear mother's countenance as she lifted up her right hand and pointed to heaven, or clasped her hands in an ecstasy of prayer. I must say no more. After an hour and a half of what appeared a dying struggle, to our astonishment my mother opened her eyes upon this outer world again, and was enabled to explain in some degree what we had witnessed. I give her own words. She wanted to be absorbed in God, but something seemed to drag her down. She could not disencumber herself of the mortal flesh, and Satan tempted her. I bless God he could not gain the victory, but according to the word long before given her, “her strength was equal to her day,” and death could not separate her from the love of God in Christ.

In the night following, the Lord gave her a last sweet parting visit, so far as this life goes. I had fallen through fatigue into the deepest sleep. She had lain some time quite quiet; but at length she bade those who were watching by her bedside tell my sister she wanted to speak to her. She then said to her, “Like Queen Esther, I have been in before the King, and he has held out to me the golden sceptre of his grace, although I have not slain Haman as I ought to have done.” By Haman she meant her maternal affections, with which she had had so great a struggle. My sister said to her, “Then you are like Esther.” “No,” she said, “not like her. She was strong, but I am so weak; but the Lord pitied my infirmity.” She then said quite aloud, “I shall now sleep, having peace with God.”

Shortly after this, upon my saying to her, “Well, mother, you have, then, peace?” her answer was, “Yes, perfect peace.” She also said she was willing to do her dear Saviour's will whether waking or sleeping; and if he held up her spirit, it did not signify whether awake or asleep. Some of us afterwards looking anxiously at her, she said, “It's all right.”

My dear mother at last died very suddenly from cessation of the heart's action. She was in our arms, and, dear soul, breathed out her spirit, I feel sure, into the hands of God.

G. HAZLERIGG.

THOUGH all sin is perfectly atoned for by the sacrifice of Jesus, yet the least sin will raise a storm in the conscience of a believer, if it be not cleansed by the blood of Jesus.—*Mason*.

MARCH 1, 1869.

THE

GOSPEL STANDARD.

MARCH, 1869.

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

NOTES OF A SERMON PREACHED BY THE LATE
MR. BROWN, AT THE PAVILION CHAPEL, BRIGHTON,
ON LORD'S DAY MORNING, APRIL 14TH, 1867.

“My times are in thy hand.”—Ps. xxxi. 15.

WHAT a quieting and comforting thought this is, if we really believe it, and are enabled, amidst all the changing scenes of life, to look up and say with David, “But I trusted in thee, O Lord; I said, Thou art my God. My times are in thy hand!”

Let us look for a moment at God, as the God of providence, as the God of all things. Think how he formed this world, and all the host of heaven. Has anything been left to chance? Is not all in the most perfect order, and everything arranged—the sun, the moon, the stars, all moving in order, and in those movements, timed to a moment, like that beautiful eclipse we saw the other day. Who ordered it to happen just at that very instant? It was the Creator of all things, he who holdeth the waters in the hollow of his hand.

Let us look at God's management of the world, every event ordered from the creation of Adam till Christ shall come again the second time; all appointed, every human being who has lived or shall live; every event that has taken place in the lives of each, all has been appointed and that to a moment; everything, great or small, from the birth of a Solomon, to the falling of a sparrow. Look at the first chapter of Matthew, at the genealogy there traced out, how exact it is; and then it says from Abraham to David are 14 generations, and from David till the carrying away into Babylon are 14 generations, and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are 14 generations. All fixed, all lined out. The railway time is fixed, and when you get to a certain station you expect the time to be as stated, but here we see the weakness of man. *We* know not what accident may occur to frustrate man's promise; but God makes no mistakes. He sees the end from the beginning. He knows the events of each future day.

“Not a single shaft can hit,
Till the God of love sees fit.”

What a comforting thought to a child of God, to know that though he may be tried like Job, God is sitting by as the refiner! If our eyes were but open to see it as at Dothan, when the prophet prayed, "Lord, open the eyes of this young man," and they were opened; and what did he see? O, he saw the city surrounded with chariots and horses of fire. And if our eyes too were anointed, what should we see? We should behold the angels of God encamping round about us, as a guard, and a wall of fire, and the promise is, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Let us for a moment think of David. It is said in the Chronicles, "Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer, with all his reign and his might, and the times that went over him, and over Israel, and over all the kingdoms of the countries." How much there is in this verse! The God of David and the God of Israel, managed and ordered all these times, and to poor David what times they were. God is the special God of Israel, but he is also the God of the whole earth. Not even the sparrow can alight upon the ground without your heavenly Father. We do not half realise this truth; if we did, what peace it would bring. God is managing all. Like the coachman with the reins, guiding all, holding in his hand even the enemy, and even the devil cannot go beyond God's permission. Like Bunyan's lions, they are chained. They may frighten poor Christian, but they can do him no harm. The word is, "Hitherto thou shalt go, but no further." It is said, "The times that went over him;" so may we say of you, poor child of God. It may be that now it is a time of grief with you. Is it not often so with the believer? "Many are the afflictions of the righteous;" but they and all that concerns them are in the hand of God, the great Physician, and he, like the skilful doctor, knows how to combine all the ingredients in the cup, and to make them work together for good. Poor dear child of God, have you a bitter cup to drink? It is mixed by God himself. The good Physician has mixed it with his own hand, and he knows every drop in the cup. When he was on earth, he appeared in this very character; and he was so good, he refused none; so skilful, that he never failed. In our hospitals some are found to be incurable, and they are sent away; but our blessed Lord loves to deal with such. And does not that just describe our case?

"Loathed incurables we stand,"

And as poor lepers we cry out "Unclean, unclean!" But how various are our afflictions, how diversified the "times that go over us!" Sometimes the enemy seems as if he would swallow us up, coming with his dreadful temptations; but he cannot put upon us more than our gracious God allows; he is chained, and though he may afflict, he shall not devour. When he came

amongst the sons of God, and accused Job, the command was, "Save his life;" and your life, poor tempted one, is safe. The devil has no power over it, God has planted a hedge around you, and you are safe. The cloud that troubled the Egyptians helped and comforted the Israelites; and what you know not now you will know hereafter, and you will see that you have been led by the right way and the best way to the city of habitation. Whatever your trial, how much worse it might have been, or you might have been where hope never comes! "Ah!" but you perhaps say, "if God had not deserted me, should not I be delivered?" That is no proof. There is a time and a set time to be delivered. God does not say *when*, only that it will be in the right time, he will help "right early." "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all." None shall swallow thee up. The good Shepherd will save his poor sheep, though it be so far gone that, as the prophet says, there may be only a leg or a piece of an ear. To all thy trials and temptations there is a limit, there is an end, and thine expectation shall not be cut off. The time will come when the spirit of heaviness shall be exchanged for the garment of praise. "Sorrow may endure for a night; but joy cometh in the morning." As the earth rolls round, as day and night follow each other, so it is with the child of God. The light will break in again. Perhaps thou art now in the dark, and saying, "When shall it be morning?" Wait. Remember, thy times are in his hand.

Perhaps, poor soul, you may be tried and tempted to think there is no God, or that He has forgotten you. Well! You are not alone even here. Look at the footprints of the saints of old—at Joseph in the pit. What must have been his feelings? Don't you think the enemy would whisper in his ear, "Is there a God? Can he see me? If he did, would he allow me to be cast in here and left to perish?" O how he felt! his brethren called it the "anguish of his soul." Look at him again in Egypt, cast into prison, unjustly accused, and kept there for two long years. Was not this a trial of faith? How he must have felt as if he was left and forsaken of God! But what a providence in all these things, all to bring about the good of Joseph and the sustaining of the house of Israel, and the people of God. All was well ordered, and well timed, and Joseph saw it to be so in the end, and was well satisfied with "the times that had gone over him." But what joy when his deliverance came! Could not Joseph have preached a sermon from our text? I am sure he could. He knew it by experience, and that is the way to understand the word.

What histories we read of the Old Testament saints! David was at one time the young shepherd, looking after his sheep, then called of God to stand forth as the champion for Israel, and slaying, by the power of God, the giant who dared to defy that God. Then see him fleeing for his life for fear of Saul, and

begging a few loaves of bread from the hand of a priest. Then behold him raised to the throne, and the Lord blessing him in all his ways. See him again, under the power of temptation, falling into the grievous sin which gave him broken bones for the rest of his life. Though God forgave him, and put away his sin, we are sure poor David never forgave himself.

We might go on with David's long history, and tell of the times that went over him; but what did he say at last, after all his trials and sore conflicts? "He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure."

Let us look for a moment at Daniel and the times that went over him. At one time in the den of lions, at another time clothed with scarlet and made third ruler in the kingdom. And after all the solemn visions that he saw, what was the word addressed to him by the angel? "Thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days."

Look at another picture—the three Hebrews in the fire; hear their blessed testimony for God. See them bound and thrown into the burning fiery furnace. What a time was this to pass over them! But look at them again, and see another with them, even the Son of God. O, my dear friends, this is the life of a child of God; it is the life of faith—trials and deliverances both appointed, and both to the moment.

Look at the New Testament saints—at the disciples, when their dear Lord and Master was dead. What a time of grief and desolation it was, and their faith so low they could only say, "We trusted it had been he which should have redeemed Israel!" But O the joy when he rose, when Mary clasped his dear feet and cried, "My Lord and my God;" and when the two going to Emmaus found the dear Stranger who had walked and talked with them, to find he was their dear and blessed Master! O what a time of joy to go over them! How they went back to Jerusalem to tell the joyful news to their brethren and sisters that they had seen the Lord. How little they would mind the long walk and the dark night; their feet would hardly feel the ground, and they knew where to go. They would not go to their worldly relatives or friends to tell the joyful news. No, it was to their brethren: "We have seen the Lord." O what joy! And that is just what we want again and again. And then the dear Lord did come, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and so he comes to us now and then, and turns our night into day, and says to us, "Peace be unto you." And his promise is, "I will see you again." And did a covenant God ever break his word? or can one promise fail? O no. Our comforts may fail and darkness may come on, but light will break in again; for "our times are in his hand."

Some poor dear children of God cannot read their title clear to all these blessings. Many cannot. They cannot see they are the characters described. Their language is, "But am I a child?" The Lord suffers this for wise ends. It is one of

the times that pass over you. Some are more subject to this than others. They are Little Faiths; and some remain so almost to the very last. Little Faiths, ready to halt, such is their character. We must not lay down a line for God, he deals with his people as he will. Each has a case of his own, and each is led by the Lord, and ordered in the way he should go; and in this the Lord is a Sovereign, and does as he will. Some pass through much darkness, others less, having a smoother path, but those who have great faith generally have great trials; but the measure is, "As thy day, thy strength shall be." Let not the strong look down upon the weak and despise them, and let not the weak envy the strong or condemn them. These things ought not to be. The apostle would war against this evil. He speaks of God giving to every one "severally as he will." The apostles were not all alike; they had different gifts; and the language of Paul, who might be called the greatest of them all, was, "By the grace of God I am what I am." And this word fits us all. Let a poor child of God be in ever such darkness, if, like Paul on his voyage, neither sun nor stars for many days appeared, yet they shall not sink. Light will dawn again, for it is said, "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." It is living light, living seed that is sown. Like David, we may say, "Many there are which say unto my soul, Who will show us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us." That is the good a child of God wants. When in our right mind we see and feel the emptiness of every worldly thing. But these seasons of darkness, as well as seasons of light, are among the "times that go over us."

This wilderness state is a state of warfare; we have many enemies to grapple with; we are called to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, and to put on the whole armour of God. What for? We don't want a buckler and sword in time of peace and security, but to defend us from our foes.

How exactly God times everything! At the set time, to a day and an hour, Noah was brought out of the ark. Must he not have had his trial of faith, and his many exercises when shut up and riding upon the waters? Don't you think he had his fears and misgivings? And would not the devil be there, tempting him that God had forgotten them? But no. Every day and every night they were watched over by a covenant God and Father. Each living creature there, a type of the church, was fed and sustained, and at the right time set free. So shall it be with every living child of mercy; and God has no dead children. They may feel lifeless, but there is the life, for it is hid with Christ in God. Dear child of God, you may feel in prison, but there is a door of deliverance for you, though you may not be able to see it; and the same hand that shut the door can open it. "My times are in his hand."

Sometimes the Lord appears in a most unexpected way. It

may be in the midst of a conflict we are having with the enemy, when our great Saviour and Redeemer appears, and he not only vanquishes the devil, but, as David says, "he prepares a table for us in the presence of our enemies." Berridge says,

"I think my foes all dead."

No, not so, they are alive. It is said, after the forty days of temptation of the dear Lord in the wilderness when on earth, that the devil departed from him "for a season." These seasons are in the hand of the Father: "My times are in his hands." It is as he pleases. Our dearest friends can do nothing for us, only as God will have it. How ready we should be to cut the knots of providence! but it must not be so. We must wait and look to a God of providence and grace to do it for us. We cannot expedite or frustrate these things. "My times are in his hands." Noah or his sons might try to open the door of the ark, but it was shut by Almighty power, and when he shuts, none can open.

Are we in some great affliction passing through the furnace? Our friends try to comfort us, and sympathy is sweet and precious; but how little can the creature do, even the kindest and the best; but one word of heavenly peace and joy dropping on the heart, and how is the scene changed! "My times are in thy hand." Dear Lord, I bless thee that they are. I would not have them in my own power if I might. God's tender care and watchful providence extends to everything. Where do I dwell? God knows, for he has fixed the very bounds of my habitation. Is it not a blessed and a quieting thought? How often, when I lived in the country, I have looked at a little thatched cottage, where a dear old believer dwelt, and thought it one of the dwellings of the righteous, and angels watching over it, that no harm happen to that dear old lame woman now in glory.

Then, again, what is our employment? How do we get our bread? That, too, is ordered. God knows our daily life; it may be our daily cross. The poor mother washing the clothes or dusting the house is still under the gracious eye of God. "Her times are in his hand."

To some God gives riches, to some he gives poverty. Some of his dear people can hardly get a mouthful of meat, and they may be tempted to think, "How can this be, when all is in my Father's hand?" Well, poor dear children of God, we don't know how it is, only we know this, that "he doeth all things well," and that what we know not now we shall know hereafter. Many are tried with ill health, and none can enter into that but those who have experienced it. Many of the family of God are on beds of languishing and pain; and whatever be our trials, our language is like David's, "How long, O Lord?" How long? Not the ten thousandth part of a second beyond the appointed time—beyond your Father's time; for your "times are in his hand;" and there would I leave them. Amen.

A LETTER FROM SUKEY HARLEY TO THE LATE
MR. W. M.

My dear Friend in the Lord,—Excuse the liberty I have taken in writing to you; but I want to send you my soul's love, my dear Mr. W. M., and to know how you be now you have got to H. I feel my soul in your soul, on times close together, not a hair's breadth between. I believe the Lord sent you down. I have on times felt that constraining love you spoke of to your dear brother, in Christ Jesus, my beloved brother. I hope you will join with me in constraining prayer for our dear minister, as I am enabled to pray for him, for I be sure with all my heart that the Lord gives him power to preach exactly to my feelings, all my inward trials and troubles as if God taught him secretly how to set them forth.

Oh, Sir, what a sinner I am; what an odious sinner! When the candle is lighted up in my dark soul, I can feel, know, and see my sad state, and then what a wonder and adoration comes over me to be made sensible that I am a partaker of the precious blood of his dear Son sprinkled upon such a heart as mine. Oh! Words beyond uttering, words we have not, to speak of the dreadful and awful lost state of all of us by nature, and the lovingkindness, tender mercy, and longsuffering of my dear Father and God. What tongue can speak it, what heart believe it, unless wrought on by the Spirit of life and truth? then he teaches all things, yea, the most hidden things of the heart. But oh! The depths of his mercy. Oh! the riches, and glory, and majesty of his power, who can fathom it? My dear Mr. M., I feel the Lord is very near in my soul while I am writing these few words to you.

Do you remember what I told you at the style, that if I saw you no more here, I should know you when I saw you in heaven. You remember, Sir, I asked you to pray for me when far away in body, because the Lord gave me such a witness in my soul that you are one that God has been pleased to make his own, and he have put an abiding and uniting love in my soul, which can never sever spirits one from t'other, though our bodies may be far separated here on earth. Last Thursday I had thought before coming up to the meeting, nothing could possibly stir or move me, I was so rivetted down with my sins, and I was quite tossicated with the burden of them, that I had to carry all up yonder hill; I was obliged many times to stop and pant for breath. As I came up I saw one and another going the same way, and some one said to me, "Sukey, I hope we shall get something to-night; I feel to need it." I instantly turned away, and crouched in a corner of the yard, to beg my dear Lord and Saviour to come to us; and oh! how he enabled me to tell him all my sorrows, and that of the others. I felt he were coming to my relief, and I kept the more looking, crying, and begging; and as I got in, the word came to me, "Saved by grace, free

sovereign grace." "O Lord," I said, "and *that alone*, for I am sure what I have brought to thee to-night would rather have spurned thee from me." Then the text were given out about the Lord rebuking Peter. (Matt. xvi. 21-23.) It shewed me the deceitfulness of my own heart, as well as Peter's, and I was filled with thankfulness for the Lord's mercy, and I cried out secretly, "Saved by grace, free grace alone!" I felt Peter's was only a fleshly love at the time he spoke to my dear suffering Lord, but that mine was a *constraining* love which *over-topped all my evils*, and I could cry with all my heart, "Hallelujah! salvation, and glory, glory. Oh! The power of the word. It must come from the Lord alone; and Oh! what a constraining word I felt that to be to all my evils; "Get thee behind me, Satan;" and I felt such a shame, and abomination, and humiliation, and it brought me to think about Peter denying my dear mourning Jesus. Oh! How do we know what state of sore trial and suffering we may be called to bear? I often sit here and wonder if I have *all my armour* on, or if any of it is come short, or worn out. Sometimes I be brought before the bar of God's justice to try and examine in this matter, and I generally begin with the blessed fear of the Lord. Oh! If that be wanted, or loosened, or deadened, I feel many hosts of enemies may soon take hold of me, and I should have no powerful weapon against them. Now there be one called "All Prayer" that I know full well. It be my safeguard continually, and my comfort day and night. But I want you to consider in your own soul what a wretched sinner the Lord found me and took me in that state, and worked in me and for me by his mighty power. I must have gone to hell if it had not been that my Father and God in Christ Jesus had chosen me before the foundation of the world. I am now by his especial goodness and mercy a truly awakened sinner, and Oh! what can I render to the Lord for all his mercies to me! Truly I can say that one day in his courts is better to me than a thousand elsewhere. Now these courts I find to be holding sweet, secret, heart-searching communion with him in any private corner, granary, or barn, hovel, or kitchen; there I have found him many scores of times, and I may say my dear Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, has held with me sweet counsel together. Oh! What a condescension for he so high and mighty, and I a poor miserable worm of the earth. I feel I canna now live without him, He be precious to me above rubies, and altogether lovely; there is none to be compared to him.

Now I want to send my love to my dear sister Mrs. H., and tell her how I can go along with her in many things she writes. I see she is one who finds the Lord in her solitary retirement, and bless his holy saving name for being her comfort, support, and guide in all she does. If I could see her, I could tell her of many blessed times I have had with him, sometimes upon the road, at others crouched in a hedge, many times on my bed and

in my kitchen alone. O my dear sister, you donna want another friend if you have the Lord with you. No, keep close to him, and donna let the devil draw you away, for he be always going about seeking whom he may devour. I often wish I were as diligent as he is; but I be often on my watchtower, and generally awake there in the morning, with some sweet verse like this:

“Remember all the dying pains
My dear Redeemer felt;
And let his blood wash out my stains,
And answer for my guilt.”

Will you please to thank my other sister L. for her very kind present to me? May the Lord bless her. I have only my prayers to return her, which I hope the Lord will hear and answer.

And now, my dear Mr. M., I must tell you how I had for some time been asking the Lord to send me the means to buy a pair of boots to go to the meeting in. Well, I felt long afore you came I was to be silent; and so I was. I sadly wanted them, and often the enemy would tempt me to go and ask some one for some; but I could not. No, if I had gone barefoot, I could not have stirred in it. I had been just sewing a patch on some shoes I had, thinking they would do till the Lord supplied me with others, as I felt I was to wait and watch by continual prayer; when to my surprise your very kind present came to me. I had only stopped my prayer to open the door, and how to thank and bless my dear Lord and Saviour and you I donna know. Words canna do it that I be sure; but my heart be so full and melted I hardly can say a word, only “Who is a God equal to him, who understands all our wants, and gives ear to our feeblest cry, even for outward things;” but so it says, “If he feeds the ravens, will he not much more feed and clothe you?” I feel sure if he be tender and careful about our outward wants, he will much more provide for our spiritual necessities if we be brought to feel our need of his help, but that he must give us.

I were looking t’other day at yonder folks all so busy building up that fine, lofty church; and as I stood by the style, the word came to me, “Can ever God dwell there?” “Oh!” I thought, “he donna want all this show and grandeur to dwell in. No, for his temple be in his own poor defiled sinners’ hearts, made clean by the blood of his Son; and he be to be found in all the low, secret retirements of his people, where the heart and soul goes out in longing desires to find him.”

But, dear Sir, God bless you. Do not forget to pray for us all here, and if we donna meet here again, may we be permitted to do so in heaven.

My soul’s prayer and love goes with this to all your church; I forget their names; but I feel much spiritual love to them.

Aug. 28th, 1852.

SUKEY HARLEY.

[It will be seen that we have preserved Sukey’s language, as her Memoir has done.—Ed.]

BAPTISM INTO CHRIST'S DEATH AND RESURRECTION.

Dear Friend,—Certainly the baptism of our Lord by John had a spiritual meaning, and the Lord must know best what it was. If we attend to his explanation, he tells us that it meant his death and sufferings: "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." (Luke xii. 50.) As though he had said, I am now going to accomplish the real meaning of my baptism by John. What was represented by my baptism by John I have now really to fulfil in my death and sufferings, by which all righteousness will be fulfilled, and an everlasting righteousness brought in for all my members. But who are his members? Why, he tells us, such as drink of his cup, and are baptized with the baptism that he is baptized with (Matt. xx. 22), which Paul calls a having fellowship with him in his sufferings, and a being made conformable to his death. (Phil. iii. 10.) And this, he saith, they have by baptism: "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (Rom. vi. 3.) But what is it to be baptized into Christ's death? Why, the apostle explains it in verse 5, in these words: "If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." Now, there is a planting by men, and a planting by God the Father: "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up." (Matt. xv. 13.)

I believe this true planting, or baptism into death, is but little understood by the professing world, in this our day, though plainly spoken of in God's word. (Deut. xxxii. 39; 1 Sam. ii. 6; Eccles. iii. 3.) The generality of them think and teach it consists in a man's overcoming and getting the better of his sins, and that this death is a dying to the pleasures and vanities of this world. This doctrine seems very right to natural reason, but will not stand with true experience, or the word of God. For in truth it is sin's overcoming and getting the better of a man which produces this death, "Sin revived, and I died." (Rom. vii. 9.) Here the life of sin is the death of the man. This is a secret which no hypocrite ever learned. I do not mean to say that the children of God do not die to the world; God forbid! but that death proceeds from this of which I am speaking. When the Holy Ghost first awakens and enlightens a sinner to see his sins, and the danger he is in of being lost, this will trouble his mind; and being unwilling to die and be damned, he will seek by all ways and means which he can devise to overcome his sins, and pacify a guilty conscience. He will vow, promise, cry, pray, reform, and fly to all the ordinances he can find; by which many have got ease, and their wound healed slightly. "Peace, peace," has been cried, where God has not spoken peace. Not so where the Holy Ghost comes to work really and effectually. They go at the same work, but fast as

they build, he pulls down; as fast as they heal, he wounds by the arrows of conviction. "Thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore. My sore ran in the night, and ceased not." "Iniquities prevail against me." "My soul is full of troubles, and my life draweth near to the grave. I am as a dead man that hath no strength. Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps." (Ps. lxxxviii. 3, 4, 6.) "Though I wash myself," saith Job, "with snow-water, yet thou shalt plunge me in the ditch again." "Thou makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth. Thou huntest me as a fierce lion. Thou renewest thy witnesses against me, changes and war against me. Cease; let me alone, before I go hence to the land of darkness itself where the light is as darkness."

Here the death which I am speaking of is clearly to be seen, both in David and Job, which Paul calls a being planted in the likeness of Christ's death. And this work goes on to this day in every one that is truly born again. The law is brought home in its spirituality, which reaches the very thoughts and intents of the heart, stirs up and discovers his lusts, and makes them boil like a boiling pot. Sin takes occasion, by the commandment, to work in him all manner of concupiscence. The great deep is broken up, and the heart, like the troubled sea, casteth up its filth and mire. "For from within out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness." (Mark vii. 21, 22.) The sight of this host causeth his heart to faint. He prays, cries, and strives against them until his strength fails, and his heart is brought down with hard labour. Sin revives, his hope gives way, his mouth is stopped, and he falls down, and there is none to help. Thus he is planted together in the likeness of Christ's death, by the burden and guilt of sin, the curse of a broken law, and the wrath of God, which hang heavy over his head, and sink him into deep waters where there is no standing. Thus he is brought low, and is in a low place; his mouth is in the dust if there may be hope. He acknowledges the justice of God, and is sensible that nothing but an act of free grace or mercy can save his soul, and with the publican, cries, "God be merciful to me a sinner." He is now shut up in the prison of unbelief, and is under the sentence of death. His life hangs in doubt, and he has no assurance of his life. Thus he is planted by God the Father into the likeness of Christ's death; and the promise is he shall be in the likeness of his resurrection. "Thy dead men shall live; together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing ye that dwell in dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." (Isa. xxvi. 19.) And Paul saith that they are raised with Christ through the faith of the operation of God, who raised him from the dead. (Col. ii. 12.)

This dew is the gentle operation of God's Spirit, softening

and meekening the heart to receive the ingrafted word of pardon and peace, which is able to save the soul, by opening the understanding, and taking of the things of Jesus and showing them unto the sinner, his free promises, the worth and merit of his precious blood, the satisfaction he made to law and justice by his death; and God declares himself well pleased with him for his righteousness' sake. Thus a new and living way is opened, a door of hope is set before the sinner, and a Spirit of supplication is poured forth, by which he cries to God day and night for his pardoning love. And the first promise that is applied with power in the Holy Ghost begets and opens a door of faith in the sinner's heart. Christ enters with, "Son, be of good cheer, I have overcome the world, death, hell, and the grave; and have risen triumphant over them all, and, because I live, ye shall live also. Your sins, which are many, are forgiven: go in peace," and gives him the Spirit of adoption, by which he calls God Father.

Thus he is sealed and baptized with the Holy Ghost, to the day of redemption; for he is "passed from death unto life, and shall never come into condemnation." Thus God "turneth man to destruction, and saith, Return, ye children of men."

I have been very short on the sinner's resurrection for want of paper. If it should suit your taste, I will give you a fuller description in my next.

P. BRICE.

A VOICE FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE.

Dear Friend,—With the help of God, I will try, as he shall bring things to my remembrance, which I hope and trust he hath shown me in this long illness, to comply with your wish in sending you a few lines; and may the Lord enable me to exalt his holy name and lay myself low in the dust of abasement before him.

At the time I was taken worse, which happened to be on a Lord's day, my poor mind was in a very dark, destitute state indeed. I felt the hand of the Lord heavy on my poor soul as well as upon the body; and in this state I knew not how matters might end with me, either as it regarded body or soul. What to do I knew not; and so I continued nearly all that week, with scarce one ray of light to shine upon my benighted mind; but I trust there were intervals when I was enabled to groan out my petitions into the Lord's gracious ears, who hears and answers the sighing of his prisoners. He enabled me to cast myself in some feeble measure, body and soul, upon him, as the only hope and help of a sinner feelingly ready to perish; for where else can a poor, ruined, hell-deserving wretch go to but unto him who is mighty to save? And as I think I told you the first time you came to see me, that sweet verse, or rather two verses of Watts's (125 Gadsby's Selection), commencing,

"My faith would lay her hand," &c.,

described my then present feelings; and, dear friend, sure I am, if ever the blessed Jesus has at any time been made precious to my soul, we must, we can do no other, in time of trouble, than cast ourselves upon him, sink or swim; and that poor soul, whoever he or she be, that is really and truly brought to cast itself unreservedly into his almighty hands (his own word for it) can never, no never, perish, world without end.

But, dear friend, my pen runs on and the paper is filling before I seem to get into anything I primarily intended.

The Lord was pleased to lead me, as I lay upon the bed of affliction, to take a retrospective view of my past life; and O what a view it was of myself as a base, polluted, fallen, guilty, and filthy creature, who had been living so much to myself in the indulgence of the flesh and everything carnal, and so little to him who deserved every faculty both of body and soul! How I was led to see his ever watchful care and long-suffering goodness and merciful kindness towards me, both as a God of providence and also as a God of grace. He showed me how I should have plunged myself headlong, body and soul, into hell a thousand times, had it been possible, if he had left me to my own foolish and desperately wicked nature. I trust also he led me to see his leadings in providence in bringing me from amongst vain, ungodly companions, and placing me in a quiet, retired spot, where no ungodly companion or fellow-servant could annoy me; and I believe in that place he was pleased gradually to open my heart, as he did Lydia's, to attend unto the things spoken of in his word to poor sinners. Here was I led to see my need of a Saviour, and such a Saviour that could save me to the uttermost, feeling I must eternally perish without an interest in him. And here it was my unworthy self with a few others used to meet in a friend's house to read the works of that eminent servant of God, the late William Huntington; and though at that time I knew but very little of the depth of experience he enters into, yet I trust they were made profitable, inasmuch as they led me to see that there was a secret power in true religion that I was at that time unacquainted with, and left an aching void in my heart which none but the Lord could fill.

In this place also it was I was induced to come to Stamford to hear that dear man of God, Mr. P., for whose heart-searching ministry I trust I shall have to bless God to all eternity. After I left the freewillers to hear him, I was sometimes assailed by one of that stamp, thinking to turn me away from hearing the truth unto freewill lies again; but the Lord, I believe, had taught me better. I told him I really believed the Lord had raised Mr. P. up and sent him to preach and show what true religion is. He then asked me who was going to support him when he came to reside at Stamford. I told him if the Lord saw fit to send him there, he no doubt would provide means for his support; and, blessed be his name, the Lord, in his goodness, has proved them to be true words. He

left me by saying he would never enter a Calvinist chapel as long as he lived.

But I feel I have wandered from my subject; and, to return where I left off.

The Lord seemed to deny me his manifested presence, and my cry was, day and night, at times, "If thou wilt not grant me thy gracious presence, do, dear Lord, give me patience to wait thy time; and also submission to suffer all thy holy will concerning me." Two corresponding scriptures seemed to be a great prop to my poor sinking mind at this time, one in Hab. ii: "The vision is for an appointed time," &c. The other in Luke xviii.: "Shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him?" &c. And also that precious word in the Psalms: "Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me," was some encouragement to me; and a verse in one of Gadsby's hymns often recurred to my mind, and was made a little help and stay to me:

"Why art thou afraid to come?
Why afraid to tell thy case?
He will not pronounce thy doom;
Smiles are seated on his face."

It was the desire of my soul, if the Lord saw fit to spare my unworthy life and raise me up again a short time, that he would be pleased to enable me, in some feeble way, to honour and glorify him by speaking good of his holy and blessed name; and it was suggested to me that I could not do better than commit these few thoughts to paper, and send them to you, as you desired it.

And now, dear friend, lest I tire you and myself too, I will draw to a conclusion. A fortnight last Saturday, I was worse than I had been for some time, suffering with violent pain in the chest, which continued nearly all night; and so great did the weakness become that I was unable to leave the bed all that day, being the Lord's day; but as I was sitting up in bed at breakfast time, drinking a cup of tea, I was solemnly impressed with the thought how near I might be to eternity, and at the same time I was led earnestly to beg of the Lord that he would bless me with a sense of pardoning love and blood before he called me hence; when suddenly my mind was led from all thoughts of death to that solemn day when the last trumpet should sound and call the dead to judgment; and I had also such an awful view of the Son of God coming the second time, without sin, unto salvation, surrounded by ten thousands of saints and angels, clothed in glory and divine majesty; and the thought occurred, how should I meet his dread presence, when a sweet persuasion seemed to pervade my soul that he would meet me, not as an angry Judge, which he will be to the ungodly, but as a Friend, with a smiling countenance; and these words came to confirm what I saw and felt: "This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend, O ye daughters of Jerusalem." Both body and

soul were for a short time overwhelmed with a sense of his undeserved love, and I wept aloud for joy, and blessed and praised his holy name, with all the little power I possessed, for such great condescension to one so very unworthy. But the power and sweetness of it soon vanished. Still the Lord's presence, in some measure, continued; and about two hours afterwards the Lord again broke my heart with a feeling sense of his great goodness and unmerited kindness to me, the vilest of the vile. "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name."

The Lord's day that Mr. M. spoke here I truly felt miserable, as I was not well enough to get up to chapel to hear him, and felt greatly disappointed.

And now, dear friend, in perusing this long scrawl, if you can find anything in it to lead your mind from the creature to the Creator, give him all the glory; but let my worthless name sink into utter forgetfulness. Please excuse all blunders, and when you have access at the throne remember

Stamford, June 24th, 1867.

WILLIAM ROBINSON.

THE ORNAMENT OF A MEEK AND QUIET SPIRIT, WHICH IS IN THE SIGHT OF GOD OF GREAT PRICE.

My dearest H,—* * * O, my dear girl, how my soul blesses God at times for a hope of eternal life, a knowledge of being one day free from all the sin and sorrow under which I now groan. I do also hope that my heavenly Father is by these means bringing me nearer to himself, and I can say, that I esteem that dispensation a mercy indeed, however painful, which has this effect. I have been greatly tried, but trust I have been favoured with a spirit of prayer to commit all to the Lord with a feeling of blessed reliance upon him and resignation to his will, simply watching how he would make a way for me; and I hope I have seen his hand in the matter; a way has been unexpectedly made, and the thing which my pride once shrunk from I now see brought about by God, after he has subdued every feeling of my mind into sweet submission to his will. I know it will be a great addition to my daily cross, but I feel assured the Lord will lay upon me no more than I really require. One day, when much perplexed in my mind why it should be so, I seemed answered by these words of Hart's:

"He shall by means like these
Thy stubborn temper break,
Softens thy heart by due degrees,
And make thy spirit meek."

I could not tell you, my dear H., what I see and feel in myself; but when I feel how opposite my spirit by nature is to that meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price, O how I long for it, and would cheerfully welcome any cross if the Lord will sanctify it to bring forth the blessed fruits of meek-

ness, tenderness, and humility, for he has said in his word he will dwell with such, and my soul's desire is that I may know more and more of this blessedness by daily experience. I do know the visits of my Lord are more to be desired than all things else, and afford more happiness than all the world can either give or take away. O what then must the dwelling be! The Lord gives us those contrite hearts in which he will dwell. I must say farewell. Yours most affectionately,
Peterborough, January, 1849. M. BLYTON.

A LETTER BY HUNTINGTON.

The Coalheaver to his dear Brother Hedger and Ditcher, sendeth greeting: Beloved,—I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. I read thy epistle with tears of joy, believing in my heart that it is in every sense an original; the style, the diction, the artless strokes, and simple embellishments, made the author manifest in my conscience that he is taught of God, insomuch that I have thee in my heart both to live and die with thee.

Beautiful upon the mountains of Zion are the feet of those who bring me such tidings. That God hath chosen the weak and the foolish to confound the strong and the wise, is manifest both in you and me; and, whilst either of us live, the earth will not be left without a witness to that truth. Your epistle came in season. I have lately been in much heaviness through manifold temptations; but the Lord, who often comforteth them that are cast down, comforteth me by the coming of Titus. Pay no regard to any reproach cast upon me. I expect evil report and good report; this ever was, and ever will be, the lot of God's servants; for the two-edged sword of the Spirit cuts both ways still, and works death in some but life in you.

O the condescension of the King of kings! who not only humbles himself to behold the things in heaven but to visit those on earth! Moses found him in a bush; the shepherds found him in a manger; I found him in a toolhouse; and you found him in a barn. Thus he puts down the mighty from their seats, and exalts them that are of low degree. "What house will you build unto me, and where is the place of my rest?" Solomon had seen servants on horseback and princes walking as servants on the earth; but I have seen criminals in coaches and kings and priests threshing in a barn. Go on, my son. The flail will never go round thy head so fast, nor down so hard as when thou art favoured with the presence of the Lord. I am a thresher, and a threshing instrument having teeth, I work in the barn as well as you. Let us thresh as clean as we can, and separate the chaff from the wheat, and pray the Master to use the fan and purge the floor; and, while we are sifting the corn, we had need to watch and pray that we do not fall into Satan's sieve ourselves, as poor Peter did.

They tell you that Satan can condemn, accuse, comfort, &c. That he can condemn and accuse, I believe; but he must be a miserable comforter, because his comfort generally springs from revenge, as Esau's did, when the murderer influenced him: "Thy brother, as touching thee, doth comfort himself, purposing to kill thee." (Gen. xxvii. 42.) But the elect shall all be taught of God; and they shall all know him from the least of them unto the greatest, and great shall be their peace; so that if any of them are out of the way of public means, yet they cannot be forgotten; or if they fall into the hands of a blind guide, they cannot be finally deceived nor finally misled. God will either bring them to the means, or call them (as he did me) without means. I have had two persons that have heard the joyful sound under me from Denmark, four from Germany, and several from Ireland. "I know my sheep (says the Shepherd) and am known of mine, and they shall all hear my voice." And who teacheth like him! God makes us feel the impressions of his own perfections, and the blessed energy of his own truth. Under the deep impressions of holiness and justice we sink and tremble; under his quickening operations we feel, with the most acute anguish, his anger, his threatenings, and our own guilt and shame; but, under the impressions of his lovingkindness and tender mercies in Christ Jesus, we bow, we bend, we yield, we melt, we resign, we submit, we approve, we wonder, we adore, we weep, we repent, and abhor ourselves in dust and ashes, and love him with all our souls. Here we are less than nothing, and he is all in all. On this mount of transfiguration the covering vail is destroyed; here our interest in him is made plain, and reconciliation takes place; old things pass away, and all things become new. Upon this mountain the feast of fat things is prepared, the evidences of our adoption are manifested, and sensible union takes place; jealousies subside, and everlasting light and love discover the day of espousals, and knit the marriage knot. Verily there was joy in heaven in the presence of the angels of God while my poor brother hedger was weeping, rejoicing, and "making the faggots." "Ah," say you, "and sure the hand-bill never cut so well, nor went through so sweetly: no, nor had even the withs been seasoned a whole month, and warmed over the fire, they could not have been more pliable, nor have bent better than at that time, when I found my soul bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord my God." (1 Sam. xxv. 29.)

As thou hast received him, so walk you in him. Beware of remissness in prayer, or in attendance on the means, which leads to backsliding; for backsliding often leads to legal bondage: and, if thou get the old yoke upon thy neck again, everything will go contrary; the bill won't cut, the withs will break, the stakes won't drive, and you will often hit your hands with the beetle instead of the stake, and break great gaps in the axe; the white thorns will run through the cuffs, if not through the

buskins, and you will forget the wallet or the bags, and at some places in the bank the spade will have gone in too far, and in other places not far enough; the stuff will not lie, nor stick, but tumble in the ditch again for two or three yards together; and, when you come to step it out, or to run the pole over it, on the Saturday afternoon, it will not answer to more than three rods per day, and then you will go murmuring home, saying, "Sixpence per rod is too little; what is nine shillings per week to keep a wife and family?" You read in the Scripture of some who sowed much and brought in little, for God blowed upon it. Others planted vineyards, but did not drink the wine of them; others olive-yards, but did not anoint themselves. "Ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath, and the seed of an homer shall yield an ephah." (Isa. v. 10.) As it is with the farmer so with the labourer, when they backslide. All this comes upon us for walking contrary, and for which cause God walks contrary to us.

The Lord's servants are to bring some to the marriage from the highways and hedges; yea, the poor, the halt, the lame, the maimed, and the blind, that the Lord's house may be filled with guests. But who would ever have thought that the coalsack and the leather jacket would have been had in remembrance, and that such as you and I should have been brought in, not by the instrumentality of the servants, but by the Master himself? Verily, this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. The first heavenly visits that God paid to me were chiefly in a garden, and my studies and qualifications for the ministry were finished in the barge and on the wharf. Gideon went from the barnfloor and the flail as well as you, Elisha from the plough, David from the ewes and lambs, and Amos from the herds. Surely God has provided some better thing for us that they without us should not be made perfect. They saw things at a distance, and predicted what should come to pass; but we see them all accomplished, and Christ evidently set forth crucified among us; and blessed are our eyes, for they see, and our ears, for they hear. They laboured to find redemption out, and travailed to see it accomplished; and we are entered into their labours, and reap the benefit of them, and so gather fruit unto eternal life, and live in comfortable hope of the harvest-home, when the Master shall gird himself and come forth and serve the reapers; then he that soweth, and they which reap, shall both rejoice together.

Seeing we have such hopes, such views, and such expectation, the Lord grant unto us that we may run with patience the race set before us until it shall please God, who sent his angels to fetch Lazarus the beggar from the gate, to condescend to fetch my brother from the faggots, and me from the scourge of the tongue; then those that have lain among the pots, and some that have worked in the woods, shall be as the wings of a dove.

Honourable, honoured, and highly-favoured brother in the Lord, adieu. The coalheaver wisheth all peace, not forgetting his

love to all in Welwyn, of every sect, name, denomination, and party that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth.

W. H., S.S.

REMEMBRANCES.

LET me approach my Saviour dear,
To yonder mount, to Calvary;
And with thy glorious presence near,
Tell what thy love hath done for me.

My soul was lost in sin's dark maze,
And no escape or hope I saw;
Around me flash'd fierce Sinai's blaze,
And thunder'd overhead the Law.

And O, with mighty power it came,
Into my soul with grief oppress'd;
For by its bright and angry flame
I read how much I had transgress'd.

"Do this, or die," stern Justice cried.
"I have not done, I cannot do,"
With fear and trembling, I replied,
For nought but terror could I view.

But now a mystery I show:
'Twixt death and me a Saviour stood;
And when I look'd for lasting woe,
I only saw his flowing blood.

And O my soul, that lovely form
Is more to thee than aught beside;
His noble brow was crown'd with thorns,
His wounds gush'd forth a crimson tide.

His blood hath purged my guilty soul;
His gaping wounds have set me free;
His death has made my spirit whole,
And he obey'd the law for me.

"Fear not, fear not," he sweetly said,
"Thou could'st not do, but I have done.
Come, raise thy drooping, fainting head,
And put this robe of gladness on."

And then he clothed with matchless grace
My soul with his own purity,
And promised me, with sweet embrace,
With him to spend eternity.

O would I could for ever praise,
For ever of my Saviour dream!
On earth I fail, in heaven I'll raise
An endless song, my Lord its theme.

C. W.

THE Holy Spirit manifests his indefinite condescension herein. He is by nature over all, God blessed for ever. It is a condescension in the divine excellence, to concern itself in any creature whatever. God humbleth himself to behold the things that are done in heaven; how much more in submitting to the discharge of the office of Comforter in the behalf of poor worms on earth!—*Dr. Owen.*

MEDITATIONS ON DIFFERENT PORTIONS OF THE WORD OF GOD.

MEDITATIONS ON THE FIRST CHAPTER OF THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER.

As we have reason to believe from various testimonies which have reached us that our Meditations upon the first two chapters of the Epistle to the Ephesians have been received with acceptance by, and been found profitable to very many of our spiritual readers, we have felt encouraged to move onward in the same track; for besides this acceptable encouragement from without, we are well persuaded from our own experience from within that there is not only a peculiar safety, but a special blessedness in the laying open of the word of truth, which is not usually to be found in any other path of private meditation or public exposition. God has himself set a special value upon his own inspired Scriptures. "Thou hast magnified thy word," says the Psalmist, "above all thy name;" that is, all thy other manifested perfections. (Ps. cxxxviii. 2.) Nor are the reasons why God has thus magnified his word far to seek. Several occur to our mind:

1. As the display of his own glory is, and ever must be, the chief object and ultimate purpose of all his works, the main reason why God puts this high value on his word is because, as being a revelation of his mind and will, it especially glorifies himself. Creation manifests his eternal being, and with it his greatness, wisdom, and power; "for the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead" (Rom. i. 20); and providence displays his tender care in sustaining the creatures of his hand in life and being; but it is revelation which discovers the thoughts of his heart, and especially the purposes of his grace; and as this discovery of those thoughts of God's heart, "which are to all generations" (Ps. xxxiii. 11), is more precious in his sight than any external manifestation of his works, he has magnified his word above those other perfections of his nature in which consists his name.

2. But besides this special reason for magnifying his word above all his name, there is another, in that he has given therein a revelation of his dear Son, who is emphatically the Word; and as all we can now know of the incarnate Word is through the medium of the written word, God has put a special value and honour upon the inspired Scriptures as "the testimony of Jesus;" for that "is the spirit of prophecy." (Rev. xix. 10.)

3. Another reason is that he thereby forms a people for himself to show forth his praise. All that is done in and for the soul to conform it to the image of Christ is by the power of the word. Our gracious Lord, therefore, when he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and, as the High Priest over the house of God, offered

up that memorable intercessory prayer which the Holy Ghost, has recorded John xvii., said, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." This work of sanctification includes the whole of that sacred work of the Holy Ghost upon the soul, whereby it is made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light: which made the apostle say, in his parting address to the elders of the church at Ephesus, "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." (Acts xx. 32.) By it he begets us into spiritual life, as James testifies: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth;" and to this corresponds the language of Peter in the chapter which we have been led to propose as the subject of our present meditations: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." (1 Pet. i. 23.) By this word, in the hands of the Spirit, is the soul first convinced of sin; for by the law is the knowledge of sin. "Nay," says the apostle, "I had not known sin but by the law." And as divine life is thus communicated by the word, and with life the knowledge of sin through a condemning law, so is it maintained throughout by the same instrumentality. "As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby." If we look back to the first work of God upon our soul, and it is often profitable to do so, we shall see that never till then did we feel the power of God's word upon the heart. It was with us as the Psalmist speaks, "The entrance of thy words giveth light." (Ps. cxix. 130.) And though we might have been, and no doubt were, very ignorant of doctrinal truth, and had, so to speak, to grope our way to it more by feeling than by sight, yet the word of God was not as before, a sealed book, nor were we deaf to its voice or altogether blind to its meaning, for those words were made true in us: "And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness." (Isa. xxix. 18.) It was this divine light entering the soul, and this divine life together with it, quickening it into faith and feeling, that made us, like the new-born babe, desire the sincere milk of the word; and never, perhaps, was the word more attentively listened to, or the feet made more ready to run after it, than in those early days when eternal realities were first laid with great weight and power upon the mind. By the word, too, came all our *faith*; for "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Rom. x. 17.) By the word came also a good *hope* through grace: "Remember thy word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope." (Ps. cxix. 49.) It is by the word also that comes *love*: "O how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day." This is a receiving the love of the truth by which we are saved (2 Thess. ii. 10), and a proof that we love God as keeping his commandments through the obedience of faith. (1 John v. 3;

Rom. xvi. 26.) Through the word also is wrought *patience*: "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience" (Rev. iii. 10); and by the word, not to pursue the subject further, is a hard heart broken into contrition, and a cold heart fired with holy warmth: "Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" (Jer. xxiii. 29.)

But though such and similar are the effects of the word of God upon the heart, how few, speaking comparatively, even of the living family of God, get from it that fulness of blessing which is thus stored up in it. And are we wrong in saying that one cause of thus coming short of reaping from the word the blessings laid up in it is a want of prayerful meditation, and of a seeking to enter into the treasures of grace laid up in it by diligent search? God's word is a mine of heavenly truth: "Surely there is a vein for the silver, and a place for the gold where they fine it." (Job xxviii. 1.) But this vein has to be dug into; this gold does not lie loosely scattered upon the surface. We are bidden, therefore, to "cry after knowledge, and to lift up our voice for understanding; to seek her as silver, and to search for her as for hid treasures; for only thus can we understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." (Prov. ii. 3-5.)

But we need not here enlarge upon the power and preciousness of the word of truth; nor should we have dropped even these remarks upon it had we not wished to show that there was a special reason why, if we wrote at all, we should prefer to lay before our readers *Meditations upon the word of God* in preference to taking up any particular subject. Though the Scriptures are written with such wonderful wisdom, and are so inspired in every line by the Holy Ghost, yet it is not every reader of them, even though possessed of divine light and life, who is able either clearly to understand their divine meaning, or to derive from them that amount of profit which they are capable to impart. They need to be "opened" as Paul's manner was (Acts xvii. 3); and there are many of God's children who must almost answer with the eunuch to the question, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" "How can I except some man should guide me?" If, then, we can help in any way the diligent search of the Scripture, and by opening up the word of truth may lead our spiritual readers into a clearer and deeper knowledge of it, that they may be fed as with the finest of the wheat, we shall be well repaid for our labour, be it in breaking up the clods, or thrashing out the grain; and as "the husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits" (2 Tim. ii. 6), if the Lord be pleased to feed our soul whilst we are attempting to feed the souls of others, we shall reap a double benefit.

As, however, new ground is sometimes a desirable change for the seed, and as we have dwelt so much upon the leading points of the Epistle to the Ephesians in our *Meditations upon the*

first two chapters, that to pursue the subject further might probably involve much repetition, or if not that, might be chiefly an expansion of truths already opened up, we have felt disposed to lay before our readers some thoughts upon the first chapter of the general Epistle of Peter; and as in the case of the Epistle to the Ephesians we prefaced our Meditations with some general remarks on the character and nature of that Epistle, we shall do the same in that which is now before us.

i. Its *title* demands the first place; for though this is not strictly a part of the epistle, yet it is descriptive of its character, and distinguishes it from the epistles of Paul. His, it will be observed, were written either to churches, as to that at Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi, Colosse, &c., or to individuals, as to Timothy, Titus, Philemon. The only epistle of Paul which like that before us is of a general character, that is, not addressed to particular churches or persons, is the Epistle to the Hebrews. To show why that epistle was couched in that particular form would take us too far from our present point. Suffice it to say that all the other apostles wrote their epistles, with the exception of two short ones by John, not to churches or individuals, but to the people of God generally. Such is the Epistle of James, the first Epistle of John, that of Jude, and the first and second Epistles of Peter. They are called General or Catholic epistles, not because their views and doctrines are, in the ordinary sense of the word, general, but because the persons to whom they were written formed a part of the mystical body of Christ, irrespective of being gathered together into special and particular churches. They are therefore addressed to *characters*; and this feature in them makes them especially suitable to us; for either directly or incidentally the various features of divine life in the soul are thereby brought forward and presented to view, and thus, so far as we are able to recognise those peculiar features in our own case, they speak personally and individually to us. But as we shall see this peculiar character of the Epistle before us more fully brought out in the course of our exposition, we need not enlarge upon it now.

ii. The next point which demands our attention is the writer, "*Peter*." We may here remark incidentally that the ancients had a much more sensible way of addressing their letters than we have. Unless we know the handwriting of our correspondent, we have to go to the end of a letter before we know the writer; and as it often happens that our own name does not appear in the letter at all, and is only written upon the envelope, the letter itself affords no evidence who the person is to whom it is addressed. Now, the ancients avoided all this liability to confusion and mistake by putting the name of the writer, with appropriate titles, if required, to distinguish him, as the very first word in the letter, and the name of the person to whom it was written as the second. We have in the Acts of the Apostles an original Roman letter; and we see in it the two features

just described: "Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix sendeth greeting." (Acts xxiii. 26.) Here we see that Claudius Lysias, who wrote the letter, put his own name first, and immediately after the name of Felix, whom with all due courtesy he styles "the most excellent governor," or as we should now say, "his Excellency." Following this ancient and most sensible pattern, Peter puts his own name first; and to give his letter greater weight and authority, adds, "an apostle of Jesus Christ."

How much is involved in the simple word "Peter!" How it calls up to our mind the first and foremost of the disciples of Jesus Christ! How at once rush into our thoughts his warmth, his zeal, his love to his dear Master, the sweet revelation with which he was favoured of his being the Son of God, and his bold declaration of it; his cleaving to him when so many went away with that earnest appeal so expressive of the faith and feelings of every God-taught soul, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." And though our admiration of Peter's zeal and warmth is somewhat tempered by his sad fall in the hour of temptation, yet it no more takes Peter out of the affections of our heart than it took him out of the love of his dear Lord. Nay, it rather gives us a feeling of sympathy with him, as having been ourselves in a similar, if not the same, furnace of temptation as he, and having manifested in the sieve of Satan as little strength to stand as the very prince of the apostles.

But he comes before us in this epistle as "an apostle of Jesus Christ;" and a discerning eye can see in it not only the inspired and authoritative language of an apostle, but of one also whose spirit had been meekened and softened in the furnace of affliction. He writes, therefore, not merely "as an apostle of Jesus Christ," but, as he speaks elsewhere, as one "who also is an elder," both in years and grace, "and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed." This epistle, therefore, was written by him, not in that proud and haughty spirit which his pretended successors have shown so continually in their Papal bulls, but though claiming to speak with authority as an apostle of Jesus Christ, yet as one who to the authority of an apostle joined the love and affection of a friend and a brother.

iii. The *date* of the epistle is somewhat uncertain, but as the apostle speaks in it of "judgment beginning at the house of God," and intimates that "a fiery trial" was at hand which would try the faith of those to whom he wrote, it was probably written some little time before the destruction of Jerusalem, and not very long before his own martyrdom A.D. 64 or 65. It is not, indeed, of any great consequence, but we may not, therefore, greatly err if we fix the date about A.D. 61 or 63.

iv. The *persons* to whom it was written is the next point to be considered; for independently of its being a general or catholic

epistle, that is, addressed to the saints of God generally, it bears upon its front that it was written to "the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." The expression "strangers scattered" may be rendered more literally "strangers of the dispersion;" and this connects it with the general Epistle of James, which is addressed to "the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad;" or as it might be rendered more literally, "the twelve tribes which are in the dispersion." A light also is cast upon the expression by a similar term which we find in John, where the Jews ask, "Will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles?" where it is in the original "the dispersion of or among the Greeks." (John vii. 35, *margin.*) To understand this point better we must bear in mind that there was a very large population of Jews scattered through the various provinces of the Roman Empire, or rather the eastern portion of it. We see this in the Acts of the Apostles, where we find in almost every city a colony of Jews who had their synagogue, and to whom, in the first instance, Paul used to preach. Now amongst this scattered Jewish population, who were generally called Hellenists, from speaking Greek as distinct from the Hebrews who lived in Palestine who spoke Hebrew, or rather a dialect of it called Aramaic, the gospel had made many converts; and Peter being eminently the apostle of the circumcision, as Paul was that of the Gentiles (Gal. ii. 7), he addresses this epistle to those believing Jews who were scattered through the various provinces of Asia Minor which he enumerates, and which it is not necessary for us to enter into or explain.

But as brought under the power of divine grace they were "strangers" in a spiritual and experimental sense, and were scattered not only locally, but experimentally. It is here that the epistle meets us; here it becomes addressed to characters; here it speaks to us as being spiritually and experimentally what they were locally—scattered strangers.

The main character of a child of God is that he is a stranger upon earth. Such was David when he said, "I am a stranger in the earth; hide not thy commandments from me (Ps. cxix. 19); and again: "I am a stranger with thee and a sojourner, as all my fathers were." (Ps. xxxix. 12.) Such also were those blessed characters of old who are said to have "died in faith," and to have "confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." (Heb. xi. 13.) Such also was Moses in the land of Midian, and such were the feelings of his heart when he named his eldest son Gershom, "a stranger here." (Exod. ii. 22, *margin.*) And such before him was Abraham, who "by faith sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country." (Heb. xi. 9.) Such was Jacob in the land of Padan-aram when "he sore longed after his father's house." (Gen. xxxi. 30.) And such shall we be in our daily experience, if the same grace which wrought in their hearts has touched ours. Indeed, one

of the first effects of the grace of God upon our soul was to separate us from the world, and make us feel ourselves strangers in it. It was once our home, the active, busy centre of all our thoughts, desires, and affections; but when grace planted imperishable principles of life in our breast, it at once separated us from the world in heart and spirit, if not at first, through weakness of the flesh, in the fulness and decision of actual life and walk.

Nor has the word "scattered" a less significant meaning. It is true that those to whom the epistle was primarily written were scattered literally and locally; for in those Asiatic provinces the Jews generally were dispersed here and there, as solitary units in a population alien to them, not only on such a fundamental point as religion, but in all those observances, habits, customs, and even thoughts and feelings which sprang out of this religion as shoots from a deep root. There was, as we showed in our Meditations on the Epistle to the Ephesians, a deep, impassable barrier between Jew and Gentile, as Peter well expressed it: "Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation." (Acts x. 28.) Never, therefore, at any period or in any clime has the Jew been anything but a stranger; and he is still in this country, as he was in Asia even before the destruction of Jerusalem, a solitary being, except so far as he cleaves closely to his own people. But what was true of the Jew generally, was of the converted Jew true specially. Those of the stock of Israel to whom the word came with power, that "remnant according to the election of grace" of which Paul speaks (Rom. xi. 5), were in a special sense "scattered strangers." They were, speaking comparatively, very few in number, the main harvest, as we see in the Acts of the Apostles, being reaped from the Gentiles. Israel after the flesh "stumbled at the stumbling stone;" for "being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, they would not submit themselves unto the righteousness of God." The few, therefore, of the literal Israel who were called by grace were indeed "scattered strangers;" for they were but a sprinkling here and there, two or three berries on the top of the uttermost bough; and as having to endure great persecution from their own body, who then, as now, abhorred with the deepest loathing every convert to the Christian faith, they were "strangers" as having neither brother nor friend among Jew or Gentile, and no union or communion except with those who were partakers of the same precious faith.

But we may view the words as having a spiritual and experimental bearing. Those who truly love and fear God are in our day "scattered strangers." Even literally and locally they are scattered here and there, a few in this town or in that village; but wherever they dwell separate in heart and spirit, and as far as they can in worship and service from all amidst whom they

dwell; and as they are strangers inwardly and experimentally by the power of divine grace making this world to them a wilderness, so are they scattered inwardly and experimentally by the breath of the Lord having blown upon their natural strength, wisdom, and righteousness, and scattered to the four winds of heaven every delusive hope, and all confidence grounded in self. Nor are they less "scattered" by the various trials and temptations through which they are called to pass, the effect of which often is to fill them with confusion, to scatter their thoughts to the wind and leave them often as the hymn says:

"Half a wreck by tempest driven."

It is, however, to such "scattered strangers" that the epistle speaks; and its first word is a word of consolation and strength to gather together as it were these scattered outcasts of Israel, to plant them on a sure basis, and to give them an encouraging testimony that though strangers to man and often to themselves, they are not strangers to God; and though scattered in their bodies locally and in their souls spiritually they are gathered up into the book of life in which their names have been written from eternity as the elect of God.

v. The next word that meets our eye is "*elect*."

Peter, we see, "the apostle of Jesus Christ," does not shun or keep back the doctrine of election. He counted it neither dangerous nor licentious, but puts it forward in the most prominent manner as the distinctive blessing of these "scattered strangers." "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ; grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied." (1 Pet. i. 2.) But it will be observed that he speaks of these scattered strangers as "*elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father*." By this foreknowledge he does not mean merely that God knew from all eternity those who should believe in his dear Son. Foreknowledge of the persons of the elect in the divine economy precedes election. "Whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate" (Rom. viii. 29); and this foreknowledge was not any eternal foreview of their faith or love in time, as if *that* were the ground of God's choice of them; but it implies, first, that thorough knowledge which God had of them, and of all that should concern them, of all the depths of sin and rebellion, disobedience and ungodliness, of which they might be guilty before called by grace, and of all their grievous backslidings, slips, and falls, with all the base returns that they should make for his goodness and mercy toward them after he had touched their hearts by his finger. And secondly and chiefly, it signifies the good will and pleasure, with that everlasting love of God the Father, whereby he foreknew them with a holy approbation of them, a divine affection toward them, and a holy and unalterable delight in them as viewed in his dear Son, chosen in

him and accepted in the Beloved. And thus election is not, if we may use the expression without irreverence, a dry choice of them in Christ, but a choice of them as foreknowing, with a holy approbation, each of his elect family, personally and individually, and however they might differ among themselves in the infinite variety whereby one man varies both naturally and spiritually from another, yet that his approving knowledge of each and all of them in Christ Jesus was in sweet harmony with his determinate choice. To realize this in soul feeling is very sweet and precious. We do not know ourselves. We may have seen a little into our fallen state by nature, and may know something of the awful evils that lurk and work within; we may have had some passing skirmishes, or even some hot battles with our proud, rebellious, unbelieving, infidel, and desperately wicked heart, but we do not know ourselves as God knows us. And though we may cry, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts," yet how shallow for the most part and superficial is that knowledge and experience of ourselves! How little do we measure our sinfulness by the holiness of God, or look down into the depths of our nature as they lie naked and open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do! When, then, we think that he who knew from the beginning all that we ever should be in the depths of the Adam fall, and yet chose us by determinate decree in his dear Son unto eternal life, what a blessed lift does it give to the soul out of all those sinkings into which a sight and sense of sin is continually casting it.

But we may observe also that the apostle couples with election both means and ends. The ends are "unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ," the means are "sanctification of the Spirit." But as the consideration of these points demands more space than we can now give them, we shall defer our Meditations upon them to a following No.

Obituary.

ANN BELL.

DIED at Oakham, Nov. 24th, 1868, Ann Bell, aged 52.

Mrs. Bell was much impressed with the value of the soul, and the importance of religion at an early age. She could say she never hated God's people, but felt towards them a mixture of veneration and admiration, which in after years ripened into the warmest love. She was very gradually taught her lost and helpless state as a sinner, and as light increased, her efforts to work out a righteousness to please the Lord were changed into prayers that she might know him; and, through the power of grace, she was enabled to follow on, until he manifested himself to her. One of our friends well remembers the earnestness with which she expressed this reigning desire of her soul, to know the

Lord as *her* salvation, when she was young and serving an apprenticeship with a dressmaker, and her own full conviction that the desire was of the Lord, and that he would fulfil it.

She attended the ministry at Providence Chapel from its being first opened. Mr. Gadsby's preaching was attended with more power and savour to her soul than any other she heard at that time.

On her marriage she was removed to Melton Mowbray. Leaving the ministry at Oakham was a sharp trial to her, and she was impressed with the belief that much of the trial she experienced was on that account. Every succeeding providence to the end of her days, even those apparently prosperous, eventually added some bitterness to her cup. She was often tried because she had not been the subject of such cutting convictions as others, the work having been so gradual that she could not clearly date its commencement; but I think she was much relieved on this point by a sermon which she heard at Leicester, preached by the late Mr. Brown, from the words, "I will bring the third part through the fire." After some time she returned to Oakham, but to her great sorrow, was unable, through her much increased deafness, to hear a preached gospel. *Once only*, she heard these few words, "Your heavenly Father knoweth," which were attended with such power to her soul as not only reconciled her, in some measure, to the Lord's will, but raised up faith to believe he was *her* God and Father indeed. This she often looked back to, as a stone of help, and I really think the savour and sweetness of those words never wholly left her. They were delivered by Mr. Philpot.

To extreme deafness was added a weak and afflicted tabernacle, and at times she was much tempted to repine and rebel against the Lord. One day, when in this state, a few verses on murmuring were lent her, which were the means of breaking her heart into contrition, shame, and confession before the Lord, and such passiveness of spirit was wrought as she had never experienced before.

After several years, two children were given to her; one, a girl, was taken away at about five years of age. There was a hard struggle in the mother's breast, but after great wrestling with the Lord, he not only satisfied her respecting the child, but so blessedly manifested himself to her soul as to enable her to set up another Ebenezer, and go on her way with renewed strength.

In 1866 she and her husband were baptized by Mr. Knill. The church received the account she gave them with sympathy and satisfaction.

She was in a very poor state of health at this time. A friend called to see her the day after her baptism, and found her not only something better in body, but very much favoured in soul. She said how Toplady's hymn,

"When languor and disease invade," &c.,

was blessed to her, as she sat by the water side. "Ah!" she

said, "I thought I saw the dear Saviour baptized in water, then in blood; and then these lines came into my heart:

'Sweet to remember that his blood
My debt of suffering paid.'

Then my mind rested upon the third verse, then upon the fifth, then upon the last; and then I began at the first verse, and went through the whole hymn." Being unable to *hear* what was passing, it thus appeared that her mind was kept stayed and meditating upon the sweetness of these eternal realities.

The same friend calling a few days afterwards, she said, "I have lost all my sweet feelings. The Lord has withdrawn, and I have mourned after him as a child after its mother. I have taken up the lamentation of Hart:

'I mope, I grieve, I faint;'
'More frequent let thy visits be,
Or let them longer last;
I can do nothing without thee;
Make haste, my God, make haste.'

As disease advanced, the Lord enabled her to look death in the face without dismay. Walking out a little one day, being weary, she sat down to rest, when the words, "In my Father's house are many mansions," &c., were very blessedly applied; so that by faith she entered in and enjoyed a sweet foretaste of

"The joy prepared for suffering saints."

She said, "If my husband and boy had seen me crying, they would have thought it was for the loss of my brothers; but I wept for joy, and longed to depart. I fear it was almost impatience." She had lost three brothers in about the space of a year. Those who frequently saw her can testify how graciously the Lord supported her and gave her patience. One evening in August she was complaining of the old spirit of rebellion under sufferings, but said, "I have been reading Mr. P.'s sermon, No. 124 'Gospel Pulpit,' and I can say I know it all by experience."

A friend who spent an hour or two with her one evening about this time, much enjoyed the depth and savour and richness of experience with which she was favoured. With what submission she spoke of her many trials, which were deep, close, and peculiar, and how she justified the Lord in all his dealings with her, and said, "All were needful, all for the mortification and crucifixion of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved," and she spoke very blessedly upon Matt. x. 24 to the end. This conversation left the impression that the Lord was either preparing her for her dissolution, or for some keen trial, and it proved that the one was to precede the other. The Sunday following, her husband was taken very ill, and was confined to his bed with fever for four weeks. The second week their only child was prostrated, and he died Sept. 22nd, aged 12. Thus earthly ties were rent asunder and she was loosened from earth, and it became evident that she was soon to pass away. A friend re-

marked to her, "Your weakness increases; you will not be long here." She replied, "I think not; I wish to go when the Lord pleases; but I shrink from pain and suffering. I should like to be taken away gently, or in my sleep. I have many years wished to die a triumphant death, but now I can leave it with the Lord."

On the first Monday in November, she said, "I was much cast down, because I had no sensible enjoyment; but I read yesterday the account of Joseph T., in the "Gleaner." That broke the snare. "The just shall live by faith and not by sensible enjoyments;" and on the last Lord's day evening, she directed her husband to read it, and said, "I have no joy, but the Lord is my righteousness." The latter she often repeated during the few days afterwards she lived. She took a most affectionate leave of her friends, and blessed them in the name of the Lord, and expressed most firmly her assurance of the Lord's eternal favour to her soul, and that he would never leave nor forsake her.

The last few days she suffered much through pain and exhaustion which, together with her deafness, rendered it impossible to converse much with her. The Lord's day evening before she died, she told her husband that before this last illness began, hymn 992 was applied to her:

"Poor and afflicted, Lord, are thine."

Also that sweet promise, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee;" and added, "The Lord has given me, since I have been on this bed, some promises within these last few weeks, and I believe he will take me to himself."

"There shall I bathe my weary soul,
In seas of heavenly rest,
And not a wave of trouble roll
Across this peaceful breast."

One who was with her, referring to something she did not hear, said, "You can hear the Lord's voice, even his whisper;" she replied, "Yes, sweetly at times."

The morning she died, she said to the same friend, "I hope *you* will not suffer as I do." Her friend said, "It will soon be over, and then heaven will make amends for all." She answered, "Yes, it will."

When she was very near her end, a friend having one hand, and her husband the other, she looking very earnestly at each, but unable to speak, the friend pointed upwards, and said, "Rest there." As quick as thought, she gave a nod of assent, and shortly afterwards entered into that rest for which she had often ardently longed.

O for grace to follow her as she followed Christ in her life and conversation, in her separation of heart from the world; for she passed through it as "a stranger and a pilgrim," more so than any one I ever knew. Her deafness kept her in much solitude, and the Lord overruled the affliction in his tender pity, and

showed her many sweet and blessed things out of his word, and often communed with and cheered her spirit. Her garments were unspotted. Few knew her trials and temptations, and when clouds gathered over her soul, she was ready to say, "My way is hid from the Lord." But, no! His eyes were not eyes of flesh. Her heavenly Father knew all, saw all, and delivered her from the fowler's snare. Promise after promise beamed to cheer her onward to her heavenly home, and an everlasting day has dawned upon her soul. "The Lord is her everlasting light, and the days of her mourning are ended."

Oakham, Dec. 4th, 1868.

H. W.

THE ABSENCE OF JESUS.

WHERE, where is my Beloved?
 O wherefore doth he stay
 So long from me away?
 I quickly stray aside
 Whene'er I miss my Guide,
 And faint, and drop, and die
 Without his presence nigh.
 Return, my Love, return,
 For I cease not to mourn.

O where is my Beloved?
 I fear this tide of thought
 With every evil fraught.
 I fear these doubts that rise,
 And hide him from my eyes.
 Could I but hear his voice
 Then would my soul rejoice.
 Return, my Love, return,
 For I cease not to mourn.

O where is my Beloved?
 Low at his feet I'd fall,—
 My Lord, my Life, my All.
 His presence, calm and bright,
 Would chase these clouds of night.
 Come, glorious Prince of Peace,
 And bring me full release.
 Return, my Love, return,
 Then shall I cease to mourn.

PROVIDENCE is like a curious piece of arras, made up of a thousand shreds, which single we know not what to make of, but put together they present us with a beautiful history.—*Flavel*.

CHRIST'S love must needs exceed all the love of the children of men; for he was the very love of God clothed in flesh and blood. This is he "that was red in his apparel, that treadeth the wine-press."—*Saltmarsh*.

It is a diminution of Christ's dignity, sufficiency, and glory, in the business of your salvation, to join any thing with the Lord Jesus; and it is the greatest disparagement in the world to your own judgments, knowledge, prudence, and wisdom, to yoke any thing with Christ in the work of redemption, in the business of salvation.—*Brooks*.

APRIL 1, 1869.

THE
GOSPEL STANDARD.

APRIL, 1869.

MATT. v. 6; 2 TIM. i. 9; ROM. ix. 7; ACTS viii. 37, 38; MATT. xxviii. 19.

NOTES OF A SERMON BY MR. SMART,
PREACHED AT OAKHAM, MAY 25TH, 1856.

“Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”—ISAIAH liii. 12.

How in the prophecies respecting Christ, we read as if the things then spoken of had actually taken place; as in this chapter we find: “Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him, he *hath* put him to grief;” which prophecy was spoken 700 years before Christ came and performed the thing spoken of. What does it show forth? It shows that Christ had from all eternity condescended to act as Surety for all his dear elect. In the eternal counsels and decree of the Father he laid on Christ the iniquity of all his dear people, and there is nothing new or old in the mind of the blessed Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; he is the one eternal Now, the great I AM.

“Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him.” Just think for a moment about this pleasure of the Lord. O! wonder-working God, that he should take his darling, his dearly-beloved Son, and deliver him over into the hands of inflexible Justice, on behalf of such rebellious wretches that he came to save; and notice, too, that it was his pleasure so to do. Not that he was dragged down from those heights of bliss against his will; but he agreed in the counsels of old to do the work, and the Father accepted the promise of the Son, his “Lo, I come.” He delighted in the will of his heavenly Father. And think, too, what it cost him. How he was bruised in both soul and body. Hart sings,

“Suffering Saviour, Lamb of God,
How hast thou been used,
With the Almighty’s wrathful rod,
Soul and body bruised.”

How it sets forth the justice and holiness of God, and what a hatred he had to sin. O what a damnable thing sin is, that nothing could deliver from it but the offering up of God’s darling Son, the innocent, harmless Lamb of God! Was not God just and righteous in casting down the angels that sinned? Was he

not just and righteous when he turned our first parents out of paradise? And is he not just and righteous in sending to hell all the vessels of wrath, to receive the just reward of their misdeeds? And how can justice and mercy be reconciled? In no other way than by the bruising of God's dear Son. Either the elect must be damned or Christ must suffer in their law-place, room, and stead. Honours crown his brow. The work he undertook he must go through. He was the only real Friend that ever visited this earth. He was the Friend of friends. And was there ever a brute on earth, was there ever a creature, man, or devil, that was used as this dear Friend? See him as soon as born, how he was laid in a manger among beasts, and how the little children were put to death, in order that he might be involved in the dreadful massacre, and how, when he was grown up, what afflictions of soul and body he went through. How the devil seemed to be let loose upon him, tempting him, and also led him to the brow of a hill, in order to throw him down and break his neck. And what soul-sufferings he went through. How he cried out under the hidings of his heavenly Father's countenance, "My God, my God, why hast *thou* forsaken me?" And look, too, at the Jews, those that were his own people by national adoption, how they entertained him. It is said he came to his own, but his own received him not; but they took him, and put him to shame, ignominy, and death, the most cruel of deaths that either men or devils could devise. He drank up the cup of suffering and wrath to the very dregs, the cup of the Father's holy indignation against sin. Think for a moment of what our hell would be, and then think of the millions of hells that must have burst upon his sacred head. How he was overwhelmed in suffering! And what could move him to go through all this sea of affliction? It was love, and nothing but love. Love of whom? The pious and religious Pharisees? No; but a "hardened herd," a "rebel race." And to come a little closer home, Has it pleased the Lord to *bruise* thy soul for sin? Has Christ to suffer all, and you that are interested in his death to have no fellowship with him in his sufferings? You must suffer with him here, or you will not reign with him hereafter. And what communion can there be between a broken-hearted Saviour and a whole-hearted sinner? Hart says:

"A faithful friend of grief partakes,
 But union can be none,
 Betwixt a heart like melting wax
 And hearts as hard as stone,
 Betwixt a Head diffusing blood
 And members sound and whole,
 Betwixt an agonizing God
 And an unfeeling soul."

There must be a feeling sense of the guilt of sin, or how can you prize the pardon of sin? Unless you feel sin to be a burden, you do not want Christ to take the burden off. There is a hell

for everybody. You must have hell here, or, in other words, taste in some small measure the wrath of God due to sin and sinners while here, or lie for ever under the penal wrath of God, under the curse of a broken law hereafter. What a mercy, poor soul, if it has pleased the Lord to bruise you, and to make you heartily sick of sin; for those and only those he bruises has he come to heal. "The whole need not a Physician, but they that are sick."

"And to put him to grief." The Lord put his dear Son to grief. He cried out, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death;" and are you so hard-hearted as to have no feeling for him? Are you never grieved for grieving him? It is said, "They shall grieve for him as for an only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one is in bitterness for her first-born."

"Love and grief compound an unction
Both to cleanse our wounds and heal.

"When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin." We shall do well to call to mind whose soul it was that was made an offering. That it was the holy soul of the innocent, harmless Lamb of God, and that he possessed a perfect human soul, that he might be partaker of the infirmities of the children, and have sympathy for them—a sympathizing high priest; for as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he likewise took part of the same, and was in all points tempted as we are, in order that he might succour those that are tempted. And it was by the offering up of himself once for all that he hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified, or set apart by God the Father in the counsels of eternity, and set apart by the redeeming work of God the Son, in that he was the good Shepherd that gave his life for the sheep, and set apart from the rest of mankind in this time-state by the individual sanctification of God the Holy Ghost. This offering up of himself ascended with a sweet smell into the nostrils of the Lord of Sabaoth. With this sacrifice he was well pleased, better pleased than if the work of redemption had never been performed, and that the elect as well as the rest had been left to perish in their sins; for they had no claim on God, that he should send his dearly-beloved Son to bleed and die, and so deliver them from going down to the pit. Gaol pays no debts; but Christ has paid the debts of all his dear people, and God the Father is better pleased, and justice is more satisfied, than if the sinner had been cast into prison, there to lie until the last farthing was paid, which could never be. How few there are that see the value of such an offering! Only those who are taught by the blessed Spirit, and have been shown the awful demerit of sin and the transgression of their souls to be infinite, therefore required infinite satisfaction, which no creature could ever give.

"He shall see his seed." It was this that encouraged him to go through the work and to bear all that was laid upon him, and to

“Bear all incarnate God could bear
With strength enough and none to spare.”

His eye is upon his children from the beginning of the year to the end of the year, and for their good to watch over and preserve them, and to hold them up against all the powerful assaults of the enemy, whether external, internal, or infernal. His eye is always over the righteous, he sees all their goings, and he waters his vineyard night and day. He is the keeper of his people, so that Satan can only act but by permission; he is a chained enemy.

“He shall prolong his days;” which he did on earth while he finished the work he came to do. His enemies would fain have destroyed him before they did; but he declared that his time was not yet come. He did prolong his days till the last part of redemption work was done, and then cried out with a voice that shook heaven, earth, and hell, “It is finished,” and he bowed his head and died.”

“And the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.” For my part, I have not the least doubt about its prospering; it must prosper; he will do all his pleasure, and I do not (in my right mind) wish to alter his sacred pleasure.

“He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied.” What satisfaction would it be to a man if he went to a market and purchased a hundred sheep, and was to be put off with fifty? Would he be satisfied, or could he be reconciled to his purchase? Verily, not. And do you think that Christ will be satisfied if part of his purchase, part of his redeemed, be left to perish? No. Universal redemption is a universal lie. Christ will see his ransomed, his love, his dove, his darling, his wife and spouse for ever at home with him in glory, basking for ever in the rays of ineffable bliss. I have no such beggarly views of Jesus as to think he will be cheated out of part of his purchase, those he bought so dear.

“Shall sin and Satan Jesus cheat,
And prove the ransom incomplete?”

No. Christ has bought her with blood, and is determined to win her heart to himself, and to live and reign with him for ever and ever, and then he will be satisfied. But how could he be satisfied to see one part for whom he suffered and bled in hell, and one part in heaven? No, where Jesus is, there the elect must everlastingly be.

“By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many.” What a solemn thing! “By his knowledge.” He knows every child of his, into whatever hole and corner they may get. He knows all their trials and difficulties. He knows, too, their motives. He knows the way they take; however they may deceive the eye of man, God knows. He knows, too, the craft of all their enemies, with all their malice, internal as well as external enemies. And by his knowledge shall he justify many. It matters little who condemns, if he justifies. Who is he that

condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather who is now risen and seated at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. In the case of Simon the Pharisee and poor Mary Magdalene he knew the secrets of the heart of each; they were both naked and open before him. And how he justified the one, and left the other to the consequences of his own pride and self-righteousness; the one raised to a blessed assurance of her own justification, and the other to fall into condemnation, to lie for ever under the wrath of the Lamb as a Christ despiser. How, too, Christ was a righteous servant, doing his heavenly Father's will. Though he were a Son, how he learnt obedience by the things he suffered; and the Father accepted the obedience of his Son, though acting in the office of a servant, and says to his people, "Behold my servant whom I uphold." He shall justify many. Think of that great number out of every nation, kindred, and tongue whom he hath taken home to sing of redeeming grace. Not a clashing note; they will all sing to the praise of the glory of his grace, casting their crowns at his most blessed feet, saying, "Thou art worthy, for thou hast redeemed us by thy blood, and we shall reign with thee for ever and ever; for those whom he justifies, them he also glorifies."

"For he shall bear their iniquities." Are your iniquities more than you can bear? and do you feel their weight, and that they are more in number than the hairs of your head? If so, you will prize a burden-bearer. One of old says, "Mine iniquities are gone over mine head as a heavy burden; they are too heavy for me." Is sin an evil and bitter thing? Do you hate sin because it crucified the Lord of life and glory, and that it was your sins that pierced him, the sins of an elect world that caused him to suffer? It was the wrath of God due to their transgressions which were laid with all their weight upon his devoted head. The non-elect had no interest in his death; they were only instruments in the hands of the devil, so that with their wicked hands they put to death the Lord of glory. Their sins were not atoned for. It was the sins of his church and people that crucified and nailed him to the accursed tree. He was made a curse for them that they might be made righteous in him. He died that they might live, and while he lives his people can never die. All his people shall be made to feel the burden of sin; and he took upon himself to be their burden-bearer. What a consolation, poor, heavy-laden, coming sinner! But some poor soul may say, "I do not feel my burden heavy enough." Is it heavy enough to make you hate it? And do you desire to be delivered from it? And do you feel any love and sympathy to a crucified Saviour?

"For it is not of him that wills or runs,
But Christ that saves from hell."

Do you want to have Christ exalted and the sinner debased? If these are your feelings, there is hope in Israel concerning you.

The Lord teaches by little and little, here a line and there a line, and all his children shall be taught of him, and whom he takes in hand he never lets finally depart from him.

“Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great.” This is the language of the Father concerning the inheritance which he gives to his dear Son. He says, “I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance.” And, again, “The Lord’s portion is his people. Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.” He will divide the people of all nations. His Son is to have a portion with the great one. That great one is the devil, the prince of the power of the air, that king over all the children of pride. His portion is not so large as the devil’s. He seems to hold nearly all in his grasp. Old and young, rich and poor, noble and ignoble, are led captive by him at his will, but not seeing or feeling their captivity. And what an awful thing it is that he is king over all the children of pride! How nearly all the aristocracy seem to be determined to exert all their power and influence in behalf of this king; how they seem to yield to him sincere obedience; and how that aristocratic spirit seems to be the spirit of all in hell! They are all aristocracy there; all the ambitious and despotic. How great men want to be! which shows what dominion Satan has over them. Not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. It does not say, “Not any.” Christ has a portion even among them, though it be but as the gleanings of grapes when the vintage is done. If it is only a remnant that is to be saved, it will be a great number at the final reckoning; a number which no man can number, and not one of the despised remnant shall be missing. The remnant of anything seems to be generally despised, but Christ takes care of the remnant, according to the election of grace.

“And he shall divide the spoil with the strong.” O what power the devil has over mankind! What strength he manifests in the old man of sin, which every vessel of mercy carries about with him. What powerful suggestions and powerful temptations, that seem to bear all down before them, and the poor soul is almost at his wits’ end, not knowing what to do or which way to take. The heart of man is the devil’s stronghold and his palace, until Jesus comes as an Almighty conqueror to the rescue of the poor drudged vassal. While the devil keeps possession, the goods are in peace. He is strong, but there does not seem any necessity for him to put forth his strength. Mankind are so fond of him and his dominion that they, of their own free will, would never revolt from under his service. Nay, more, they choose him for their king and ruler. They are led captive by him at his will, just as he likes and just as they like; and while that is the case, the soul is at ease and quiet, unmolested, and unalarmed. “But when a stronger than he cometh upon him.” You see, there is one stronger than he. Poor soul, the devil is strong, but Jesus is stronger, and comes upon him, and first

binds him, and then begins to strip the soul of the false armour in which he has been trusting and resting so secure. He takes by force the castle of the human heart from him, and proclaims himself the rightful sovereign and ruler. Things, then, are not so peaceful and quiet. The devil is aroused and begins to put forth his strength, but he is sure to be conquered when Jesus comes to the battle. The battle of this Almighty Warrior is with confused noise and garments rolled in blood. He conquers the sinner by showing him what dominion sin and the devil had over him, and then winning the heart of the sinner over to himself; and he will bruise Satan under his feet shortly. Well, he is to divide the spoil with this strong one, the devil. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. That is the devil's share; let him have it and make the best of it. All the works of the flesh, such as Paul gives a long catalogue of in his Epistle to the Galatians, such as anger, wrath, malice, &c., as well as all fleshly religion, which most people prize so dearly. It is flesh and nothing but flesh, do all you may to try to vamp it up. But that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. All the members of the new man of grace are to join in bringing forth fruit to the honour and praise of God, and as a fruit of Christ's finished work; and this fruit is to be his share—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, &c. All that is born of the Spirit is spirit, and when in sweet exercise, can do nothing but honour the blessed Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit. It is sweet living by faith on the finished work of the Son of God.

“Because he hath poured out his soul unto death.” If any one should ask why the Father should divide the Son a portion, I should say, that he suffered, bled, and died on their behalf; and if any should say, Why did he pour out his soul unto death? I could give no answer but that he loved the people, and therefore gave himself for them. He loved them because he would love them. The Bible gives no other reason. Its language is: “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy.” He giveth no account of his matters.

“And he was numbered with the transgressors,” as much as if he was the actual transgressor. God the Father numbered him with the elect transgressors in that he stood in their law-place, room, and stead. All the transgressions of his dear people he took upon himself; and the Scriptures testify that he was made sin for us, who knew no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He is the spiritual scapegoat that bare all the sins of his people into the land of forgetfulness, and if they should be sought for they shall not be found. He was numbered with the transgressors in his death. He was crucified between two thieves—a death of ignominy and reproach—in order that all that passed by might conclude him to be an impostor, or worse than those crucified with him; and the thieves themselves that were with him in dying agonies cast the same in his teeth, saying, “If

thou be the Son of God, save thyself and us,"—evidently as hard and impenitent as mortal man could be. But mark! Jesus was about to perform a miracle in the person of one poor thief. What a conspicuous display of sovereign, discriminating grace! He let a drop of love fall into the heart of one, and see its effect. He soon began to acknowledge the justice of his punishment, and to vindicate the cause of his fellow-sufferer, Christ Jesus. He says, "We, indeed, justly; but this man hath done nothing amiss." But love divine still carried on the work in this poor sinner's soul, which forced a cry from the bottom of his heart, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." Faith was raised up in his heart to view him as the Christ of God, and acknowledged him as Lord, the Lord; and knew, too, that if he did not help, no one else could. And did Christ hear the cry of the poor sinner? Was there ever a poor creature who was made to feel his lost and undone condition, and enabled by the blessed Spirit to cry from sheer necessity, that he did not answer. No; it could not be; he will answer in his own time and way. He answered the poor thief, "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Now, I will ask, what was there in one of these men more than another? Nothing at all. They were equally depraved, and one would not have implored mercy any more than the other but that love divine broke into the poor sinner's soul; for all that know anything of divine teaching are brought to say, "We love him because he first loved us."

"And he bare the sin of many." Some poor soul may say, "I believe Christ was offered to bear the sins of all his dear people; but am I one of his people?" You are brought to believe God has a people. Do you wish to be made manifest as one of his people? Yes; but I cannot make myself one. Do you love his people, cause, and truth? If so, it is one mark in your favour. Do you feel sin to be a burden, and long to be delivered from it? He bare the sin of many. There is everything in the word of God to encourage all truly penitent and coming sinners; but to all hard-hearted, impenitent sinners it holds out nothing but fearful threatenings, and those threatenings will be put into execution.

"And made intercession for the transgressors." Where can you find in all the word of God that any but transgressors have any interest in the death of Jesus? And what are you, and what have you ever been but transgressors? From the womb we go astray speaking lies; but he ever liveth at the right hand of the Father to make intercession for his redeemed people. You always have been, and always will be transgressors.

"Not the righteous,
Sinners Jesus came to call."

THOUGH the holy walk of a Christian does not recommend him to the favour of God, yet it recommends the religion of the Son of God in the world.—*Mason.*

THE SECRET OF LOVE AND UNION.

Grace, mercy, and peace be with my dear Friend. Amen.

I have been much engaged in writing for some time, also indisposed in body; notwithstanding which I should have written to you, but thought as I corresponded with your dear sister it was almost the same as if I addressed you. I bless the Lord if my poor writing has been a blessing to you, and am glad your desires continue to crave for the best things, that you are seeking the things that accompany salvation. "They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." In the Lord's time they shall have all their wants supplied.

I am truly glad to hear that your eldest sister has a deeper sense of her poverty, and is desiring the bread of heaven. It is indeed a great mercy to be made sensible of our poverty and destitute state of soul, and to find a sense of need of the things of the Spirit. The humiliation and sufferings of Christ are for such: "For though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty may be made rich." All the grace prepared by God in covenant (with which Christ is filled) is for such: "The poor (in spirit) have the gospel preached to them." The throne of grace is for such: "Come boldly to the throne of grace, that ye may find grace to help in time of need." (It is for the needy.) God will feed such: "I will feed you, O poor of the flock." They shall have the exercise of faith: "The Lord hath founded Zion, and the poor of the people shall trust in it;" "I will leave in the midst of thee a poor people; they shall trust in thy name." They have every encouragement to pray for what they need: "He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer." They are blessed, and shall go to heaven: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." God will deliver them from their bondage, guilt, fear, and destitute, helpless state: "He will deliver the needy when he crieth, the poor also, and him that hath no helper." They shall have occasion to rejoice in God: "The poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel." They shall have what they want in the Lord's time: "My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory, by Jesus Christ." Therefore a sense of poverty is of more value than a kingdom. Those who feel spiritual poverty, or poverty of soul, will have a sense of need. Such are "poor and needy," which none are but the children of God. Others "have need of nothing," because "they know not that they are poor, and blind, and naked." Then, in so far as a sense of poverty and desires for the riches of grace are evident in your sister, there is foundation for hope that God has begun a good work in her. These may well be embraced by the flock of Christ, for God has promised "to feed the poor of the flock."

You state it as your belief that my correspondence with your sister has been blessed to several. This to me is good news.

God is my record how I long that my writings may be made useful to his chosen ones. I care not how much I am stripped and emptied, if it be to the profit and enriching of the souls of his people. "As poor, yet making many rich." That your sister is free to let others read, or hear read, what has been a blessing to her evidences a sweet and noble spirit, and is proof of her love to God: "He that loveth God, loveth his brother also." This is the way to increase comfort in her own soul: "There is that scattereth (distributeth), yet increaseth; there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to penury." I wrote to her, not knowing it was read by any other person, except her sister and you; yet if the good Lord is pleased to bless it to others, it will be a double pleasure to me to write.

I have not written to Woolwich, being so engaged; yet it seems they are determined not to give me up, which is a fresh token of their love. The Lord unite, bless, and prosper their souls, that they may have but one heart, all agreeing to give their hearts as one to Christ; that they may have but one way—Christ in his word; that they may have but one mind—the "mind of Christ;" that they may unanimously be content to sink that Christ may rise; and that they may in unison rise up with him from this wilderness and all entangling things. No way so straight to meet Christ, or have his presence among them as to cultivate union with each other. When the children of God are cold and shy towards each other, Christ seems shy of them; but when they cultivate love and seek unity and peace among each other, then Christ will show himself loving to them: "Be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you."

Now, there are several things needful to such unions: 1, Let each one esteem another better than himself; 2, Submit to each other in the fear of the Lord; 3, Bear the infirmities and burdens of each other; 4, Seek to honour each other; 5, Let each one pray for another. Seek not honour from each other, but seek the honour that cometh from God, otherwise the exercise of faith is stopped; then love and unity will abate: "How can ye believe that seek honour one of another, and seek the honour that cometh from God only?" 6, Consider the grand stimulus to union: "If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." God loved us with a *notwithstanding* all our sins and provocations; therefore we ought to love each other notwithstanding infirmities and the many impediments: "Have fervent charity among yourselves, for charity (brotherly love) shall cover the multitude of sins"—failings of each other. I am truly glad you are inclined to associate with them often: "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise," when "a companion of fools shall be destroyed." Now, wise men are such as fear God, though they may be idiots in other respects, for "the fear of God, that is wisdom." And these truly have his fear in their hearts; therefore, if in heart you join them, you must be in-

terested in the same blessings; for if he that walketh with wise men shall be wise, then he that is united in heart to them that fear God hath in his own heart the same grace. And “surely I know it shall be well with them that fear God, who walk before him.” “Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord; he will show them his covenant.” Those who fear the Lord should speak often one to another. Such, when truly united, have plenty to talk about: “Come hither, ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul”—what a great work he hath wrought for my salvation and welfare; what he hath done in my soul, his work of grace there; what he hath done, from time to time, in visiting, feeding, comforting, strengthening, leading, guiding, healing, teaching, and refreshing my soul. O! When the spring is open, there is no end of telling. But who can open the spring? None but the Spirit of God. Therefore cry for him to do it. Who will draw out from the spring? “A man of understanding shall draw it out.” Who is a man of understanding? Such as fear God, for “the fear of God is to depart from evil,” and “to depart from evil is understanding.” Therefore it is such as fear God.

See, then, the blessedness of associating together and being in close and unreserved union with each other. O, cleave to such, and all will be well!

I have written to your sister to-day. Give my love to her and to your other sister. Tell me her name.

Yours affectionately,

March 1st, 1822.

D. FENNER.

HE DOTHT NOT AFFLICT WILLINGLY NOR GRIEVE THE CHILDREN OF MEN.

My dear Friend,—Surrounded as I am with various infirmities and manifold tribulations, it is no wonder if I incur the charge of neglect or inattention to the sufferings of my brethren; but I hope it will not appear so when I assure you that I have you daily in remembrance before the mercy seat, that sacred place where Christian charity inspires my heart to supplicate and plead the cause of the afflicted ones of the household of faith. Every time I have been able to come into the city I have called in the market to make inquiry concerning your welfare, but could not find you there. Indeed, I am not an idle spectator of the afflictive hand of God that is now upon you, and have felt an anxious concern for the issue of the present dispensation, and, above every other consideration, I have entreated the Almighty to attend this his rod with quickening, humbling, and sanctifying grace.

Ah, my dear friend, the all-wise God doth not afflict us willingly, nor grieve the children of men without just cause. He taketh no pleasure in crushing poor sinners under his feet; but if we are of the number of those whom he hath chosen out of the world, if his holy purpose is to form us for himself to show

forth his praise, then into the furnace we must needs go, and under the rod we must pass; for in very faithfulness, agreeable to covenant stipulations, "he will visit our transgressions with the rod, and our iniquity with stripes." Everlasting love and the chastening rod are both included in the covenant of grace; and this we found by experience in the first visitation of our souls; as David expresses it: "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law," &c. Thus we were taught at the beginning, and in every stage of our experience since we have found that the Father's blessing and the Father's rod are inseparably connected together. And what a rich display of sovereign mercy it was for the Most High to take such base, vile, and polluted rebels as we are, and that he should put *us* among his children, and deal with us as sons! And though he has done such great things for us, how brutish and unfruitful we are to this day! We feel by bitter experience that foolishness is bound in our depraved hearts, and nothing but the rod of sharp correction shall drive it far from us. If, like Ephraim, after repeated strokes, we go on frowardly, the next stroke will cut deeper. "I will," saith God, "make thee sick in smiting thee," till, like Ephraim, we are brought to bemoan ourselves, are ashamed, and even confounded on account of our folly and vile ingratitude towards the best of fathers, the best of friends!

Thus, my dear friend, I have found it, and thus have you; and the present dispensation you are under is a visit from God. And if you are a vessel of mercy, this furnace is heated on purpose to purge out your dross, and to make you meet for the Master's use. The Lord Jesus Christ is a jealous God. He will suffer no idols to lodge or find entertainment in the hearts of those who are the purchase of his precious blood. He knows how to heal our backslidings, by terrible things in righteousness, as well as by the melting operations of his love. Every individual sheep of Christ's fold must and shall pass under the rod; and the more addicted to folly, the heavier will the rod fall: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." This I can prove by my own sensations under his rebukes, and with my whole heart I do bless him for every stroke of his chastising hand, and I can most cordially join in David's confession: "I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me." His supplication also must be mine: "Let, I pray thee, thy merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to thy word unto thy servant," &c.

My dear friend, I know, understands my aim and desire in these few lines. I love, I pity, I grieve on your account, and also for poor Mrs. S., on whom this dispensation presses with oppressive weight; but as her day her strength shall be. Give my Christian love to her, and tell her that she is by no means forgotten, either by the Lord or by his poor disciples.

It would no doubt be very desirable to see the afflicted youth

restored to health again ; but if this is not granted, it will be a greater mercy to feel resignation and submission to the will of God, who is righteous in all his ways and holy in all the dispensations of his providence towards us who are but dust and ashes, and unworthy of the least of all his mercies.

And now, my dear friends, together with the afflicted youth, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

I remain, in true sympathy and regard, yours affectionately,

June 17, 1826.

J. KEYT.

A VOICE FROM THE FURNACE.

DEAR Lord, in this pathway of deep tribulation,
 My heart in its weariness turneth to thee,
 To seek those pure sources of true consolation
 Which flow to thy mourners so sovereign and free;
 Blessed Jesus, bestow
 On a sinner below
 A drop of the honey, the milk, and the wine,
 Which will comfort impart
 To my sorrowful heart,
 And prove that I am most assuredly thine.
 Great God, I confess, while the furnace is burning,
 I need this ordeal, though fierce is the fire,
 For my backsliding heart was so far from thee turning,
 So cold my affections, so faint my desire.
 Then the dross and the tin
 So abounded within,
 That it needed a furnace of fire to refine
 This wretched vile heart,
 And Christ's image impart,
 That gold like his graces unsullied may shine.
 Thou knowest, dear Lord, how I sinfully slumber'd;
 The ground was enchanted, and spellbound I lay;
 Again, with the cares of this life so encumber'd,
 My spirit lay bound in those fetters of clay.
 No hand, Lord, but thine,
 With a touch all divine,
 Could arouse from a slumber so deathlike and deep.
 Ah! Did it require
 Thy rod and thy fire,
 To awaken my soul from its indolent sleep?
 Once more I implore thee for heart-felt contrition,
 To mourn o'er the sins which offended my God;
 Once more, Lord, work in me a childlike submission,
 To bow at thy footstool, embracing thy rod;
 In mercy I know
 Thou dost chasten me so,
 But 'tis only to crush my rebellion and pride,
 (Those monsters of hell
 Which still in me dwell.)
 And bring me more humbly to cleave to thy side.

C. SPIRE.

THY VISITATION HATH PRESERVED MY SPIRIT.

My dear Friend,—Through mercy I arrived home safely on Friday evening. I found my friends all well, with the exception of one who departed this life during my stay with you. On my journey home the Lord was pleased to soften and crumble my poor unworthy heart at his feet with the thoughts of his repeated kindnesses to a poor, vile sinner of the Gentile race. And, truly, the visits of the Lord the Spirit to the soul are precious and prizable, because they are spiritual and saving. Indeed, all religion without the blessed visits of the Spirit of God to the heart is vanity, and will be sooner or later vexation of spirit; and living souls prize above all other things the touches and tokens of God to the heart, the anointing and watering of the blessed Spirit, the heart divinely melted with the word of truth applied, and the love of God gloriously shed abroad therein; faith, and hope, and love drawn forth by the blessed things of Jesus revealed to the soul by the Spirit. These are things living souls prize above all mere profession, and the mere forms of external religion. All religion works death and bondage in the living soul that does not stand in the Spirit and power of God; at least, I find it so.

I hope you are all well. Remember me to Mrs. W. and the rest of the family. With thanks for your kindness to me,

I am, Yours most sincerely, &c.,

No. 28, Frenchwood Street,
Preston, Nov. 1st. 1842.

JNO. M'KENZIE.

CHRIST was so mean that he gave offence to the Jewish nation. They could not think that this person who sprang from them could be King of Israel. "Is not this the carpenter's son?" say they. "Is not his mother called Mary, and his brethren James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us?" Don't we know them all? What poor, mean persons they are! And they were offended. Such a low condition this family was in when the Messiah was born; and he sprang from it, as a root out of a dry ground. His education was agreeable to his birth. He was brought up in an obscure place, Galilee, concerning which Nathaniel said, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" He had not been so much as sent to a private school, much less to a university; therefore he was upbraided with it afterwards, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned," never been at school? He was not only represented as the carpenter's son, but they said, "Is not this the carpenter?" It seems he was brought up to trade. O how low was our Lord brought in our room and stead! He was found in fashion as a man and in the form of a servant,—he who was Lord of all, he to whom the world belonged and all the fulness of it, yet was obliged to some few persons for his support. Thus we see the wonderful amazing grace of our Lord Jesus, who though he was rich and Lord of all, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich.—*Gill*.

This great truth that the Holy Spirit is the author of our regeneration (which the ancients esteemed a cogent argument to prove his Deity, from the greatness and dignity of the word) is, in words at least, generally granted by all who pretend to sobriety in Christianity.—*Dr. Owen*.

MEDITATIONS ON DIFFERENT PORTIONS OF
THE WORD OF GOD.MEDITATIONS ON THE FIRST CHAPTER OF THE FIRST EPISTLE
GENERAL OF PETER.

A VERY common objection to the doctrine of election is that it leads to licentiousness. Men will not say in so many positive words that all who hold the doctrine of election are loose and licentious characters, for the evidence of facts to the contrary is too strong for this calumny to be proved or believed, and the charge against them usually lies in just the opposite direction, viz., that they are too strict and precise, too rigid and separate from the world, and do not allow themselves to enjoy even the innocent pleasures and harmless amusements of life. But in making the charge they often draw a distinction between the doctrine itself and the persons who hold it. Thus they say, "We do not mean that *you* are licentious, for your life and conduct plainly show the contrary; but there may be special reasons and motives which act upon you which may not influence others who hold the same views. It is not you, therefore, that we condemn, but your doctrine. You may be preserved from its dangerous influence by your education, or your natural conscience, or your high sense of duty and propriety, or even by your fear of the reproach of acting inconsistently with your profession; but if you preach it to others who may not be under the same restraints with yourself, they will most likely use it or abuse it to their own destruction. And, indeed, what can be more natural than that they should do so? If I knew certainly and positively that God had chosen me to eternal life, and that come what may, come what will, I could never perish, then I might lie, and cheat, and steal, wallow in drunkenness and all manner of filth and uncleanness, and yet be sure all the time that I was going to heaven." Such are some of the objections of the opponents of sovereign grace to the doctrine of election; and as such objectors evidently know nothing of the secret teachings and dealings of God with the soul, and the sweet constraints of the love of Christ, and indeed do not even understand, much less believe, the Scriptures, we need not wonder that they talk so wildly and so inconsistently, not only with the power, but with the very letter of truth itself. To guard, then, against this common objection to the precious truth of election, which, indeed, would be fatal to its claims, for a holy God could never reveal an unholy doctrine, and more especially to instruct his people into the fruits which spring out of a sense of electing love shed abroad in their heart, the Lord the Spirit has written, as with a ray of light in the inspired Scriptures, not only the doctrine itself, but the gracious and spiritual effects connected with and flowing out of it; and has most plainly declared that instead of tending to licentiousness, it leads to holiness of heart and life, and that God has chosen his people in his dear Son, not that

they might take advantage of the riches of his grace to sin the more against him, which would be a doctrine of devils, but that it might lay them under the sweetest and most powerful constraints to walk all the more tenderly in his fear, and live all the more worthily to his praise. The apostle, therefore, declares that God "hath chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love" (Eph. i. 4); and that we are "created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (Eph. ii. 10.) So our gracious Lord said: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit." (John xv. 16.) We see, therefore, that election is not a licentious or dangerous doctrine, but one which leads to holiness, and that so far from being the cause of sin, it is just the contrary, being the true and real cause of holiness; for if there had been no elect people, there would have been no holy people, for the "chosen generation" are "a holy nation" (1 Pet. ii. 9); and, therefore, if there had been no election, there would have been no holiness. It is true that ungodly men may abuse the doctrine, and hold the truth in unrighteousness, for what is there, however holy and sacred, which the carnal mind will not pervert to its own base purposes? But this is their sin, and will, if grace prevent not, end in their damnation.

But it is time to return to our exposition, though our readers will probably trace the connection of these thoughts upon election with the language of Peter: "Elect unto obedience, and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ," and will see how the apostle unites election with obedience and the blood of sprinkling.

At this point, therefore, we now resume the thread of our exposition, and shall, with God's help and blessing, endeavour to open these two points which we termed, at the close of our last paper, the *ends* of election. It will be observed that the one of these ends refers to the heart, and the other to the conscience, these being the two main seats of divine operation.

i. "Elect unto *obedience*."

All true obedience is from the heart. "Ye have obeyed from the heart that form (or, as the word means literally, "type" or "mould") of doctrine which was delivered you," or "whereto ye were delivered" (margin); the figure being taken from that of a stamp or signet where the impression coincides perfectly with the seal, or from that of a mould where the object cast corresponds exactly with the model from which it is taken. Thus, as divine truth is stamped upon the heart by the power of God, it obeys that truth in every line and lineament, and copies it into the life, in the same way as the cast obeys and copies the lines and features of the mould. This is being "like wax to the seal," or clay to the potter. (Job xxxviii. 14; Isa. lxiv. 8.) And as "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness" (Rom. x. 10), this obedience is called "the obedience of faith" (Rom. xvi. 26),

and to yield it is to obey the gospel. (Rom. x. 16.) But the question may arise, How is this obedience of faith produced? It is by the voice of the Lord speaking with power to the soul. The promise given to our gracious Lord when he was made a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec was: "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness." (Ps. cx. 3.) David, therefore, personating the Lord, says, "As soon as they hear of me they shall obey me." (Ps. xviii. 44.) It is, then, the hearing of the Lord's voice ("My sheep hear my voice"), which raises up faith in the soul; and with faith comes the obedience of faith; for faith and the obedience of faith are so closely and intimately connected that that faith which is not obedient is not the faith of God's elect. We see this very plainly and clearly in Paul's case. The moment that the Lord spoke to him at Damascus gate, faith was raised up in his heart, and with faith immediately came the obedience of faith, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts ix. 6.) The neck of unbelief was in a moment broken, and with it the neck of disobedience, and the faith which made him say, "Lord," made him also say, "What wilt thou have me to do?" "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" Our own experience also proves this. God spoke to us in various ways before he called us effectually by his grace. How often, for instance, did he speak to us in his providence, sometimes to warn, sometimes to admonish us, if we had had but ears to hear. What narrow escapes sometimes with life; what severe strokes of illness, and yet what raising up from the very gates of death! What unexpected turns at other times in our favour, as if the very goodness of God were calling us unto himself from paths of sin and disobedience! How often, too, he spoke to us by secret warnings and admonitions of conscience, telling us what the end would be of walking after our own crooked ways! How he spake to us sometimes also by the words and example of godly men and women, the truth and sincerity of whose religion we were compelled to acknowledge! And how he spake to us, it may be, for many have not this, in and by the ministry of the word, so that, in spite of ourselves, a ray of unwelcome light darted into our conscience to produce a momentary pang of guilt and uneasiness, with some desires to be different from what we were. But how ineffectual was all this; and how the power of sin, the love of the world, the fear of man, the pleasures and pursuits of life, and, above all, the strong cords of unbelief, impenitence, and hardness of heart held us fast bound; so that in us there was neither faith, nor the obedience of faith. And so we should have lived, and so we should have died, had not the Lord put forth another power, and spoken to us by another voice than that of providence, or natural conscience, or the outward ministration of the word, and done that for us and in us by the power of his grace, which has made us what we are as new creatures in Christ Jesus.

We thus see the special blessedness of being "elect unto obedience," and that God secures it by as fixed and firm a decree as salvation itself; and, indeed, it is a part of salvation; for as by grace we are saved through faith, it is by the obedience of faith that we become manifestly interested in God's great salvation. We can, therefore, no more be saved without obedience than we can be saved without faith; for the wrath of God is upon all the children of disobedience (Eph. v. 6); and as to believe the gospel is to obey the gospel (Rom. x. 16), so disobedience of the gospel is of the nature, and will have the punishment of unbelief of the gospel.

ii. The other end to which the people of God are elect is "the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." This deals with their conscience as obedience deals with their heart. Wherever there is a work of grace in the soul, it makes the conscience alive and tender in the fear of God; and the application of the law to this living and tender conscience lays upon it a heavy load of guilt, under which it cries and groans being burdened. In this sore and guilty conscience the law of God and his wrath meet together, and down goes the soul, more or less, into those depths of which the Psalmist says, "Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord." Now, nothing but the blood of Christ revealed unto and sprinkled upon this guilty conscience can remove from it this heavy load of guilt. Sin after sin, crime after crime, iniquity upon iniquity, in thought, word, or deed, press the soul at times almost down into despair. But God will never suffer his elect people to sink, that is, wholly and finally, into this horrible pit, for they are elect unto the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. Not only, therefore, has he chosen them in Christ that they should be holy and without blame before him in love, made them accepted in the Beloved, and forgiven them all their sins, but he has determined, in the riches of his grace, that the atoning blood which was shed for them upon the cross, and by which they were redeemed from death and hell, should be sprinkled upon their conscience, so as to cleanse and purge it from this load of guilt, that they might draw near to him with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, as having their heart sprinkled from this evil conscience. (Heb. x. 22.)

We now see the connection between obedience and the blood of sprinkling, and how and why the elect are chosen unto both. By the special gift and power of God they believe with the heart unto righteousness, and thus render the obedience of faith; and by the blood of sprinkling obtain a manifestation of the forgiveness of their sins, and thus serve God with an obedient, loving heart, in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter, and with a conscience purged from guilt, filth, and dead works. And though there are many of the dear family of God who have not yet attained to an experimental knowledge of the blood of sprinkling revealed and applied to their conscience, yet being elect unto it, and already favoured with the first blessing of

obedience to the gospel, this second blessing will in due time also be revealed unto them.

We need hardly remark that the expression, "the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ," has reference to the practice of the ceremonial law in which the blood of the victim was first shed and then sprinkled. It was so in Egypt at the institution of the Passover, when the blood of the paschal lamb was first shed when the animal was killed, and then struck or sprinkled on the lintel and the two side-posts of the houses. (Exod. xii. 7, 22.) So it was when Moses sprinkled the blood on the altar, on the book, and on the people." (Exod. xxiv. 6-8; Heb. ix. 19.) So also he first shed and then sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. (Heb. ix. 21.) And we may here observe that the blood was always sprinkled whilst warm, when, so to speak, the life was still in it, for it was never suffered to become cold or clotted; and thus was a lively type of the life that is in the blood of Christ when it is sprinkled on the conscience. But more especially was this the case on the great day of atonement, when Aaron took the blood of the bullock and of the goat and sprinkled it upon and before the mercy seat. (Lev. xvi. 14, 15.) We thus see that, according to the ceremonial law, the blood was first shed and then sprinkled. In a similar way, in the antitype, it was through the bloodshedding and death of the gracious Lord that sin was atoned for, put away, and blotted out. This was the shedding of the blood, and accomplished our redemption. In this redemption by blood all the elect of God are interested, and therefore by virtue of this redemption all their sins are forgiven them. (Eph. i. 7; Col. i. 14.) But in order to enjoy the manifestation of this forgiveness, the atoning blood of the Lord Jesus Christ must be sprinkled upon their consciences, that they may have a knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins. And as doubtless there were many to whom Peter wrote, who "as new-born babes had tasted that the Lord was gracious," but had not yet attained unto a personal, experimental knowledge of pardoned sin, he encourages them to hope and patiently wait for the promised blessing, by assuring them that they were elect unto it, and that, therefore, they could not fail of obtaining it at God's appointed season.

The apostle also opens the *instrument* through whom these blessings are communicated, and thus instructs us into the means as well as the ends. If we are elect unto obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ as ends, we are put into personal possession of them by the Holy Spirit as the means. He, therefore, says, "through sanctification of the Spirit." It is desirable to observe how we have here in the compass of one verse the three Persons of the blessed Trinity brought before us, viz., God the Father, his Son the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost the Sanctifier; and mark also the three blessings ascribed to these three distinct Persons—that the Father elects,

the Son atones, and the Holy Ghost sanctifies. Observe also from it how we are brought into the personal, experimental possession of these blessings, and how we are made to know our election, our redemption, and our sanctification; and that it is the Holy Ghost moving in sweet accordance with the electing love of God, and the atoning blood of Jesus Christ, who sanctifies the soul by leading the heart into the obedience of faith, and applying to the conscience the blood of sprinkling. We thus see that election is a holy doctrine, because it moves in accordance with the sanctification of the Spirit, and that redemption by blood is a holy doctrine, because attended by the Spirit's sanctifying grace; that the obedience of faith is a holy obedience, as produced by the power and operation of the Holy Ghost, and that the blood of Jesus Christ sprinkled upon the conscience both cleanses and sanctifies it, by not only revealing pardoning mercy, but by making sin exceedingly sinful and holiness the very element of the renewed soul.

We shall not dwell upon the apostolic prayer which closes what we may call the address of this epistle: "Grace unto you and peace be multiplied," as we endeavoured to open the words in our Meditations upon the first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, and shall, therefore, pass on to what may, in fact, be considered the real commencement of the epistle: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." (1 Pet. i. 3.)

We may call this, then, the true commencement of the epistle, and it is remarkable how Paul and Peter, though writing to different persons, and most probably without any communication with each other at the time, both begin their letters in almost the same way. Thus Paul, writing to the Ephesians, begins with blessing God as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for the manifested riches of his grace: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." (Eph. i. 3.) So similarly Peter blesses the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ for the display of his mercy and love. The blessings for which Paul praised him were all those spiritual blessings with which he had blessed the church in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; but the blessing for which Peter here thanks and adores his divine Majesty is for having begotten them again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. This, then, is the first feature which we shall now have to consider.

Three things are observable in it: 1, the *blessing* of being "begotten again;" 2, the *fruit* and *result* of this new birth, which is "a lively," or as the word means, a living "hope;" and 3, the *cause* of this new birth, which is "the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

1. The epistle was written to those who were partakers of a

new and heavenly birth. They are, therefore, said to be "born again" (i. 23), and are addressed as "new-born babes." (ii. 2.) For this act of his grace the apostle blesses and praises God on their behalf. And well may this unspeakable blessing call forth every power and faculty of the soul in praise and thanksgiving, whether of an apostle, or of the meanest believer; for it is the introduction into, as well as the sure pledge of every other spiritual blessing for time and eternity. To possess divine life, to be born of God, is to have him for our Father, and thus have every blessing which a Father's heart can conceive, and a Father's hand bestow. It is to be delivered from death, and made partaker of a life which can never die. It is to live through every storm; to be brought through every trial, temptation, sorrow, and affliction; to obtain victory over sin, Satan, death, and hell, and to reign with Christ in the light and blessedness of one eternal and glorious day. On this point, however, we need not dwell, as it is one which, however sweet, does not require any special opening.

2. Let us pass on, therefore, to see the *fruit* and *effect* of this new and heavenly birth—a lively or living hope. There are other fruits of the new birth, but that which the apostle has brought forward here is one eminently sweet and suitable to the new-born family of God. One peculiar feature in this epistle seems to be that it does not, so to speak, take very high ground; that is, it does not address itself to very advanced believers. If, for instance, we compare it with the epistle to the Ephesians, we shall see that though both are equally inspired by the Holy Ghost, yet that a higher, fuller, and more exalted strain animates, as it were, the epistle of Paul. It was written to a deeply-taught, highly-favoured, and well-established church, and, therefore, able fully to receive, and experimentally enter into, the grand and glorious truths unfolded to them. But Peter's epistle was not written to any particular church, much less to one so far advanced in the divine life. It is, therefore, styled a "general epistle," as being addressed to the people of God generally, and was sent not to a specially-favoured, long-established church, but to "strangers scattered" here and there, and therefore widely differing in experience, both from one another and from a church which, like that at Ephesus, had been for three years specially favoured with the benefit and blessing of Paul's personal ministry. Peter's epistle, therefore, takes what we may perhaps call a lower tone of experience. The doctrine preached in both is the same, the grand truths of the gospel, such as election, redemption, regeneration, are just the same; but the persons to whom it is written not being, for the most part, so far advanced in the things of God as the Ephesians, Colossians, and the churches generally to which Paul wrote, milk, rather than strong meat, is set before them.

This may explain why Peter blesses God for begetting them again unto a lively hope. He does not tell them that God had

begotten them unto the full assurance of faith, or unto the clear enjoyment of manifested pardon, or to the shedding abroad of the love of God in the heart by the Holy Ghost, but unto a lively or living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. There is much wisdom, mercy, and condescension in this.

Now, there are very many of the family of God who cannot rise much beyond a lively or living hope. It is called a lively or living hope to distinguish it from a dead and carnal hope, such as the hope of the hypocrite, which shall perish (Job viii. 13); or of the wicked, which shall be as the giving up of the ghost (Job xi. 20); or of the Pharisee who is under the curse of God, as trusting in himself and making flesh his arm (Jer. xvii. 5); or of that numerous throng, dead in sin or dead in a profession, who hope in God's mercy because they have never experimentally felt or feared his wrath. The living or lively hope to which God begets his dear children by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is very different from any such dead hopes as these. It is raised up in the soul by the power of God—the same power by which he raised the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. It has, therefore, life in it, which makes it always living and sometimes lively. It may, indeed, sink very low, and seem at times almost if not wholly gone, as one complained of old, "My strength and my hope is perished from the Lord" (Lam. iii. 18); and another cried out, "My hope hath he removed like a tree" (Job xix. 10); and yet the one could say as soon as it was revived, "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him" (Lam. iii. 24); and the other could declare, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." But however low it may sink through temptation, darkness, bondage, and guilty fear, yet it can never wholly perish, fail, or be disappointed, for it is "in hope of eternal life which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began," and is built upon two immutable things, God's promise and God's oath, in which it was impossible for him to lie. It is also a fruit of the Spirit in union with faith and love, and, therefore, like them, abideth in the church and in the soul when all gifts, such as of prophecy, of tongues, and of knowledge fail, cease, and vanish away (1 Cor. xiii. 8, 13.) It has salvation in it, for by it we are saved (Rom. viii. 24); is the gift of God's free grace (2 Thess. ii. 16); and, therefore, must reign through righteousness unto eternal life. (Rom. v. 21.) It is an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast, and is firmly fixed within the veil, whither the forerunner is for us entered, and hopes to the end for the grace that is to be brought at the revelation of Jesus Christ. It is, therefore, a precious grace; and though it may not have the sweet enjoyments of the assurance of faith, or the casting out of all fear which hath torment, which is the special blessing and high privilege of love, yet it equally secures the soul in the firm possession of the grace of the gospel and the gift of eternal life.

3. Now, it is by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the

dead that God begets us again unto this lively hope. We showed in our Meditations upon Eph. ii. 5, 6, that the resurrection of Christ was not only the pledge but the initial cause of our regeneration. When Christ rose from the dead all his elect rose virtually in and with him. It is impossible, therefore, that their souls should continue ever dead in sin, and so pass out of life unregenerate; for as none can enter the kingdom of God but those who are born again, they would be excluded from eternal life if they departed in their unregeneracy.

But it may be desirable to trace out this connection a little more plainly and fully.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ was God's grand attestation to the truth of his divine mission and Sonship, for by it he was "declared to be the Son of God with power." It therefore set a divine stamp upon his sacrifice, bloodshedding, and death, showed God's acceptance of his offering, and that sin was thus for ever put away. Now, just think what would have been the dreadful consequences if Christ had not been raised from the dead, or if we had no infallible proofs (Acts i. 3) of his resurrection. There would have been, there could have been no forgiveness of sin (1 Cor. xv. 17); and, therefore, when the conscience became awakened to a sense of guilt and condemnation, there could have been nothing before it but black and gloomy despair. But Christ being raised from the dead and having gone up on high to be the High Priest over the house of God, and the Holy Spirit bearing witness of this both in the word and through the word to the soul, a door of hope is opened even in the very valley of Achor. The Holy Ghost, who would not have been given had not Christ risen from the dead and gone to the Father, now comes and testifies of him to the soul, takes of the things which are his, reveals them to the heart, and raises up faith to look unto and believe in him as the Son of God, and thus, according to the measure of the revelation, it abounds in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost. (Rom. xv. 13.)

If you will look back to the time and way in which God was pleased to beget you again unto a lively hope, you will clearly see that it sprang out of some discovery of Christ, some view by faith of his Person and work, some dropping in of a promise or of a word that testified of him, and through which he was presented to your faith as the Object in whom every hope of salvation centered, and round whom it closely twined. It was because you saw his suitability, blessedness, blood, and righteousness, what he is in himself, and what he had done and suffered as the Son, the Christ, and the Lamb of God, that you were lifted up out of guilt, bondage, and condemnation, so as to feel a sweet persuasion that what the Lord had done and suffered he had done and suffered for you. This hope admitted your faith and affections within the veil where this risen and exalted Christ sits in his grace and in his glory. You saw that he was a Mediator between God and men, an Advocate with the Father,

Jesus Christ the righteous, an Intercessor able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him. And as this hope waxed stronger and stronger and became more and more lively, it took a firmer hold of the Lord of life and glory. Nor did he reject, discourage, or frown upon it, but rather fed it with promise after promise, until it rose almost, if not wholly, to "the full assurance of hope" (Heb. vi. 11); and though there were many things which seemed to damp it, yet, like Abraham, you could and did against hope believe in hope. Nor have you ever sunk so low since, for this experience of the mercy of God in Christ has wrought a hope which maketh not ashamed, and, therefore, abides stedfast, and is ever looking out for better things; for it is of the very nature of hope to wait with patience for that we see not, that is, in present possession. (Rom. viii. 25.)

And we may observe also that as the life of God is in it, it will have its revivals and its renewals, and these will be very sweet and precious, for they are always attended with faith and love, and enable the soul to rise up out of its troubles and sorrows, its trials and temptations, and to say with the Psalmist: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God." (Ps. xlii. 11.)

But we have said enough for the present on this lively hope, and must defer to our next No. the blessed end which lies before it, and unto which it looks, viz., "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

Obituary.

MARY WILD.

MARY WILD died at Allcannings, Wilts, October 19, 1868.

Mary Wild was the only daughter (though there were many sons) of godly parents, both of whom I well knew, not only as being attached hearers of mine during the time of my residence in Wilts, but from personal intercourse, especially with her mother in my subsequent visits, as her father was taken out of this world of sin and sorrow as far back as 1837.

As no memorial has ever appeared of them, though better worthy of it than many, I shall from some memoranda which have lately been put into my hands written by the deceased, as well as from my personal recollections, give a little account of this godly couple, as a kind of introduction to the experience and dying testimony of their daughter Mary.

They had both of them made a profession of religion very long before I became acquainted with them, Mrs. Wild dating her convictions from about the year 1809, when she was about 26 years of age. They had for many years lived at Stowell, in

the parish of Wilcot, a small village near Pewsey, Wilts, renting a farm under a family of High Church principles and thoroughly imbued with that proud, feudal, domineering spirit which in those days particularly so prevailed in the squirearchy towards their tenants and dependents. I name this as forming an element of difficulty and opposition in the path in which they were afterwards called to walk.

Farmer Wild, as he was generally called, and as I shall therefore term him, from carrying in manners and appearance so much about him of the plain, simple English farmer, was one of the good old school, being naturally, even before called by grace, remarkably honest, straightforward, sober, and very industrious. He had also in his wife, to whom he was married in the year 1805, a thorough good helpmate, as she was a woman of considerable natural intellect, not indeed what now would be considered cultivated or educated, but of great shrewdness of observation, and a most industrious and careful manager. In fact, she was, like her husband, one of the good old school of farmers' wives; and though she could not play the piano or paint landscapes, and would have passed a very poor examination in history or geography, could and did make the butter and cheese, set the hens, feed the poultry, look up the eggs, wash and dress her children, and all the while keep a sharp eye on all that was going on in parlour, kitchen, and farm yard. And thus they went on toiling and moiling hard for a living, without thought of God or godliness, until the set time came for the Lord to begin his work of grace upon their souls. It appears from the little memoir of her now before me that the Lord wrought first on the soul of Mrs. Wild. In it she tells her daughter, who, without letting her know, took down at various times memoranda of her conversation, some of her feelings about the year 1809. From these memoranda I make the following extract:

"I was afraid of death, and worked hard for salvation, hoping to escape hell and gain heaven by my good works, knowing no other way whereby sinners could be saved from the wrath to come. God's plan of saving poor sinners I had not the least knowledge of, never having even once heard the doctrines of God's grace preached or talked of. I remember at that time I seemed to have much more power over myself than since. I took out my earrings, left off curling my hair, and many such things, was afraid to visit my worldly relatives and neighbours, often denying myself a slice of meat for dinner that I might send it to any of my poor neighbours who I thought feared God. I used much at that time to read a book entitled 'The Whole Duty of Man,' a book that at times almost drove me crazy, I was so continually coming short of fulfilling its requirements."

When thus labouring under soul-trouble, a heavy temporal burden was laid upon them by the sudden raising of the rent of the farm from £400 to £700 a-year, after only five years' occupation. She observes upon this:

"All our neighbours, as we were the first that were raised, prophesied our ruin, and we ourselves were very desponding how we should make

up the rent. But the thoughts of my never-dying soul outweighed all those pressing earthly matters. I was so continually haunted by the fears of death."

About this time, however, an old shepherd, a good man who as often as he had an opportunity would talk to her about the things of eternity, procured her Dr. Watts's hymn book, which, however, she had to hide lest her husband should know she had it. Through this shepherd and an old woman also in the village, at whose house there had been at one time preaching, she was induced, in the absence of her husband one Sunday, to go to the Baptist Chapel at Pewsey. She thus describes her feelings when she first went there:

"The first time I ever ventured to go to Pewsey Chapel was on a Lord's day when your father and uncle were gone to Chilton, in Berkshire, on parish affairs, to save time on week days. Old Sally G., the woman at whose house the preaching was, went with me. I do not believe I lifted up my head the whole time I was in the place, so did not see who was there, I felt so ashamed of the people and chapel; nor could I think what I should say for myself when my husband came home, knowing well enough he would be sure to hear where I had been in his absence. When he did return I, to be beforehand, said where I had gone whilst he was away. He did not seem to take much heed, only laughed at me, and I then promised him, if he would but sometimes allow me to go, I would be an obedient wife to him in other respects. Thus I sometimes got off with old Sally on Sunday evenings, after going to church with your father in the early part of the day. It was, however, some months before I went a second time. O my pride was such a barrier to me, and feeling what would my relatives think of my joining such a set of people; and, what was worse, what would the lady we rented of think of me, she being such a High Church woman. I feared the clergyman also, who was very much opposed to the chapel. If, however, there was a thunder-storm, or I heard of any one dying suddenly, or coming to an untimely end, or of any awful occurrence, I was again haunted with fears of my own death; but whenever I went to chapel, in some part or other of the sermon my feelings would be described, which kept me going from time to time with the old woman. We had two miles to walk, and my husband would sometimes come to meet us, and old Sally would often say to him, 'Well, master, take and come with mistress and me all the way, and then you will hear for yourself.' After a time, one evening he went with us all the way to chapel, when the minister took for his text the very same which the Church clergyman had preached from in the morning, 'But we preach Christ crucified,' &c. The words were handled by the minister, who was a man of considerable ability, so differently from the way in which the Church minister had done that he was fully convinced who was right, and this gave him an inclination afterwards to attend there."

I am not able to give any account how the work of grace was begun in Farmer Wild's soul, whether, as Peter speaks, he was won by the conversation of his wife (1 Pet. iii. 1), or whether a word of conviction was fastened on his conscience at the chapel. But he became a constant hearer there, and much attached to the minister. But, after undergoing a good deal of contempt and persecution for their attendance there, some very painful matters transpired at the chapel about the year 1814, which I

do not wish to enter into, but they were such as not only brought great and wide reproach upon the cause, but also involved Farmer Wild in a heavy loss of £300, he having backed a bill to that amount for the minister, which, when it became due, not being taken up, he had to pay the whole. Of this she says:

“This was indeed a sore trial to us, with our dear farm and young family; and the scoffs and jeers which we had to endure from our neighbours and relatives seemed almost as bad to bear as the loss of the money.”

But this heavy trial was made to work for their spiritual good, for the old shepherd before named had by some means heard of the late Mr. Symons, of Bristol, who then lived and preached in a small room at Marlborough; and as he brought a good report of the ministry, and they were completely cut off from the chapel at Pewsey by the painful circumstances to which I have alluded, they were induced to go to Marlborough to hear him. I have heard her speak of the effect of Mr. Symons’s ministry upon her soul. It was to pull to pieces all her religion, and turn her inside out. But I shall give her own words:

“Many times has he sent me home crying and sadly cut to pieces, stripping me of my self-righteousness, so that I often thought I would not go to hear him again; but by the time Sunday came round again, I wanted to go. Like the Jews of old with Samuel, many times when he entered the pulpit have I said inwardly, “Comest thou peaceably, or not peaceably?”

She used to say that she never heard any other man insist on the practical part of religion as Mr. Symons did:

“Often did I think of him and of his preaching when I have been weighing up the butter for sale, or counting out our eggs for market, and when our landlady’s people sent to us for eggs, not to overcharge them for the same, though they were rich, and made us pay so dear for the farm. I truly loved and feared Mr. Symons, and he told me that by the feelings he was the subject of when he came to our house, he was sure there was a son or daughter of peace in the house, or both.”

As they became acquainted with him, Mr. Symons took much to Mrs. Wild, coming sometimes to see them at Stowell, as she names above. I shall, therefore, insert a letter which he wrote to them about this time, which I think will be read with both pleasure and profit:

“Marlborough, Dec., 1815.

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Wild,—Your little basket, with its contents, came safe to hand, for which I kindly thank you; and as the Lord has promised to bless his people in the basket, I could not return it until I had besought the Lord to put his blessing into it, namely, that which maketh the soul rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it. In general I am not forward either to converse with, or write to, strangers on religious subjects; and there are several in this town who I believe, from what I see and hear of them, have been savingly brought to a knowledge of the truth under my preaching, with whom I have never conversed, and to whom I have never written. Should you ask what made me depart from my general rule of procedure, I answer, that what I have heard and seen of you has raised a hope in my mind that the Lord has begun a good work in both your souls, and this hope is abundantly confirmed

by a strong affection of soul, so that I can say, I long after you both in the bowels of Jesus Christ, and have from time to time great liberty of access for you at a throne of grace, praying the Lord to accomplish in you all the good pleasure of his goodness and the work of faith by his almighty power, in granting you a double portion of his Spirit to lead you into a saving knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, to write the same on the fleshy tables of your hearts, to reveal Christ to you in all his excellences, power, and glory, to apply his blood to your consciences, and to clothe you with his righteousness, to shed abroad the Father's love in your hearts to bear witness with your spirits that you are born of God, passed from death unto life, and shall never again come into condemnation. These are some of the leadings and most important blessings of the everlasting gospel of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, which he freely bestows on his people as the gifts of his eternal love, without money and without price. I should rejoice to hear you say in the affirmative, 'These blessings are all our own, we have them in sweet and happy possession.' But should you, through unbelief, stagger at any of the promises by which our covenant God has engaged to bestow them on his people, they are, nevertheless, set before you in the gospel, and faith is given to believe them, and, in the Lord's good time, to receive them, through and by which your hearts will be purified in obeying the truth to unfeigned love of the brethren, whom you will consider as the excellent of the earth, and with whom will be your delight. Faith will also render sin increasingly sinful. The evil of it will be seen, and the burden of it felt more and more, which will cause you frequently to go mourning with your spirits bowed down within you. Doubts and fears will prevail, and you will be ready sometimes to conclude that all is a delusion and a cheat of Satan, which will make your minds like the troubled ocean. In this distress you will call on the name of the Lord with a deal of sighing and groaning within, and the secret corner often resorted to in order to pour out the heart with all its complaints before God, who hath said, 'Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.' These are a few of the footsteps of the flock which I believe my friends are walking in. If so, I would say, Peace be on you, as a part of the true Israel of God. I am happy to see that with a large family and a multiplicity of business you can take up your cross and come six miles to hear the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. It is a mark that you are of those that hunger and thirst after righteousness; and the promise is that you shall be filled. Yes, I believe that you will be abundantly satisfied with the goodness of the Lord's house, and, if not now, in due time be brought to praise your covenant God with joyful lips. Beware of and keep from outside preaching and professors. I shall be very glad to see or hear from you both. Should you write, keep nothing back, good or bad, and it will be gladly received by

Your affectionate Friend in the Gospel of the Lord and Saviour,

JOHN SYMONS.*

Mr. Symons became much attached to Mrs. Wild, seeing in her so much honesty and sincerity, and kept up a correspondence with her up to the time of his decease. Indeed no one who knew anything of the truth could converse with her without seeing the grace of God manifested in her conversa-

* Letters of this gracious and well-taught servant of God, as well as an account of his last days, will be found in Vol. XV. (1849) of the "Gospel Standard."

tion. Mr. Symons, who was in the Excise, continued to preach at Marlborough until 1818, when he moved to Bristol, I suppose by the order of the Commissioners. They continued, however, to go to Marlborough to hear a Mr. Weldon, who, having been in the army and a trumpet-major in it during the Peninsular war, was generally known by the name of Trumpet-Major Weldon. I am not able to say how far they profited under his ministry, but they could not hear the minister that succeeded him, and therefore left him to attend at a poor cottage at Rushall, a village about four miles off, but in an opposite direction, the minister being a poor shoemaker, and his cottage the chapel with a mud floor so uneven that she said she had often great difficulty to keep her stool from upsetting as she sat to hear. When the service was over, they went under some sheltered hedge to eat their dinner, and then down to the brook to get a little water to drink. But she had a heavier load all this time than sitting on a mud floor, dining under a hedge, or drinking from a brook, for she says:

“Many times when my mind was bondaged and I could not hear to my satisfaction and had so to shift about, has my pride been sadly mortified, and what was worse, fearing my religion was only enough to make me miserable, and like what Mr. Hart describes:

‘A sore that never healing
Frets and rankles unto death.’

The devil would also tell me that I should have nothing else in this world or in the next, and that mine was nothing but the sorrow of the world that worketh death.”

Still, however, this honest, godly couple, for I place him with her, though I have not yet spoken much about him, struggled on through wind and storm, not beaten back, for hell was behind them and heaven before, even though the last was but dimly seen; and after a little time the friends at the cottage at Rushall helping each other, a little place was built at Manningford, about three miles off, in which they heard Henry Huntly (of whom some notice appeared in the March Supplement), Mr. Pontin, of Devizes, and other good men, for about nine or ten years. Some reason, however, occurred about 1835, which caused them to leave Manningford, and Mrs. Wild for a little time went again to Pewsey Chapel. This was about the time that Mr. Godwin came to preach there. The poor old farmer, however, having so severely smarted from his connection with the chapel, could hardly bring himself again to enter it, and would, therefore, either stay at home or take his Bible or book to a little copse close by the farm meadow, and there read and pray by himself.

I shall now have, though unwillingly, to speak a little about myself, and the way in which I first became acquainted with them. Those who recollect the Obituary of Carby Tuckwell, will perhaps call to mind the circumstances which I have named in it of my first going to Allington. I shall, therefore,

give an extract or two from the little MS. now before me, in which her daughter has recorded some of her mother's conversations:

"Mr. Philpot's leaving the Church and coming for a time to preach at Allington was noised abroad and soon reached your father's ears, and he felt inclined to go and hear him, which, after once doing, you might as well have tried to stop a running stream as to stop his going."

In a subsequent entry, dated May 11th, 1862, I find the following words:

"In the afternoon of this day she said to me, 'I was thinking in the morning, whilst you were at chapel at Allington, of your father, how terribly sunk and low spirited he sometimes came home from there 26 years ago, when he first began to hear Mr. Philpot. It came so fresh to my mind. Once in particular. The text was, 'A sower went out to sow,' &c. Your father seemed so cut off that he could scarce eat his dinner. He told me the singers were the same, so that they could hardly sing. It was before I went there, but you might as well have tried to stop a watercourse as try to stop him from going."

As my mind had been for several years a good deal exercised upon the things of God, and I had been led particularly to see and feel the wonderful difference which there was between natural and spiritual religion, and that nothing was of any worth or value as regards salvation but the teaching and testimony of God himself in the soul, my ministry at that time ran much in that channel, and was, therefore, very separating, searching, and, as I was young both in years and grace and had a good deal of warmth and zeal, was often, no doubt, very cutting both in manner and expression, which was, I am bound to say, rather a new sound in those parts. I have reason to believe, from what I afterwards heard, that both Farmer Wild and his wife, like many others, had for some time been gradually sunk into a cold, lethargic, and sleepy state of soul. When, therefore, the good old farmer was first brought under a more searching, separating ministry than he had been accustomed to since the days of Mr. Symons, it was very cutting to his feelings, and seemed at times to strip him of all his religion. But, as Mr. Huntington somewhere says, "Where we get our cutting there we get our healing," and thus, as every now and then there was a little balm dropped upon the sore, it nailed his ears fast to the door-post; and I may say, almost literally as well as spiritually so, for he always sat close to the door of the chapel, in one and the same place, and I seem to see him now in my mind's eye, for he was naturally one of the finest grown men that I have ever seen, hanging upon the word, as though he could eat it. When the service was over, he would creep away by himself and get under a hedge, or sit on a bank (for hedges are rare things in that part of Wilts), where he ate his dinner alone, rarely speaking to any one and carrying as he best could his own burden, or feasting on any little morsel that he might have gathered up under the word.

But in 1837 the Lord was pleased to lay upon him his heavy hand, in an illness which terminated in death. His complaint was what is commonly called water on the chest, one of the most distressing diseases that our poor frames are subject to. I visited him several times in his illness, and I have rarely seen any one more distressed on a sick bed, both in body and soul. I remember on one occasion going to see him, when so great was his distress from his bodily complaint, and the trouble of his mind, that he could not continue in bed, but sat outside the clothes with nothing on but his shirt and a shawl thrown over his limbs, whilst, it being summer, great drops of sweat rolled down his face. His poor wife seemed almost as much distressed as he. I said what I could to comfort him, read and prayed with him, but left him much as I found him.

But I shall here insert an extract from the little memorial before me, which will tell his end better than anything of my own which I could say :

“In July, 1837, my father, who had been suffering much from heart disease and dropsy, died on the 24th of the month. To my knowledge he had been in a very dark and gloomy state of mind for several months, and a heavy affliction it was to my dear mother to see his end approaching, and his poor mind so bondaged and cast down, and also to witness his bodily sufferings. I recollect one of her expressions before the good Lord set his soul at happy liberty was, ‘O could I but see his poor soul delivered from the sad state he has been so long in, if it was only just before he leaves this world, and the Lord enables him only to lift his hand up to let me know that it is all right between God and his soul, I could willingly go into a cave, and there end my days.’* But, poor soul! she had many years of trouble to wade through after the death of her partner as bad as a cave to her. About three weeks before my father’s death, after he had been reading the 333rd hymn (Gadsby’s Selection),

‘O my soul, what means this sadness?’

the good Lord blessedly delivered him from all fears of death; he sent for his children to his bedside, admonished each and all, and telling them how good the Lord had been to him in removing his fears. He also wished for several of his old servants to be sent for, that he might also declare to them what God had done for his never-dying soul, and they, being God-fearing men, rejoiced with him. Many times after this deliverance he was longing and desiring to be absent from his poor body that he might be present with his dear Saviour. I have many times heard him say the Lord had promised to be his God and guide till death. I well recollect his lamentations and groaning before his deliverance. He described himself to be like the man in the cage in Bunyan’s ‘Pilgrim’s Progress;’ only he said there appeared to him a very little light in just one corner, and here he was shut up for several weeks, but said: ‘Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all.’ Also, ‘He bore our sins in his own body on the tree.’ The day before his death, he groaned to himself, and on mother asking him what was the matter, ‘O,’ he replied, ‘the enemy has got my mind out in the barn about winnowing that wheat. Under Stowell Hill many years ago, the Lord promised to be my God and guide until death, but he did not promise to go through with me, and Satan tells me the

* I heard her say the words.

Lord will then leave me.' This was the enemy's last attack, for the next day, hearing the clock strike, he inquired the time. Being told one o'clock, he said, 'I thought I should have been gone before this time.' 'O, father,' my mother answered, 'the Lord's time is best.' He quickly replied, 'Betsy, if thou didst but know the happiness I am going to enjoy, thou wouldst not want to keep me here,' adding, 'Thou wert the last idol I could give up; but, thank God, I can do that now.' He then talked for some time of the sufferings of Christ, saying, 'He bore our sins in his own body on the tree,' and tried to repeat one of Mr. Hart's verses:

"For all our sins we *His* may call,
As he sustained their weight;
How huge the heavy load of all,
When only mine's so great.'

And in less than ten minutes after this breathed his last, giving my mother a much plainer testimony of his being safely housed into the heavenly garner than a bare lifting up of his hand."

As it was his especial request that his remains should be interred in the chapel yard at Allington, where he had been favoured to hear the word with power for the last two years of his life, and that I should bury him, though I had left for a long journey, which in those days was not accomplished with its present ease, I came back for the express purpose, and committed his body to the ground, in a spot where now lie by his side, or in the same grave, the remains of his wife, whom I buried in 1863, and of his son Edward, whom I also interred in 1861.*

And now in the same spot in the little chapel yard at Allington, which I may well call consecrated ground, for few sleep there who have not been manifested as saints of God, lie the remains of Mary Wild, to whose Obituary the present sketch is meant to be an introduction; and I can say of them now that they are dead, what I would have said of them when they were living, and what every one who knew them would bear witness of as a truth, that four more honest, sincere, and God-fearing souls, as members of one family, never breathed the breath of life, and never lay together, waiting for the glorious resurrection morn.

But it is time to pause. I must, therefore, defer to our next No. some little account of Mrs. Wild, as she survived her husband many years, and had a path of little else but tribulation and sorrow till her remains were laid side by side with his.

J. C. PHILPOT.

INDEED, my dear friend, I do greatly desire to see the king's face. One glimpse of it, I am fully persuaded, will make me to meet death with courage; and nothing else can. I have the confidence that I shall be thus favoured before I go hence, though this is not without many doubts, at times; but at other times they are again dispersed for nearly a whole day together.—*Jenkins*.

* His Obituary will be found in the Jan. No. of the "Gospel Standard" for 1862.

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GOSPEL STANDARD.

MAY, 1869.

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

ZION'S CAPTIVITY. A FRAGMENT.

BY JOHN RUSK.

"There is none to guide her among all the sons whom she hath brought forth; neither is there any that taketh her by the hand of all the sons that she hath brought up."—ISA. LI. 18.

THESE words, in their first and literal sense, have an allusion to the children of Israel while in Babylonish captivity, where God caused them to be carried for the sin of idolatry and the sin of covetousness. (Jer. vi. 13.) It pleased the Almighty to reveal to Isaiah in a vision, and other of the prophets, the destruction of Jerusalem, the temple, and the worship of God at that place; and he tells us that it was a grievous vision. "A grievous vision is declared unto me;" "therefore are my loins filled with pain; pangs have taken hold upon me as the pangs of a woman that travaileth; I was bowed down at the hearing of it; I was dismayed at the seeing of it. My heart panted, fearfulness affrighted me," at seeing what was coming upon the church of God. This made him cry out, "O my threshing and the corn of my floor; that which I have heard of the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, have I declared unto you." "For thou hast made of a city a heap, of a defenced city a ruin; therefore said I, look away from me; I will weep bitterly, labour not to comfort me because of the spoiling of the daughter of my people. For it is a day of trouble, and of treading down, and of perplexing, by the Lord God of hosts in the valley of vision." "My people are gone into captivity, and their honourable men are famished. Her prophets see no vision from the Lord; her elders sit upon the ground. Thy sons have fainted; they lie at the head of all the streets, full of the fury of the Lord, the rebuke of their God," kicking and rebelling against the dispensations which had come upon them. As for their sucking children, their tongues cleave to the roof of their mouth for thirst (Lam. iv. 4); they had prayed and cried until their patience was exhausted, and hope gave way; the tongue failed, and prayer ceased. Their little children asked bread, but no man brake it unto them, the reason why, he tells you in the text: "There is none to guide her among all the sons whom she hath brought

forth; neither is there any that taketh her by the hand of all the sons that she hath brought up;" this was the state the church was in at that period.

I cannot help thinking that we somewhat resemble her at this time; for though we are not in captivity literally, we are spiritually. For since it has pleased the Almighty to take from among us one of the greatest lights that has shone for many centuries. The church has been scattered into all directions, wandering from place to place, seeking water but finding none, and returning ashamed with their vessels empty. There are plenty of wells such as Jude speaks of, but no water of life; plenty of clouds, but no dew of God's favour coming down from heaven and distilling on the tender herb, a broken heart and a contrite, to revive the spirit of the humble and contrite ones; no, all is dry and barren. As the preacher finds the people, so he leaves them; the carnal in security, hypocrites in presumption, and children starving for want of bread. The children ask bread, but no man giveth it to them. Why? Because "there is none to guide her among all the sons whom she hath brought forth; neither is there any that taketh her by the hand of all the sons that she hath brought up."

In the first place, I will endeavour to show you who this woman or mother is.

First, for this woman or mother. In the verse before my text you shall find this woman called Jerusalem. "Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of his fury." There this woman is called Jerusalem by the Holy Ghost. Jerusalem in Scripture has many meanings; I shall confine myself to three. First, you read of Jerusalem above, which is said to be the mother of us all. And, secondly, of Jerusalem, which is said to give suck in the earth. And you read also of Jerusalem that is in bondage with all her children. Paul, when writing to the Galatians about the law, saith, "Ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written, Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a free woman. Which things are an allegory; for these are the two covenants. For this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem, which now is, and is in bondage with her children." It doth not matter what sect, what name, whether Papists, Arminians, Quakers, Arians, Socinians, Dissenters, Baptists. Every one that holds universal redemption, universal salvation, human righteousness, free will, improving the light within them, &c., all these are the children of the bondwoman, and belong to Jerusalem that now is, and is in bondage with her children. "But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all," is the covenant of grace. "These are the two covenants."

You will say, "How is Jerusalem above the mother of us all? Why, all God's elect, who are called the children of promise, lay in that covenant from everlasting, just as an infant lies in

its mother's womb, till the time come for it to be brought forth. The Lord Jesus Christ was the first that this mother brought forth, for his manhood was God's first elect, and was the first-born among many brethren. He was brought forth in God's eternal purposes from everlasting, "Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth" (Prov. viii. 25), in God's eternal decree, in this everlasting covenant. And when the fulness of time came, he was born of a woman; then the decree was said to bring forth. (Zeph. ii. 2.) And when the set time is come to favour Zion, and the Spirit of adoption reaches a sinner's heart, so that he is born from above, then it is that this woman, or mother, is said to bring forth. You have this particular text in the Canticles, where God is speaking to his church; he saith, "I raised thee up under the apple-tree; there thy mother brought thee forth; there she brought thee forth that bare thee." Now, where and what was this apple-tree? It was the tree in the garden of Eden, from whence Adam ate the forbidden fruit.

When Adam sinned, he fell under the curse and wrath of God, where he was when God called to him, "Adam, where art thou?" If he had possessed an honest conscience, he would have said, "Under death and condemnation." But this was not the case; he strove to hide himself behind the trees, his sin in his own bosom; but God arraigns them at the very spot where they sinned, and brings them both in guilty before him. And when this was done, he preached to them the substance of his everlasting covenant, the gift of his own Son, saying, that "the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head." While God was preaching this to them, the Holy Ghost worked faith and hope in their hearts to believe in the promise which God had made, and so raised them up from under the law, sin, and death, not by works of righteousness which they had done, but by believing in the promise which God had made, and so proved themselves to be the children of promise. When the Spirit shed abroad the love of God in their hearts, then the birth was made clear; then it was that this mother, or Jerusalem above, brought her children forth. "There thy mother brought thee forth; there she brought thee forth that bare thee," from everlasting, in her womb of eternal election. Now this is worth your while to take notice of, that the children of this woman take the name of their mother through God's word. You read of Jerusalem that is said to be beautiful, and you read of Jerusalem that is said likewise to give suck. "Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her, that ye may suck and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out and be delighted with the abundance of her glory." Here is a Jerusalem upon the earth which is said to give suck. It is worth your while to see how Paul unites this Jerusalem upon earth with that in heaven, as by a chain, in the Hebrews: "Ye are not come," saith Paul, "unto the

mount that might not be touched; but unto Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." Here, you see, Paul begins in heaven and comes down to the blood of sprinkling on the earth, and so unites the two together as by a chain which cannot be broken; no, none of her cords shall be broken. "Thine eyes," saith the prophet, "shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes shall be removed," none of her ministers that are rooted and grounded in the faith; "neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. There the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams, wherein shall go no galley with oars," no workmonger under the law; "neither shall gallant ship," no towering professor with all light in the head and no sense of sin in the heart, "pass thereby." Here is a glorious description of Jerusalem in her prosperity. This was not the case with her in my text. She was then in adversity, and there was none to guide or take her by the hand of all the sons she had brought forth. Thus I have given you the best account I can of this mother, or woman, in my text. I will now show you the children which she is said to bring forth. As it is in nature, so it is in grace; before anything can be brought forth there must be, first, a begetting; secondly, a quickening; thirdly, labour, or pain to bring forth; and, lastly, a bringing forth. But who is it that begets? The apostle tells you that it is God who begets: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." What is the word of truth? Why, every word of God is a truth; but this word of truth is a particular voice of truth which runs through God's word, and sets forth the awful state of man, as fallen under sin, death, and judgment. By the fall: "By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation;" "For all have sinned;" "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned." (Rom. v. 12.)

God Almighty is represented as looking down from heaven to see if there were any that did understand or seek after God; but declares that they were all gone out of the way, that there was none righteous; no, not one; that they were all become abominable; the way of peace they had not known. This is the state God declares men to be in when he looked down from heaven. (Ps. xiv. 1-3.) You are not to conceive of the Almighty's looking down on them as you and I do, first on this and then on that. No. When the Lord looked down, it was when Adam fell into sin. He then surveyed his whole posterity at one glance, and declared that there never would be one that would ever seek after God; so he concluded the whole world

under sin and guilty before God. This is the state God declares every natural man to be in under the whole heavens. See what figures the Holy Ghost makes use of to represent fallen man by. He sets him forth by that of an infant just born, cast out into the open field in its blood, without ever being washed, salted, or swaddled, no eye to pity, nor hand to help. What a helpless, deplorable state! What would you think were you to see a man cry to such an infant, "Up and be doing; wash yourself, clothe yourself, feed yourself?" "Why," say you, "I should think such a man out of his mind." This is the state of all the Arminians who call upon the dead and helpless to be up and doing. None of these ever saw the spirituality of God's word or the awful state that man is in by the fall, which God showed to Ezekiel by a valley full of dry bones. He tells you that he was "carried out in the Spirit of the Lord, and set down in the midst of a valley full of dry bones, and caused to pass by them round about; and, behold, there were very many in the open valley, and, lo, they were very dry." And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O, Lord God, thou knowest." (Ezek. xxxvii. 1-3.)

This valley of dry bones did mean, in the first place, the children of Israel in Babylonish captivity; but that captivity did represent the captivity of sinners under sin and the devil, led captive by him at his will. The prophet tells you that these bones were in an open valley. The valley sets forth their low state under sin and death, open and exposed to the wrath and curse of God; dry, and very dry, without light, without life, without will or power to move towards God, so that a dead man could as easily perform the functions of life as these dry bones the spiritual worship of God. Now, the Lord told the prophet to prophesy to these dry bones; but what did the Lord tell him to say unto them? Up and be doing? No, he was to cry unto them, "O, ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord." Tell them that they are dry, barren, destitute of **grace** and life, of will and power, under the wrath and curse of God; and while the prophet was prophesying there was a noise among the dry bones.

Here, brethren, you may see the way that God first begets sinners. This noise is an alarm of conscience at the awful state they saw themselves in when their eyes were first opened, and is what our Lord calleth a sound: "Thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." It is the voice of God's righteous law in the conscience when justice first arrests. The next thing he tells you there was a shaking, that is, a trembling, at the word and judgment of God. "Fearfulness and trembling," says David, "taketh hold of me; I am afraid of thy judgments, O Lord." This same work you might see under Peter's sermon, when they cried out and said, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" So, brethren, you may easily

see whether you have been begotten of God or not, for this, more or less, must be known and felt in every heart that is truly begotten of God. Now the next thing that took place the prophet tells you was that bone came to its bone. By bone coming to its bone, I understand thus,—every one so wrought upon is a bone of Christ's bone, and a member of his body, and no rest will such a one feel till he finds one in the same state and condition of soul with himself. I do not say that every man is visibly called alike, or that every one is called under the ministry of the word by man. No, Abraham was called without this by God himself. The Almighty appeared to Abraham in the land of Chaldea, where the truth and word of God were not known, and preached to Abraham himself the following sermon: "Abraham, get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will tell thee of." And, it is said, "Abraham obeyed, and went forth, not knowing whither he went." Just so it is with many of the children of God when he first begets in them true faith; for faith is that which is first begotten.

THE SPIRIT OF REVELATION IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST.

Dear Friend,—I write to say that as I expect to go to London on the 17th inst., I should feel obliged, if you have read the volume of Erskine's, if you would kindly forward it to me by that time, that I may take it home; and if not, will you send me word which volume it is? If you send it to Mr. T., he will, I expect, be sending, and will, no doubt, kindly forward it on.

How gets my friend on in the best things? I often think of you, and feel that I should like to see or hear from you at any time; for I do feel that, whatever changes may take place, our hearts have been made one in a bond that can never be broken, bound up in that bundle of life that can never die, and formed into that union that can never be dissolved. And can my friend look God and conscience in the face and say it is not so? I know that the contradictions that take place in the mind, through the various exercises of soul we are subject to, will place a veto on it; but can you not say that there has been a work wrought in your conscience you did not bring about yourself? Has there not been a saving revelation of his mercy to your soul that you dare not deny, without bringing guilt on your conscience? And through all "the times that have passed over you," both of sorrow and joy, darkness and light, life and death, hardness and softenings, you dare not believe you are yet in a natural state, but that you have passed from death unto life? And though your state may, at times, appear very bad according to your feelings, yet, in the worst of times, do you dare to envy the worldling his joy, or the mere professor his confidence? Are there not times when, from the very bottom of your heart,

you secretly but sincerely utter forth this cry before him who alone can help: "O Lord, for thy mercy's sake, deliver my soul?" You may sink so deep, at times, as scarcely to dare to think upon, much less to look to for comfort, the saving manifestation of the light of his countenance you have been favoured with, and at times to scarcely believe but what you have been deceived in them; but recollect that there are other manifestations and revelations that all God's dear people are favoured with, besides those of comfort and joy. You would have gone on in the giddy dance of the multitude to eternal destruction had not God, of his infinite mercy, revealed to you your awful state by nature, and stopped you by his mighty power. Can my dear friend deny having had this revelation? You would then have sought to pacify conscience by performing dead works, abstaining from evil courses, amendment of life, and so have kept on to this day with hundreds more, in that way which seemed right in your own eyes, but which would have ended in eternal death, had he not revealed unto you the exceeding breadth of his commandment, and that by the works of the law shall no flesh living be justified, thus making known and revealing unto you the utter impossibility of your ever being saved by works of your own performing, good or bad. Can you deny having had this revelation? And then you would have sunk into despair, and perished under the awful sense of his wrath and indignation against you as a sinner, and dreadful feeling of the utter impossibility of your ever being saved at all, according to your feelings, if he had not in his boundless mercy again stepped in and revealed to your soul a way of salvation by Jesus Christ, the Friend of sinners, and wrought in your soul a secret hope of you one day being enabled to lay hold of him as your Saviour by the precious faith of God's elect. And here, by the goings to and fro of your mind and soul, under the risings of hope and sinkings of despair, heart-aching disappointments at times, and again meltings of soul under a sweet sense of his undeserved mercy hitherto bestowed, you were kept from going altogether back into a state of carnal confidence; nor were you, through mercy, suffered to settle down at ease without finding him the object of your soul's desire. It was he that held your soul in life, that your feet slipped not back, nor your strength altogether failed, until he again put his hand to the work, and revealed a glimpse of his sweet face sufficient to set your soul off again with renewed strength, like the eagle's. Remember Brighton, where you felt enabled to draw near unto him and find sweet access, and the blessedness of being brought near and finding acceptance with him, so as to plead with him and say, "Lord, do as thou hast said." Your soul, having tasted of the hidden manna of divine communion, was kept on hungering and thirsting for that through all your fears and misgivings of heart, until again he appeared and revealed so great a measure of his lovingkindness to your soul that you felt your standing so sure you began to think you

should never be moved, and were got so far you never could doubt again; but when, after a time, the feeling sense died away again, the frame melted. All the nursing would not keep it alive, and your soul sank fathoms deep about it, and coldness, hardness, deadness, and barrenness crept over and prevailed in spite of everything; and the things of time and sense carried away the mind in spite of watching, praying, reading, communicating, and what not. Did not the Lord reveal this solemn truth to your heart, that "None can keep alive or quicken his own soul?" And after the sweetest manifestation would, perhaps, be the greatest departure, except he keeps the soul alive to him. No other means will do; and when you seemed quite gone back, and could but mourn, and hardly that, at times, in secret, over the loss of his manifested presence, did he not again surprise you with such a sense of his love that you seemed swallowed up in him? All your sins, past, present, and to come, were put away by him. Clothed in his righteousness divine, you felt fully justified in him. Did he not then reveal himself indeed to your soul as your sin-bearing Victim? You will never deny nor forget this revelation, I know, however you may be left to question it; and God forbid you ever should.

But there are other revelations yet, and painful ones they are, but quite as needful, and I expect you are yet learning them. There are other paths to walk in, other feelings to undergo. How else is it to be a path of tribulation, which it really is, both inward and outward, however apparently smooth? You have, after all this, to have this truth revealed:

"How sad our state by nature is,
Our sin how deep its stain."

And this is never truly known but by living souls; but to them it is revealed by the many painful proofs they experience of it, from time to time, in their awful backslidings and departures from him, to whom every comfort they owe above what the fiends have in hell; and only those that know it thus will mourn over it in reality.

I dare say you know what it is to grieve and mourn over your backsliding ways, yet to go on backsliding, as though bent to it with an incurable bent; and pray and cry, at times, under a feeling sense of your wretched depravity, and yet go from begging and praying to such hardness of heart as almost to care nothing about it. We can, indeed, do nought but go from bad to worse, unless his hand prevent. O! What hypocrisy does our religion seem at such a time as this! Sometimes begging and praying, with feeling and earnestness, too, and within an hour carried away with some foolish vanity, that upon reflection it brings the mind almost to distraction. Sometimes, also, at these seasons, Satan, ever on the watch, is permitted to set in upon the soul with some suitable temptation and snare, so to beset our feet that no sooner off our guard than in we go; and the more we

strive the more entangled we get, until we are so caught as to be either hardened and carried away with it, or get rebellious, peevish, and fretful, as even to wish we had never been born, or, being born, had been anything but what we are. O the mercy of God! How boundless, how great, how everlasting, to bear with such wretches at such times, and, sooner or later, to bring the soul back again; or, as sure as possible, we should so depart as never to return any more. But all this in the end brings a soul at the last to fall upon that stone, upon which whoever falls shall be broken to pieces, as having no hope nor help in themselves, but to depend entirely for daily keeping, as well as eternal salvation, upon the sure Foundation laid in Zion, the Lord Jesus Christ alone, who is to be our sanctification as well as our redemption.

And this brings the soul to another revelation, that is, the Lord Jesus revealing himself as the only source and root of all fruitfulness in heart, lip, and life. It is he must be revealed in us the hope of glory. In him our fruit must be found,—all really spiritual fruit. Life and power are found alone in him; and until he gives our souls power to hang upon him, no good can be done in a way of opposition to sin and the breakings forth of iniquity; and this is a truth not savingly revealed but by the Holy Spirit to his own dear people.

The Lord, of his mercy, help you and me to come to this foundation more, to distrust our own strength more and more, and to rely on his almighty arm for strength alone, to fight with every foe, and to live more unto him in his fear, separated from an ungodly world, lying in wickedness. O! What must it have cost him to redeem us from so many destructions—destruction from Satan, destruction from the world, from our ungodly selves, and from our self-righteous selves! And what a sad thing to be left to walk as to reflect dishonour on that dear and holy name,

“Who sank beneath our heavy woes,
To raise us to a throne!
There’s not a gift his hand bestows
But cost his heart a groan.”

Your soul’s well-wisher,

Clifton, Dec. 6, 1847.

JESSE CRAKE.

[The writer of the above letter, who is lately deceased, was well known to many of our readers as one who feared God above many. We ourselves were personally acquainted with him between 30 and 40 years, and much esteemed him for the grace that shone conspicuously in him. He was blessed with a good experience, and though he possessed a much greater spirit of discernment than many, if not most are favoured with, yet it was attended with that spirit of humility and love that though it made him very faithful it never seemed to embitter his spirit.

[We hope soon to insert an Obituary of him which has been sent us by his mourning widow.—ED.]

DOING BUSINESS IN GREAT WATERS.

Dear Friends,—We have often thought of you both, and do hope that you and Mrs. G. are quite well. I intended to have dropped you a few lines before this; but, having to sail, without any intermission, against wind, tide, and tempest, I with Job have had no time even for breathing, and my soul has been weary of life; for no small tempest has beat over my head. I am in a sea, which is full of rocks and shoals. At one time, I fully concluded that my vessel had struck on the rock Infidelity, and that she was so stranded that the vessel would never ride out the storm; for you must know, that it is not at all times I can read my chart or see the lighthouse, owing to the mist and fogs that prevail. And what has made my heart to sink within me, I have feared that I was quite left alone in the vessel, for I have searched after three of my best companions, Faith, Hope, and Charity; but, all I could do, I could not find them, though I have often read in a sacred volume of many that have sailed over these seas and have encountered some very heavy gales and hurricanes. One of these mariners said they came upon him as a wide breaking-in of water in the desolation. They rolled themselves upon him; and these things brought on soul trouble; for he said that his soul was poured out upon him. "The days of affliction have taken hold upon me; my bones are pierced in me in the night season, and my sinews take no rest. I cry unto thee, and thou dost not hear me; I stand up, and thou regardest me not. Thou liftest me up to the wind; thou causest me to ride upon it, and dissolvest my substance." And he, poor man, could not find one of his companions, Hope, for he said, "Where is now my Hope? As for my Hope, who shall see it?" But he got safe to port at last; He met with a few who had never sailed in these deep waters. So all that they could do was to censure and heap reproach on him. And there are many such to be found in our day; for there are plenty of fresh-water captains and sailors; and these captains when on deck (the pulpit), their vessel being in fresh water, they make use of their speaking trumpets (their tongues), and they give a lecture about navigation; and these shallow-water gentlemen, it is wonderful how they will get their vessels (chapels) well filled with persons like unto themselves; for as priest, so people. But should an old weather-beaten mariner get a few of these head-knowledge passengers on board his vessel, and come to hear him tell them of the gulfs, rocks, shoals, and tempests they will have to encounter before they get to land, and what fears he has had many times of his vessel being lost in the whirlpool, so that he could not see sun, moon, or stars for many days, and that the passengers have been drenched to the skin by the storms, and they were driven to their wits' ends, O how these head-knowledge gentlemen will rise from their seats, saying, We will sail under another captain, and where there is bet-

ter accommodation and choicer food; for we do not like bitter herbs with our meat, or gravel stones mixed with our food; and we like to have smooth things prophesied unto us. But I must leave these navigators to themselves.

I am very fond of reading in my chart of a good old mariner; his name is Jeremiah. In one of these storms he cried out, "My strength and my hope is perished from the Lord;" and his eyes trickled down with tears and ceased not; so that his trouble affected his heart. Another one in a storm said he found it to produce heaviness in his heart, which made him to stoop. A royal king, when meeting with a storm, cried out, "How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord? for ever? How long wilt thou hide thy face from me? My tears have been my meat day and night;" while his enemies continually kept saying unto him, "Where is thy God?" And this made him say, from the anguish of his heart, "O my God, my soul is cast down within me." Another brother of mine, one Jacob, in one of these violent storms, said, he was afraid and cried out in the bitterness of his soul, "All these things are against me." But each of these did outride the storm, and got safe to land.

The mariner's wife sends her kind love to you both. She is on the sick list, having been kept to the pumps so long; for the vessel made water fast; it came up even unto her soul.

Yours truly,

June 2nd, 1859.

T. S. SWONNELL.

AN OINTING FOR THE BURIAL.

My dear Brother Huntly, and thy dear Rib, and dear old Granny, and all that love our Lord in sincerity and truth in Portland. May grace, mercy, and truth be with you.

O what a mercy it is to be kept by the mighty power of God. through faith, unto salvation, in this cloudy and dark day of outside professors! And what a mercy it is to have grace given to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. The Lord has given you and me to know it is a sovereign mercy to be preserved in Christ Jesus. I am often with you in spirit, and often beg the dear Lord to bless you and the few poor sheep.

My dear brother, the Paschal Lamb and the bitter herbs are to go together; and in all our afflictions Christ was afflicted. The Lord trieth the righteous. He has chosen them in the furnace of affliction; and all because he loves them. This is not our home; it is an enemy's country: the Canaanites still dwell in the land. Cheer up, my dear brother, "Now is our salvation nearer then when we first believed." The poor body is a clog, the world is a burden, professors are a burden: the briars and thorns tear our flesh; the Ishmaelites mock; but the Lord has said, "Fear not, worm Jacob." Poor worm, I sometimes see thee groaning and fretting with thy poor body and rough path: but mark! whom the Lord loves he chastens. O may the Lord

give thee grace, like Paul, to glory in thy infirmities. O what a mercy the Lord has made with thee an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure, and kept that little spark alive to the present moment. O my brother,

“ Hope of salvation in his name,
How comfortable 'tis.”

Yes, we have meat to eat the world nor professors know nothing of.

Last Sabbath I was very low in body and mind, and went to the little place and spoke from those words: “ Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth them out of them all;” and I had a good time; and sure I am, there is not a saint, nor ever was, but sooner or later will put his “ Amen” to it. And so will my dear brother Huntly when patience has had her perfect work. The Lord sits beside the refining pot, and he sometimes breaks the bands even in the furnace; but we are up and down, cold and hot, as Berridge says, in half-an-hour. In the evening I went again, and sank very low; but in my groaning I read of Elijah sitting under the juniper tree. This is where my soul has got to thousands of times, the old path of tribulation. My soul lost sight of all before me while I fed on the cake and drank of the cruse of water, brought by the Angel of the everlasting covenant. It is in these paths of deep tribulation he meets with his bride in this vale of tears.

O my dear brother, how many times has the Lord visited thy poor soul and mine under the juniper tree, and has put up with our Jonah peevish spirit, when we have said we do well to be angry even unto death. What a mercy he has said, he “ knoweth our frame; he remembers we are but dust.” The husband puts up with the infirmities of his wife because he loves her.

O that we could

“ Live near his heart, upon his bosom lean,
Obey his voice, and all his will esteem.”

What a mercy to be counted worthy to drink of the same cup; though we do but taste it, for he drank it quite up for his bride. The dear Lord has given thee many portions, and my poor soul, and dear old granny, and thy dear rib, too; and we hope to sit down in the kingdom of heaven together, where thy sun will no more go down, and thou no more careful and cumbered about many things; but God, even our God, will wipe away tears from all faces. O what a shout when millions of the redeemed shall sound the highest key-note on the golden harp, salvation. “ Why me, why me?” Why such a wretch, who must, *must* have for ever sunk into hell had not salvation been free?

Ah! my dear friend, life is waning, the clouds are breaking, heaven is coming in view, the night of life is passing, the day is breaking, the immortal sun is rising never to go down. These mortal garments of our flesh must decay, and the mortal put on immortality.

May the Lord give thee and thy dear rib, and dear old granny, and the poor worm, to be packed up, with our loins girt, and our lamps burning, waiting the Bridegroom's return. Ever thine in the Bonds of the Gospel,

112, George Street, Collingwood,
Sept. 21, 1868.

J. DAVIS.

[The above letter was written to Henry Huntly, whose experience and death appeared in the Supplement of our last number, a short time before he died, by our friend James Davis, to whom we owe that very interesting account; and it was so blessed to his soul that his widow has forwarded it to us with the remark that "it was like anointing him for his burial." This is the reason why we have put those words as its title.—Ed.]

THE COMFORTER.

"Behold, I will send you a Comforter, who, when he shall come, shall teach you all things."

COME, heavenly Dove, inflame
This heart with love divine;
O! speak of Jesus' fame,
And witness he is mine.
Kindle within a sacred fire
That I may to my Lord aspire.

Without thy powerful aid,
Sweet Spirit of the Lord,
Life, love, and hope seem dead,
Nor can I be restored;
'Till thou dost with the power of God
Point me again to Jesus' blood.

O! Come, within my heart
Thy heavenly work pursue;
More light, more life impart,
Grant me a nearer view
Of Jesus, of my Prince, my King;
And of his love I'll ever sing.

C. W.

INDUSTRY is the way to thrive and grow rich in the world. The earth must be manured, or its increase is in vain expected. "The diligent soul shall be made fat." Solomon has two proverbs concerning thriftiness and increase in the world. In Prov. x. 4, he says, "The hand of the diligent maketh rich." And in ver. 22 he says, "The blessing of the Lord maketh rich." These are not contradictory, but confirmatory of each other; one speaks of the principal, the other of the instrumental, cause. Diligence without God's blessing will not do it; and that blessing cannot be expected without diligence.—*Flavel*.

THE more the world, and professors of religion, and those who have more than profession, are intermingled, so life that is spiritual is more rare. And as the power of religion is not light, but life; and life is found in faith, hope, and love, these are at low ebb. The Thessalonians, more persecuted than any, abounded more than any church in these three (2 Thess. i.)—*W. J. Brook*.

MEDITATIONS ON DIFFERENT PORTIONS OF THE WORD OF GOD.

MEDITATIONS ON THE FIRST CHAPTER OF THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER.

How difficult, for the most part, it is, and we may add, how rare to be able to realise for ourselves, with any degree of abiding permanency, a sweet experimental sense of, and an assured interest in those spiritual blessings with which, so far as we are believers in the Son of God, we are blessed in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Glimpses, glances, transient views, sips and tastes, drops and crumbs, sweet beyond expression whilst they last, but rarely given and soon gone, are, generally speaking, all we seem to get after much hard labour, many cries, earnest entreaties, and vehement longings before the Lord, as he presents himself to our faith, seated on the throne of his grace. How many, for instance, there are amongst those whose eyes are now resting on these pages who are daily and sometimes almost hourly crying out, if not in the exact words, yet in the substance of them,

“O come, thou much expected guest;
Lord Jesus, quickly come.”

And yet how long he seems to delay his coming! How continually are they looking upward till eyes and heart seem alike to fail, waiting for his appearing more than they that watch for the morning; how willing to make any sacrifice, to do anything, be anything, or bear anything, if he would but manifest himself to their souls. How often are they searching and examining their hearts, lips, and lives, to see if there be any evil way in them which makes him hide his lovely face, and not drop one word into their longing breasts, whereby they might hold sweet communion with him! How they desire to be blessed with real contrition of heart, and godly sorrow for their sins, and be melted and dissolved at his feet, under a sight and sense of his bleeding, dying love!

But whence spring all these longing looks and waiting expectations? Do not all these earnest desires and vehement longings show that those in whom they so continually are found are begotten again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead? It is divine life in their souls which is the spring and source of these inward breathings, lookings, and longings; and this divine life arises out of a new and spiritual birth, which is itself the fruit of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. It is not the still-born child that cries; it is the cry of the living child which so goes to the heart of the mother. Thus the cries of which we have spoken show that there is life. But with life, there is hope; for why should a man be ever crying after, waiting for, and anxiously expecting a blessing which he has no hope ever to obtain? If, then, these had no living hope, would they cry? There are no cries in a

dead hope. It is because the grace of hope in their breasts is, like every other grace of the Spirit, alive unto God, that it acts in union with faith and love, to bring them and keep them earnest, sincere, and unwearied before the throne, expecting and anticipating what God has promised to bestow on those who wait upon him.

We thus see in a lively hope three things: 1, An origin; 2, A foundation; 3, An object. 1. Its origin is a new and spiritual birth: "Being begotten again unto a lively hope." 2. Its foundation is the sure promise of God: "Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope." (Ps. cxix. 49.) 3. Its object is eternal life as revealed in Christ, and assured by the word of promise: "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." (Titus i. 2.)

We see all these very clearly marked in the case of Abraham, who is set before us in the word, as a pattern of hope as well as a pattern of faith. (Rom. iv. 18; Heb. vi. 15.)

1. What was the origin of Abraham's hope? A new and spiritual birth, of which he was made a partaker when specially called of God (Gen. xii. 1-3; Isa. li. 2; Heb. xi. 8.) 2. What was its foundation? The promise given that he should have a son by Sarah. 3. What was its object? The promised seed, in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed.

Now apply all this to 1 Pet. i. 3, 4, and it will be seen that the lively hope there spoken of has, in a similar way, 1, An origin; 2, A foundation; 3, An object.

But as we have sufficiently unfolded the two former constituents of a lively hope, we shall now, taking up the thread of our exposition, proceed to consider the third, viz., the *object*. This is declared to be "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

Observe, first, that it is "an inheritance," and therefore a blessing for the future, not for the present, a treasure in prospect, not in possession. It is, indeed, this peculiar feature which makes it the object of hope, as the apostle argues: "For we are saved by hope; but hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" (Rom. viii. 24.) We do not hope for what we see and enjoy, but for what we see not, that is, in present possession, but look for and anticipate as a future blessing. Hope is, therefore, compared to an anchor which, unseen in itself, enters into that within the veil, and therefore in things also unseen. Thus hope deals with an unseen, yet not unknown, inheritance; for as the heir of a large property has, during his minority, a foretaste of his future possessions by being fed, clothed, educated, and furnished with pocket-money out of them, so the heir of God has in this life foretastes of his inheritance in having every want supplied out of it, and being sometimes able to look forward to it as his eternal portion, though to mortal sight now invisible.

1. The first thing said of this inheritance is that it is "incorruptible." Being eternal life, it is not capable of diminution or decay. An earthly inheritance is corruptible, and it is so in two ways: 1, in itself; 2, in its consequences. When an heir succeeds to his father's property, whether land, or houses, or money, all is alike corruptible, because all is alike earthly. We need not stop to prove how transient and uncertain all earthly possessions are. Every day bears witness that the most splendid estates, finest houses, and largest sums may be all dissipated by gambling and personal extravagance on the part of the owner himself, or lost for him by others through the fraud or failure of bubble banks, speculative companies, or dishonest trustees. And as earthly possessions are thus corruptible in themselves, so are they often ministers of corruption to their possessors. Money feeds the lusts of the flesh by giving its possessor the power to gratify them; nurses his pride by making him, so to speak, independent of the providence of God; fosters the love of the world by giving him a portion in it; and sets him at a distance from the poor children of God as unsuitable companions, he thinks, for a man of position and property. How different from this is the inheritance which is the object of hope. It is "incorruptible" in itself, and every prospect or foretaste of it feeds and nurtures that new man of grace which is born of the incorruptible seed of the word of God. And, indeed, this inheritance must needs be incorruptible, for it is no less than God himself. Of this the tribe of Levi was a type: "But unto the tribe of Levi Moses gave not any inheritance; the Lord God of Israel was their inheritance, as he said unto them." (Josh. xiii. 33.) The apostle, therefore, calls believers "heirs of God and joint heirs with (or of) Christ." All, therefore, that God is in his infinite perfections, in all his love, blessedness, and glory is theirs by heirship; and thus as he is essentially incorruptible, and knows neither change nor deviation, but is ever the same great and glorious I AM, their inheritance is incorruptible, and can no more suffer loss, decay, or corruption than the Lord himself.

And as it is "incorruptible in itself," so it brings into the heart which entertains it by faith and hope a portion of its own incorruptibility. John speaks of the effect of this lively hope as anticipating its inheritance: "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. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." (1 John iii. 2, 3.) There is in God an everflowing, overflowing fountain of grace as well as of glory, and thus, as he is looked to, believed in, waited on, sought and served, obeyed and loved in his dear Son, there is a flowing into the soul of those graces of the Spirit which purify the heart from the love of the world, and sanctify and meeten for the enjoyment of its eternal inheritance.

2. It is also "undefiled." Earthly inheritances are some-

times illgotten, and seem to have the curse of God upon them. The hands of those who got them were defiled with blood—the blood of orphans and widows ruined by gambling and speculation, raising the winner to wealth and often driving the loser to suicide. Or even when honestly and honourably gained, property and wealth are of that nature that few escape being in some way defiled by them. Even in those who fear God, abundance has a strong tendency to defile the conscience, either by the love of money, issuing in covetousness, or by spending it improperly and inconsistently, or to defile the feet by walking too much after the fashion and spirit of the world. But this inheritance of the saints is “undefiled.” It is eternal purity in itself, and every fresh glimpse, foretaste, or enjoyment of it here brings purity with it. After you have been speculating, contriving, plotting, planning, and scheming how to manage this or that concern, employ this or that money, or invest to the best advantage this or that nice little sum which has just come rolling in, how defiled your conscience often has been with guilt on account of your carnality and covetousness. But when for a few minutes you have looked forward to your eternal inheritance, spent a few sweet and happy moments with the Lord, and felt your faith, hope, and love to flow forth toward him, there has been no defiled conscience or burdened mind; no sighs or groans over your wretched covetousness and worldliness; no condemnation for coveting the Lord as your happy and enduring portion; no gloomy day nor restless night. How at such moments you desire you could be in that blessed frame all the day long, and ever feel that holy calm, that heavenly tranquillity, and that sweet spirituality of mind which is truly life and peace.

3. And “it fadeth not away.” Whatever you may have in this world, be it much or little, you must leave it. You will pass away from it, and another will possess your land, your house, or your money. And if you have no other inheritance than earth gives, where will be your portion in death and to all eternity? But if you are begotten again unto a lively hope, even if you do not enjoy the full assurance of faith, you have before you an inheritance which fadeth not away. We fancy sometimes how happy we should be if we had this man's fine estate, or that man's large property; how much better we should spend it than he does, and what good we should do with it. And do you think that these men are happy with all their possessions, and that you would be happier or better if you had them? It is not in nature to be happy. These rich men have a canker which eats up all their happiness. And even if free from the heavier troubles of life, all satisfaction of the flesh fadeth away, for possession of itself rubs off all the bloom, and with possession come all the anxieties and cares connected with it. But this eternal inheritance “fadeth not away.” The sweetest flowers fade and are thrown away as they become nauseous to sight and smell. But there is an abiding freshness,

a constant verdure, a perpetual bloom, an unceasing fragrance, a permanent sweetness in this eternal inheritance, so that it is never flat or stale, but remains ever the same, or rather is ever increasing in beauty and blessedness, as more known, believed in, hoped unto, and loved.

4. But it is as secure as it is unfading. It is "reserved in heaven," and is thus kept for the predestined heirs in the safest, as well as the happiest, of all places. The word means preserved as well as reserved—preserved so that it cannot be touched by the hands of the spoiler, and reserved that the heir may enjoy it at the appointed time. It is, therefore, out of the reach of sin, death, and hell, secured from all the storms of time, all the waves and billows of affliction and tribulation, all the assaults of Satan, and all the fears, sinkings, misgivings, anxieties, and perplexities of a heart dismayed at every breath. It is a point which we would touch cautiously and reverently, but it is a truth which, however abused by ungodly men, is full of comfort to an exercised soul, that as it is reserved in heaven we cannot sin away our interest in this inheritance. We may through sin sadly lose our enjoyment of it, sadly damp our assurance of an interest in it, sink almost into despair under a load of guilt and self-condemnation, and go mourning all our days at the bitter recollection of our filth and folly; but we cannot, if chosen in Christ, sin away our eternal inheritance in him.

5. It is therefore added of these heirs that they are "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." The word translated "kept" means properly garrisoned, that is, kept as if in a fortified place, so as to be guarded from all enemies. Thus, as the inheritance is reserved for them, and they are preserved for the inheritance, both are equally safe, the inheritance as reserved in heaven, and the heirs as preserved on earth by the immediate and mighty power of God; for He himself in his glorious perfections surrounds them as with a wall of fire. "For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her" (Zech ii. 5.) They are therefore kept by the mighty power of God unto salvation. There may seem to be but a step between them and death; their feet may be almost gone; Satan may roar against them as if he would utterly devour them; the grave may yawn for them, and almost all hope of being saved be removed like a tree. But with all this they are kept by the power of God. His unseen hand holds them up, keeps back their enemies, says to Satan, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed," and thus he maintains the work of grace in their souls.

It is therefore beautifully added, "through faith." Though kept effectually by the power of God, the heirs of salvation are not kept mechanically, as a child in a nursery is kept from falling into, or playing with the fire, by a tall iron fender, or unwillingly, as a horse or a mule is held in with bit and bridle,

but are kept spiritually through the medium of a special grace of the Spirit, the grace of faith. As unbelief is the parent sin of all disobedience, so faith is the parent grace of all obedience; and as the issue of unbelief is destruction, so the issue of faith is salvation. In and through this faith, his own gift, God works, communicating by it strength to the soul, and feeding it continually by his own word, so that it lives and acts. Thus it is through faith that the power whereby God keeps his people acts and is made known. In your saddest moments, sharpest exercises, and most trying conflicts, do you not find a something in you which will not give up the fight? Or if for a short time you seem out of breath, and lie helpless on the ground, still you are up and at it again. Faith draws another breath. Its language is, "Yet will I look again toward thy holy temple." "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall, I shall arise." It knows he is able to deliver, and thus it keeps pleading promises, confessing sins, calling on the Son of God to appear, and determined, if it die in the battle, to die at his feet.

It is very instructive and encouraging to be able to trace in our own hearts the connection between the power of God and the actings of faith. We are not carried to heaven as passengers are carried by the express train to Holyhead, so that if once in the carriage they may go to sleep, look out of the window, or read the newspaper without fear of losing their way, or not reaching their destination. Such travellers may find themselves surrounded in a moment by everlasting flames of fire, as those found literally who perished so lamentably last summer, near Abergele. Though kept by the power of God, we have to fight every step of the way. It is this living, fighting, struggling, and yet eventually conquering faith, which sets the tried and exercised child of God at such a distance from the loose and careless doctrinal professor, who is hardened and emboldened to presume, and even walk in ways of sin and death by holding the doctrine of being kept by the power of God, without knowing anything of the secret way by which this power works and keeps. To such we may adapt the language of James. You believe that the elect of God are kept by his Almighty power unto salvation. "Thou doest well; the devils also believe and tremble"—which you do not if you be one of these loose professors. But does God keep *you*? Does he keep you from evil, that it may not grieve you? Does he keep your eye single, your conscience tender, your heart prayerful, your life and walk circumspect, your eye from adultery, your tongue from folly, your hands from covetousness, and your feet from the ways of pride and worldliness? You have no evidence that you are an heir of God, and are being kept by his power unto salvation, unless you have some experience *how* he keeps, and that as it is by power on his part, so it is through faith on yours. Whenever we slip, stumble, or go astray, it is through the power of unbelief; and whenever we stand, fight, or prevail, it

is by faith. If you will only look at those various instances in which you have gone astray, brought a load of guilt on your conscience, or cut out work for bitter regret and self-loathing all the days of your life, you will see that the first step toward evil was unbelief. You distrusted the providence of God, or neglected to wait upon him for his counsel, or disbelieved a warning given in his word against the thing you were desirous and almost determined to do, or preferred your own will and way to his, or had gradually sunk into a careless, cold, lethargic state of soul, in which unbelief was strong, and faith so weak that it seemed scarcely to have in it life or motion.

When Nathan was sent to David, to expose to him his crime, he said to him, "Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight?" (2 Sam. xii. 9.) David despised the commandment of the Lord, first by disbelieving, and then disobeying it. When we say "disbelieving it," we mean practically, not speculatively so; for a man may not actually disbelieve a precept, but if he break it, he shows plainly that he acts as if he did not really believe God spoke to him in and by it. And on the other hand, if you will look back to see how your feet were kept in the hour of temptation, and preserved from, or delivered out of a snare of Satan, you will find that it was through faith that God kept you by his upholding power, and that by taking hold of his strength, as made perfect in weakness, you obtained the victory.

We have drawn this point out at some length, as being of such deep and daily importance, and from the conviction also that the best way of expounding the word of truth is to show the saints of God, from their own experience, its spiritual meaning.

We shall therefore at this point close our present Meditations.

Obituary.

MARY WILD.

(Continued from page 132.)

I AM sorry to have again to defer the account which has been sent us of the Experience and dying testimony of the late Mary Wild, whose name stands at the head of the present Obituary; but as I was for many years so well acquainted with, and had so high an opinion of her mother, the late Mrs. Wild, and as the MS. book written by her daughter, to which I have already referred as coming unexpectedly into my hands, contains so much of her experience, and as I have already given from it some account of the first work of God in her soul, I feel as if I must go on with it, not only from its intrinsic value as the record of a deeply-tried and checkered life, but as a little memorial of one whom I, with so many others, so much esteemed. And if there should be found in it much that may be considered by some

merely a record of temporal troubles, I would have them bear in mind that this very circumstance may make it all the more acceptable, as well as encouraging, to those of the Lord's afflicted family who find their providential trials so mingled with their spiritual troubles and deliverances that they can hardly separate what, in their experience, the hand of God seems so to have joined together.

It will be remembered that in our last No. some account was given of Farmer Wild, Mary Wild's father, and of the good end which he made, after much severe conflict and distress of soul. I shall now, therefore, take up the thread from that point; and as in the first part of that Article some account was given of the beginning of the work of grace upon Mrs. Wild's soul, I need here only refer to it, wishing, however, to take this opportunity to mention that I have endeavoured, both there and here, to keep as closely as possible to the words of the manuscript before me.

She was now left a widow in a large business, with several head-strong sons, whom she could neither check nor control, and renting her farm under a High Church, Tory landlord, with the clergyman of the parish of much the same stamp. Her eldest son, William, with whose aid she had hoped chiefly to manage the farm, was a young man of very high spirit, violent temper, and in politics a strong, out-spoken Liberal, which in those days was not only a very rare occurrence, but an almost unpardonable offence in a Wiltshire farmer. This last feature, therefore, of his character made him particularly obnoxious to the landlord, and indeed gave him such offence that he sent his mother word, within a week after her husband's death, that he would transact no sort of business whatever with him; and as this peremptory message highly offended the young man, and he threatened retaliation for what he called "such cowardly behaviour to a widow, whose husband and father had rented land of the family for more than sixty years," by advertising it in the public papers, she lived under continual agitation of mind and hard bondage of spirit from his violent language and her fear of the consequences. But after enduring a year of trouble from this quarter, and seeing little prospect of any change, she obtained, at length, some relief by William's emigration to Van Diemen's Land, where, after many alternations of prosperity and adversity, he was killed in 1854 by a fall from his horse.

But the clouds return after the rain; for after this severe trial had been removed, or, at least, mitigated, one of the heaviest troubles came upon her which she ever endured through a long and most afflicted life, and yet one which eventually proved one of her most signal blessings. Her youngest and favourite son, Edward, who she always said had never given her before this an hour's trouble in her life, whilst witnessing a ploughing match in June, 1841, was thrown from his horse, and falling upon the back of his head, sustained thereby an injury which, though little felt or thought of at the time, resulted, after

a few months, first in failure of sight, then in thorough blindness, and eventually in epileptic fits. He was then managing a farm in the same parish for his mother's landlord, and from his steady, industrious habits was not only much liked by him, but had every prospect of success in business. But this affliction not only incapacitated him from pursuing his present employment, and, indeed, all kind of business, but, from the severity of the fits, threatened life. Here, then, were seas of trouble for the poor, fond, anxious mother, not only as witnessing and sympathising with all the pain and suffering and blighted prospects of her favourite son, which he himself also deeply felt and continually mourned over, besides heavy expenses connected with the attempts made to cure or relieve his complaint, but full also of fears that he might be cut off in one of his fits without saving faith or repentance, of which she could not for some years see any satisfactory sign. She was also continually harassed by the thought of herself dying before him, and thus leaving him blind and helpless to the cold charity of the world, without guardian, protector, or friend. All these anxieties and fears argued, you will perhaps say, that she had but little faith; and if she heard you say so, she would be the first to confess it true, and lament her want of it. But have you ever been in the same trial? And if so, how did you manage to act faith in and under it? If she had not much faith to lift her up and out of the trial, she had enough to keep her sighing, groaning, and crying to the Lord, and looking to him, and him alone, to support her under it and bring her out of it. Nor did he disregard her mournful cry, though for a long time he was pleased sorely to try her faith and patience. Her daughter writes:

"Often was she wont to say in the early days of Edward's affliction that could she have the least reason for a good hope that God had saved his soul, were he to take him out of this world of trouble she must kneel by the side of his coffin and bless the Lord for his goodness."

This desire was granted her after 20 years of affliction, for the Lord called him by his grace and gave him a blessed testimony before he took him home in 1861, and thus heard her prayers and silenced all her fears as to what would become of him had he survived her. As it was not till about eight years after the commencement of his illness that the Lord began to work effectually upon his soul, it may encourage godly parents still to wait and watch, and not be discouraged if they do not get an immediate answer to their earnest prayers on behalf of their children, especially when they see sickness and affliction come upon them and they are fearing they may die without hope; and this is one reason why I have dwelt so long on this particular trial, especially as I was a witness to it almost from the first to the last.

In the year 1848, having given up the farm into the hands of a son with whose aid she had thus far managed it, and having a small income of her own, and many circumstances arising in

her family which deeply grieved and vexed her soul, but which she could not remove or even control, she felt led to leave them and go and reside at Allington by herself, where she would be near God-fearing friends and the chapel where her husband was buried, and in which she could hear experimentally preached the truth that she loved. This was the most peaceful and the happiest part of her life, for she was removed out of the turmoil of business and from witnessing things that grieved her soul. As is the case with too many, her natural besetment was over-anxiety about the things of this life, not for herself, for a little plain food and raiment well satisfied her, but for her children. But besides this natural besetment there were things going on in her family at that time which I do not wish to name, but which she well knew yet could not alter, and therefore made her look on every adverse stroke in Providence as the righteous judgment of God against it. Speaking at this time with lamentations over her great anxiety for her family, she said:

“Ah, it is my sin to be so anxious. I know God frowns on them, and that justly; but my family has been and is my idol, and from that quarter comes my cross.”

But by these trials and exercises her soul was kept alive, and, above all, taught that nothing but the power of God could hold her up, and nothing short of his blessing could comfort her soul. A light, empty profession would not do for her. She must have realities or nothing, and this gave her words weight and savour. Her daughter says of her:

“She was one whom nothing short of realities could satisfy. Many times have I heard her say, ‘If all the men in the world, good and bad, were to tell me I was right for eternity, it would not satisfy me. O no. I must have a better testimony than that, and it often is only a burden to me when I think of people having so high an opinion of me.’”

About this time her daughter mentions that she heard me preach from Isa. xviii. 7, under which sermon she was greatly blessed; and at another time when I spoke from the words, “Show me a token for good.” (Ps. lxxxvi. 17.) Of this last she said:

“I was sitting at the very end of the seat, with hardly room to move, there being such a crowd of people; but I was so lifted above and out of myself that I felt truly blessed.”

About this time she was baptized and joined the church at Allington, of which she continued a highly-esteemed member till her death. Speaking of it, she said to her daughter:

“I am glad that I ever went to reside a few years at Allington, if it had been only to attend to the ordinance of baptism; for it seems to me that had I not gone there to live, and been away from this house and business, and the scenes of wickedness of which I am a witness, humanly speaking, I could not have come forward as a candidate.”

It was during this period that I saw most of her, and having had much conversation with her at various times on the things of God, felt well satisfied that the life and fear of God were in

her heart. Being a woman of a naturally strong and acute mind, and remarkably honest in deed and word, well weighted with trouble, and satisfied with nothing short of divine realities, as tasted, felt, and handled in her soul, her conversation was never light and trifling; but whether she was cast down or comforted, generally much to the point, free from all cant, affected piety, and mock humility, but seasoned with salt, and therefore savoury and profitable.

But, in the year 1850, she took a step which she afterwards deeply regretted. A son of hers who, I am sorry to say, was the cause of great grief and trouble to her, and whom she had left in occupation of the farm at Stowell, had given it up and taken a larger one at another place, about five or six miles from Allington; and at the request of her daughter and her much-loved and invalid son Edward, and by the advice of several friends, she was induced to leave Allington and once more go and reside with her family. Of this step often would she say,

“O how much nearer did I live to the Lord, how much more quiet and comfortable was I during my two years’ residence at Allington among Christian friends than since I have come back amongst my own family. Only to think that I should come back to this place to assist in the business, as if that could not be carried on without my help. I am justly rewarded for my distrust of God’s faithfulness and care over me.”

Indeed, the hand of God, according to her feelings and judgment, went out sorely against her, for she underwent in her new home seas of trouble in body, mind, and circumstances. The first stroke was a failure of eye-sight; for about this time a cataract began to form in her eyes, producing at first partial, and eventually total blindness. This was indeed a sore trial to her, as being a woman so active both in mind and body, and by cutting off all employment of her hands and eyes, leaving her so much time and opportunity to pore over her miseries. But she saw in it the strong rebukes of God and, what she felt more deeply, viewed it as a mark of his displeasure against herself and her family. She said to her daughter,

“It has been a frequent saying of mine in days past, ‘As long as I have my two hands to work, I shall be independent.’ Little, then, did I think that the Almighty would deprive me of my sight. Now I have my two hands, but cannot use them. O in how many ways do we sin! I fear that the Lord’s hand is gone out against us; and if so, all the men in the world united, were they so disposed, could not help us.”*

In Nov., 1854, she became quite dark, and soon after received intelligence of the death of her eldest son, William, in Van Diemen’s Land, as we have already named, by a fall from his horse. This was a great shock to her feelings.

“She said sometimes, ‘I am ready to wish I had never been a mother—I know it is a sin; but then I should not have to think I had been a

* She once told me that of all her temporal troubles, her blindness was the heaviest; I suppose as being most enduring, and making her so dependent on others.

means of bringing children into the world and souls to be lost.' But she would add, 'I must put my hand on my lips, and, like Aaron, hold my peace.'"

In June, 1855, she underwent the operation of couching; but it was of no avail to restore her sight, for inflammation set in, which not only caused her dreadful suffering for many months, all the means used to give her ease proving ineffectual, but completely destroyed the eyes, and so disfigured them, that ever afterwards she used to wear a bandage over them. What added to the affliction was, that the loss of her sight deprived her of seeing to the comforts of her invalid son. It cut her off also from all reading of the word, and the writings of gracious men in which she had hitherto taken delight; so that she was henceforth wholly dependent upon her daughter Mary to read to her; in whose record is the following entry:

"At this time I used to read to her much from Job, the Lamentations, and many of the Psalms, which seemed to give her more comfort than any other part of God's word. Often would she desire me to turn to them, and read portions of them to her. The following hymns were also much blessed to her: 1070 and 749 (Gadsby's Selection), Hart's hymn also:

"And must it, Lord, be so?"

and Toplady's:

"Prepare me, gracious God,"

which I often heard her repeat, dwelling with much feeling on the last verse:

"Let me attest thy power."

"She would often say to me, 'Mary, it is not the dread of going to hell that distresses me, but it is my living at such a distance from God. It is his so hiding his blessed face from me that troubles me.'"

During this time, the memoirs of Hannah Judd and Richard Dore in the "Gospel Standard" (August and September, 1857), were, in God's hands, a means of comforting her exercised cast-down soul. My sermon also, on "The Bruised Reed and Smoking Flax," published in the "Gospel Standard" (September, 1861), she found very encouraging:

"She would often request me to read it to her, comparing herself, as mentioned in it, to the refuse flax that was thrown aside and swept into the fire, and yet smouldering on, to show that there was life under all."

"I have heard her say, 'I sometimes feel myself such a poor, vile, weak, worthless creature, that I seem only kept, as it were, by the skin of my teeth. The thoughts that pass through my mind I could not tell to any one; and at my time of life, too. Why, would any one believe it, Mary? I am sometimes so harassed in the morning, when I am getting up, that I can hardly give myself time to kneel down, or trust the Lord for anything. I am so driven about in my feelings by the adversary of my poor soul, that I have to pace my bedroom again and again, trying to pray; and sometimes I come down into our large parlour, and sometimes into the little one, and get behind the door to give vent to my feelings. David said that he was hunted as a partridge on the mountains, and truly I can say of myself, I experience the same.'"

"On my entering her bedroom Sunday, Jan. 22nd, she said, 'O, my dear child, how the blessed Saviour's name is exalted this day. O, sal-

vation! What a blessing there is in it! Truly, the blessed Saviour's name is as ointment poured forth. Then, clasping her hands, she exclaimed, 'My soul, wait thou only upon God; thy expectation is from him.'

"Edward coming into the room, she said to him, 'O Edward, press on, struggle hard, and call aloud on the great Physician. Having Christ I have everything; without him I should be nothing.'

But I must quote a few more entries from the book before me:

"O Mary, I am ashamed to tell you how the enemy of my soul harasses me, and what my feelings are. Truly, as Mr. Hart says:

"Buts, ifs, and hows are hurl'd
To sink us with the gloom,' &c.

And Satan is at that work with me now."

"In the evening, after reading to her from Isaiah, she said, 'O what a dreadful state the world is in, and what two poor creatures we two are in it! O what should I do without the New Testament, the blessed gospel?'"

But though for the most part so deeply exercised, she had her times of sweet deliverance and blessed relief:

"She said this afternoon, 'Blessed be God! for a few minutes I could say I long to lay my poor body down in the grave, and be with my blessed Saviour. I did truly pant for it as the hart panteth after the water-brooks. I had no fear or terror of death, nor have I of late those fears of hell I used to be the subject of.'

"My great trouble, of late, has been that God seemed to keep so distant from me. What I want is more real communion with his blessed Majesty, more nearness to his blessed self."

"Next day she said, 'O that I may, in a little while, lay this poor, sinful, worn-out body down, and be gone to rest. O to be with Christ!'"

"She much desired and prayed for the love of God to be once more shed abroad in her heart, saying, 'O! I cannot get it, nor can I see any fruits that I wish to see spring from this affliction. O what a poor, dependent creature I am. On my knees this morning how I did beg for Christ's religion more to influence my conduct, and for clearer evidences of Christ's love to my soul. O for the power! What are all forms without the power? Such things are substance, Mary, you may depend upon it:

"O when will that blest time arrive?"

Quoting the rest of the lines."

But fresh trouble soon came on through a series of losses in business, arising principally from unfavourable speculations and an untoward and rainy season, so that in the following year more than £1,000 were sunk. Her daughter thus writes:

"My poor mother and her afflicted son seemed, at times, both stunned with the dispensation. What she felt so deeply was that all the property of her poor, blind son, as well as her own, was bound up in the business which now seemed all going to ruin. 'My time,' she said, 'in this world cannot be long; but, poor fellow, what will become of him?' It was a blessed relief, therefore, to her mind, and a consolation only second to the blessing of her own soul, when, after a short illness, the Lord took him out of this world to be for ever with himself. (Aug. 1, 1861.)

"Whilst walking up into my bedroom this afternoon, I had a blessed visit from the Lord. I was obliged to stop on the stairs, and bless my

dear Saviour for his goodness to me. I did say, 'Thou dear Lamb of God, my precious Jesus, how good thou art to me—poor me! How every way precious to my soul!' My prayer to God is to leave this wicked world to go to him. He alone knows what my real desires are. I have nothing now to live for in this world."

"She spoke of the love of God being shed abroad in her heart, which she said made her humble and willing to take a low place. 'O the power of religion; that is everything! I thought this afternoon, if the Saviour were to ask me, as he did Simon, if I loved him, I must say I do love him. Mr. Hart says, and says truly,

"'Love all defects supplies.'

"At another time: 'I do not now wish to live in this world; my only wish is to be fitted and prepared to be for ever with the dear Saviour. Ah, Mary, nothing but Christ will do to die by; and how many times have I been glad of the words, "Without me ye can do nothing," having such a feeling sense of my own weakness and helplessness.'

"I do thank the dear Lord I did feel Christ to be precious for a few minutes this afternoon, as I was coming down stairs. I said to myself, "What is it, what is it I want?" Something within me seemed to say, "It is Christ you want." And, bless his dear name, he was precious to me.'

"She was again very depressed, so that it was painful to witness her groans and tears, often saying, 'I do so want what I cannot get, and that is the love of God to be shed abroad in my poor soul.' She said, 'This morning, before I left my bedroom, how sweet were the words to me which I used to hear Warburton repeat: "Honours crown his brow." O, I said, I would not take the weight of one hair of my head of his honour from him.

"'None but Jesus can do helpless sinners good.'

"Monday morning, the 23rd, on my awaking, I heard her groaning. I asked the reason. She said, 'O I fear I am not on the right foundation. I was never so tried as to the foundation of my religion as I am now. A few days ago I seemed to long to be gone from this world, but it is not so with me now, for I am full of fears.' I said, 'Cannot you look back and see how the Lord has delivered you out of your fears?' She said, 'O it is all hid from my eyes, nor can I see that I ever had a deliverance of the right kind. O wretched woman, what shall I do, what shall I do?' She was truly left to the buffeting of the enemy of her soul.

"Monday, Feb. 5. She observed, 'I passed a comfortable day yesterday; but this morning, before it was light, I was sunk in my old spot. I tremble and am ashamed to tell you, Mary, how this world seems, as it were, to clasp me in its grasp. O, dear Lord, keep me through this day and let me not so dishonour thee.' She felt this day more than usually prayerful, begging to lie passive in God's hand, and that his will might also be hers, oftentimes repeating her favourite hymn as she called it:

"'Come, Holy Spirit, come,' &c.,

dwelling with much feeling on the last verse:

"'Dwell, therefore, in our hearts,' &c.

Sept., 1861. I find recorded, 'My mother has been at times much comforted from Deut. xxxiii. 29, "Happy art thou, O Israel,"' &c.

"She exclaimed with tears, 'How I do long to have done with this world. O what a deliverance it will be to me.' After reading to her a part of Mr. P.'s Meditations on the Office Characters of the Blessed Re-

deemer, she appeared much melted down in spirit, observing how much she liked to hear them read, adding, 'It makes the dear Redeemer so precious to me, and that must be right, you know, when it has its good effects. I must get you to begin and read through all those pieces again, beginning with the Eternal Sonship. Also through "The Sacred Humanity," for I have felt those pieces so blessed to my soul.'

"I said to her when she was very ill, 'Do you feel any kind of terror how your illness may terminate.' She replied, 'No, I have told the dear Lord this morning that he knew that I was like Peter. I can appeal to thee and say, "Thou knowest that I love thee,"' observing at the same, 'O, Mary, where once the work of grace is begun in a poor sinner's soul, however little and long about the work may seem to us, you know it must ultimately end right.' She was in the habit of often walking round the table in the midst of our sitting room to exercise her limbs. She said to me, pointing to the table, 'As I was walking round this table last evening, how sweet was that line of Hart's hymn to me:

" 'Not a glimpse of hope for me
Only in Gethsemane,'

I never so fully entered into the meaning of those words before.'"

But I must reserve what remains to be told of this poor, tried, afflicted, exercised woman's experience, life, and death to our next No. J. C. P.

THE righteousness by which a sinner stands just before God, or in the light of God, from the curse, is a righteousness of God's providing; so also it is of his putting on. Thus therefore a man is made righteous even of God by Christ, or through his righteousness. Now if, as was said, a man is thus made righteous, then in this sense he is good before God, before he has done any thing which the law calls good before men, for God maketh not men righteous with this righteousness because they have been, or have done good, but before they are capable of doing good at all. Hence we are said to be justified while ungodly, even as an infant is clothed with the skirt of another when naked as touching itself. Works therefore do not precede, but follow after this righteousness; and even thus it is in nature, the tree must be good, before it bear good fruit, and so also must a man. It is as impossible to make a man bring forth good fruit to God before he is of God made good as it is for a thorn or bramble-bush to bring forth figs or grapes. But again, a man must be righteous before he can be good, righteous by imputation, before his person, his intellectuals, can be qualified with good, as to the principle of good. Neither faith, the Spirit, nor any grace is given unto the sinner before God has made him righteous with the righteousness of Christ. Wherefore it is said that after he had spread his skirt over us, he washed us with water, *i.e.*, with the washing of sanctification. And to conclude otherwise is as much as to say that an unjustified man has faith, the Spirit, and the graces thereof which to say is to overthrow the gospel. For what need of Christ's righteousness, if a man may have faith and the Spirit of Christ without it, since the Spirit is said to be the earnest of our inheritance, and that by which we are sealed unto the day of redemption? But the truth is, the Spirit that makes our person good, I mean that which sanctifies our natures, is the fruit of the righteousness which we have by Jesus Christ. For as Christ died and rose again, before he sent the Holy Ghost from heaven to his; so the benefit of his resurrection is by God bestowed upon us, in order to the Spirit's possessing of our souls.—*Bunyan*.

JUNE 1, 1869.

THE

GOSPEL STANDARD.

JUNE, 1869.

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

“ AND YET THERE IS ROOM ”

WHAT precious words are these: “And yet there is room,”—room for you and me, believer, in the kingdom of our God, there to stand and bow before the great white throne among the redeemed; room now in the bosom of Jesus. Unworthy as we are of such love as his, yet there is room in his loving breast for our sorrowing souls; room in his wounded side who is our refuge in every time of trial; our sure defence in the hour of danger and temptation, when cast out and oppressed by the world, buffeted by Satan, tossed with tempests and not comforted. He is our anchor strong when we are driven about by contrary winds, cast often on the desolate shore of depression and grief by the whirlwind and the storm, and thrown back again on the wild waves of despair, and, in feeling, our ship half foundered and our compass lost. Yet even here his hand upholds, and his arm defends; and though unseen by the eye of faith, and to all appearance deserted of God and man, he is round about our stormy track: “His way is in the sea.” He comes forth visibly by and by, treading the proud waves beneath his feet; and whilst we are in an agony of fear, crying out, “Lord, carest thou not that we perish?” he whispers, “It is I; be not afraid;” rebukes the raging tempest, and there is a great calm. Well may the astonished mariners exclaim, “What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the waves obey him?”

“In every storm, in every sea
Our Jesus makes a way;
His presence makes the darkness flee,
And turns the night to day.”

“And yet there is room,”—room in the banqueting house of his love and mercy for our starving souls, there to feed sweetly on the bread of life, the paschal Lamb, the rich provisions of undying love, and unmerited affection and grace; a feast of fat things, and wine on the lees, hath our God prepared for us here, us poor, lost, ruined, forsaken, ready-to-perish ones, who, like our dear Lord and Master, are every day esteemed of the world

and professors as stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted; even for such, blessed be our God, there is room. It is the distinguishing grace and sovereign mercy of our covenant-keeping God which causes us to "stand still" and look on wonderingly while the angel of God's presence does wondrously—wondering at ourselves often what we are and where we are, asking the question, as did David, "What am I, O Lord God, and what is my father's house that thou hast brought me hitherto?" And with poor gleaner Ruth, when looked kindly upon by Boaz, "Why have I found grace in thine eyes that thou shouldst take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?" And when we are led to look at ourselves, and to call to mind the hole of the pit from which we were dug, and the horrible miry clay of sin and despair from which we have been delivered, we are abased and confounded and filled with astonishment that ever God, in mercy, should look upon such outcasts, wandering wretches, deserving no favour; but, contrariwise, meriting eternal death and punishment. Filled with a solemn sense of our undeservings and guilt, we abhor ourselves in dust and ashes, and dare not so much as lift up our eyes to heaven; but, like the poor publican, we are necessitated to smite upon our breast (the seat of our sorrow and our sin), and cry, "God be merciful to me, a sinner!" And whilst the High and Lofty One, who inhabiteth eternity, is condescending to regard us in our low estate and take up his abode in our poor trembling hearts, we wonder still more, and the language of our ravished, love-smitten souls is:

"O why did Jesus show to me
The beauties of his face?
Why to my soul did he convey
The blessings of his grace?"

"O how could he so sweetly smile
On such a wretch as I—
I who his name did once revile
And his dear truth deny?"

"But 'twas because he loved my soul,
Because he died for me;
Because that nothing could control
His great, his firm decree."

What grace! What love! What kindness and forbearance of the King of kings, and Lord of lords!

To make room for the worst of sinners; to gather together the outcasts of Israel and the dispersed among the Gentiles, and bring them in to the wedding supper, to be clothed in his own spotless robe, and sit down among his much-loved, honoured, royal guests; to seek that which was lost and bring again that which was driven away; to bind up the broken-hearted, give liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison doors to them which were bound; to heal the sick, give sight to the blind, strength of limb to the impotent; to make the lame man

leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb to sing; and all this of his own free favour, lovingkindness, and compassion.

“O for such love let rocks and hills
Their lasting silence break,
And all harmonious human tongues
The Saviour’s praises speak.”

“And yet there is room!” Though a number which no man can number are already around the throne above, praising God and the Lamb, there is room still, and will be till every elect vessel is called in; and then there will be no more room—the Master will have risen up to the judgment, and the door will be shut. The same hand that shuts the blessed ones in will shut the accursed out; and that for ever! Solemn thought!

But, sorrowing child of God, there yet is room for thee. Thy poor, sin-stricken, grief-filled, tried, tempted soul shall find an entrance there, when time shall be no more with thee, and the sins and trials of earth have done with thee for ever. There is room for the leper, the blind, the halt, and the lame; and thou, poor soul, art all these in thy own feelings under the teachings of God’s Spirit and grace! Poor worm, there is room for thee. Jesus says there is. “In my Father’s house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you; that where I am ye may be also.” “Blessed are ye that mourn, for ye shall be comforted; blessed are ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of heaven.” He further assures thee that thou shalt not be cast out: “Him that cometh unto me, I will in nowise cast out.” And while groaning over thy sin and mourning after and longing for a sight of the dear Lord of life and glory, he is even now interceding for thee at the right hand of the Father, pleading thy cause who art utterly unable to plead thy own. Bless his name! There yet is room,—room in the mansions above when death turns us out of doors here. There, in the presence of God for ever, in the heaven of rest above, our weary souls shall recline beneath the smiles of heaven’s King,—the smiles of Him who is the chiefest among ten thousand to us now, and the altogether lovely; and we shall go no more out to battle with the world, the flesh, and the devil, but rest for ever,

“Where the weary rest,
Where the tried are blest;
And sins oppress no more
On that bright shore.”

A few more trials, temptations, conflicts with hell and sin, a few more privations, sorrows, pains, and tears, and we shall bid adieu to all we suffer here. Trial will be exchanged for triumph, temptation for victory, conflict for rest and peace unspeakable, privation, hunger, nakedness, thirst for princely wealth which language cannot describe. Sorrow and sighing will have for ever passed away, and instead thereof will be given the garment of everlasting praise; disease and pain and death will afflict no

more, will affright no more; all tears will be wiped away; beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, an eternal weight of glory for a short moment of affliction.

“Weary of earth, myself, and sin,
Dear Jesus, set me free,
And to thy glory take me in,
For there I long to be.”

GIDEON.

A LETTER BY THE LATE MR. WARBURTON.

Dear Friend,—I was sorry to hear of your being so unwell in body; but, my dear friend,

“Whatever cross lies at thy door,
It cometh from the Lord;”

and,

“Not a single shaft can hit,
Till the God of love sees fit.”

Bless his dear name, he carries the keys of death and of hell; and nothing can move but by his sovereign will and pleasure.

But methinks you are saying the dear man is taking me to be a partaker of grace; but I am afraid I am not in the secret, and shall prove at last to have had nothing but an empty lamp of profession and destitute of oil. My dear friend, I am not deceived. I have God's testimony that you have “a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” I am as confident of it as ever the word of God has said it. I have no doubt you are shaken, and many times fearful how it will end; but, my friend, hear the word of the Lord, that shall stand fast for ever and ever, whatever your fears or mine may be. His counsel shall stand and his word shall never fail: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Now, my friend, have you not felt yourself for years a poor, helpless, unworthy, vile, polluted, ill and hell-deserving wretch? And have not you felt and proved in your own soul that from the crown of your head to the sole of your foot you were one mass of sin? And has not your soul cried out unto God, “Unclean, unclean?” And has not your soul proved again and again that all your righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and cried out, “O that I may be found in him, not having on my own righteousness, which is of the law, but the righteousness of God, which is by faith unto and upon all that believe?”

“Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted;” and how many hundreds of times has your soul mourned to see and feel what a hard, unfeeling, unthankful heart you have to groan under and confess from your very soul, “I am as a beast before thee; I am a worm and no man; I am a brother to dragons and a companion to owls; I roar like a bear and mourn sore like a dove. O that I knew where I could find him, that I might come even to his seat. I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments?” Has not your soul

panted for him as the hart panteth for the water brooks? Has not your soul been brought to know that there is no other name given under heaven whereby your worthless, helpless, polluted soul can be saved but the Lord Jesus Christ? And have you any rock but him to rest upon, any refuge to hide in, any other righteousness to cover, any other fountain to wash in, any other help to look to, any other way that your soul deserves to be found in, any other smiles that are worth notice?

Is not Jesus the chief of ten thousand to your soul? And would not you rather out of choice have one look of love from him than all the riches and honours that the whole world can give? My hope of you is stedfast, knowing that as you are a partaker of the sufferings so shall you be also of the consolations. Was it ever known that a bruised reed can be broken, that smoking flax can be quenched, that the lame shall be disappointed of taking the prey? What! Shall the word of our God fail of its accomplishment, and the devil and unbelief overturn the omnipotent God? No, my friend. "Fear not," saith the Lord, "for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that riseth up against thee thou shalt condemn; for this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord. I will lead the blind by a way they know not, and lead them in paths they have not known. I will make darkness light before them and crooked things straight. These things will I do for them and not forsake them. When the poor and needy seek water and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord. I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him. Shall not God avenge his own elect which cry night and day unto him? Yea; he will avenge them speedily, though he bear long with them."

My dear friend, I feel confident the Lord has taught you that salvation is of the Lord, and you cannot deny it; but it has been times and times your very soul's cry, "O Lord, say unto my soul, I am thy salvation."

My soul has sweet liberty with God in pleading with him on your account; and whether your present sickness is for death or life, I believe it will be all right. My heart's desire is that he will whisper into your soul, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, and with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." I know this would be more acceptable in your soul than all the gold and silver in the world. It is the Lord's own pleasure to reveal his lovingkindness when he will, and how he will, and to whom he will; and his word is, "Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me."

May God bless you with waiting at his footstool, and with

answers of peace, that you may sing and exclaim with David, "I love the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of my supplication. What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord." This is my prayer,—my heart's request.

Trowbridge, Dec. 16, 1846.

JOHN WARBURTON.

[The friend to whom the above letter was addressed, and whom we well knew for many years, had been signally delivered and blessed many years before under Mr. Warburton; but had fallen into a low, desponding state of mind, in which he seemed much to have lost the recollection of past mercies and almost to view himself as deceived and deluded, so as to have little hope or expectation even of being saved. It was under this trial that the above letter was written. But afterwards it pleased the Lord to break in upon his soul; and though he was still emptied through a good part of his life to doubt and fear, yet at the last the Lord so manifested himself upon his dying bed that he breathed forth his soul in the sweet assurance of being for ever with him in glory.—Ed.]

THE LORD WILL STRENGTHEN HIM UPON THE BED OF LANGUISHING.

My ever dear Friends in a precious Jesus,—If one little drop of that mind which was in Christ Jesus has given me such real love and desire for your every welfare, then what must be that Ocean of love and pity from which this tiny drop is communicated? With what bowels of infinite love and compassion does he who shed his blood for us ever and anon look on us poor things, whom he views not only as the objects of his mercy and choice, but as the subjects of his grace. How often have I besought him for you both since I last wrote, and especially sought him for you that you may see him who is invisible that your duties and occupations may be made bearable, every bitter sweetened, your mind freed from corroding care, and your heart made to overflow with hope and joy in the midst of many causes of sorrow and vexation.

How sweet it is to be led by grace, and to be able to say, "I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me." And O what a dear cord of union of the Lord's own making, thus to be taught to love one another for our precious Saviour's sake, and also to love the Lord in each other.

During the late excessive heat, I was like one wrapped in hot poultices, from drenching sweats, and I was in that terribly prostrated state that it was impossible for me to write or to use any exertion. I have scarcely got out of doors at all, so that I have had no bracing, but rather the contrary, through this past summer. The delights of rural scenery, the drives into the villages and fields to enjoy the pure breezes, to look upon the bright blue skies, the waving trees, and listen to the rustling of

the branches, and view the hedges and green grassy banks, in contrast to the noisy town and dirty streets, has of God been this year denied me.*

Owing to the circumstance of the dangerous illness of a nephew, my sister, in sitting up with him, was unable to attend as usual upon me. I was, therefore, shut, yea, locked up several nights alone from seven o'clock at night till eight in the morning, and the precious face to face converse and communion with which the dear Lord favoured me would indeed refresh both your spirits to hear, were I but able to detail it. It was indeed given to me to taste the water of life, clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb. Yea, I did drink abundantly. It is impossible for me to utter the Lord's mighty acts and marvellous majesty as passing and repassing before my wondering eyes in this season of solitariness and sorrow. O the admiration which I had of the suitability, mercy, wisdom, and longsuffering love of Jesus toward poor sin-stricken souls. Unbelief and hardness were taken away, my soul was sweetly enlarged and emboldened to plead for saints and sinners, and to believe with the deepest humility and gratitude in the all-prevailing power of Christ's blood and righteousness; and never did I plead more especially for the church of God. Sin appeared most odious; never were a Saviour's merits and sufferings felt by me more needed or more mourned. Indeed, I did weep over the sin that dwelleth in me; shame covered me at the remembrance of my base backslidings; and I praise the Lord from my heart that even so inconstant a wretch as I should be permitted to rank with the meanest of those who taste his love and feel his sweet presence. Ah, yes, beloved, this affliction and trial have, I solemnly assure you, proved to worthless

*[None but those who have been much confined to the house, and especially in a town, can realise the delight which is taken by such in viewing the beauties of nature, in seeing such sights and hearing such sounds as are so graphically described above. The feeling is beautifully described by Gray in the following lines:

“See the wretch, that long had tost
On the thorny bed of pain,
At length repair his vigour lost,
And breathe and walk again!
The meanest floweret of the vale,
The simplest note that swells the gale,
The common sun, the air, the skies,
To him are opening paradise.”

Of course this is poetic language, and must be taken as such; but we well remember when upon one occasion we had been confined to the house for about a month and had not seen a tree, the delight which it gave us to gaze once more upon the outspread fields and refresh the eyes with looking on nature in its beauty. We can therefore well sympathize with the feelings of the writer, whom we have often visited on her bed of languishing in the street of a country town.—ED.]

me a shower of blessings out of one of the darkest of clouds. Again and again did he bid me,

“Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust him for his grace,” &c.

After pausing upon one occasion to look at and dwell a little upon the cluster of promises hanging in brightness before the eyes of my faith, being lost in amazement and almost fearing to believe that it was all for such “a beast” as I, the following came with great force:

“His very word of grace is strong
As that which built the skies.
The voice that rolls the stars along
Speaks all the promises.”

And this: “Let Israel hope in the Lord; for with the Lord is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption.”

Devides.

E. HOLLOWAY.

TRUTHS TO BE DAILY LIVED UPON.

My dear Brother,—The return of your daughter affords me a good opportunity of conveying a few thoughts to an old fellow-traveller through the desert towards the pilgrim's resting-place. And what subjects have so loud a claim on our attention when such characters correspond, as those which involve the glory of their covenant God, and their own spiritual and eternal interests? And they are the following; viz., their ruined state by sin, and recovery by sovereign grace; their spiritual death by Adam's fall, and their eternal life in Christ; their bondage as criminals, and their perfect liberty through their glorious Surety; their wounds and diseases by nature, and their health and soundness in atoning blood; their needy and famishing state while lying in sin, and their rich provisions on the gospel table; their dreadful rebellion against their rightful Lord, while left to themselves, and their now supplicating posture under the power of all-conquering love; their nakedness and shame, while cast out in the open field, and the rich attire in which they are now arrayed; their weakness and nothingness in themselves, and their strength and perfection in their All-sufficient Lord; their present troublesome journey in this vale of tears, and their endless rest at the end of it.

These, my brother, are subjects of such vast importance as to demand the constant contemplations of the renewed mind. And blessed, eternally blessed, is that soul whom the Lord the Spirit leads to a scriptural apprehension of them, and in whose heart that glorious Instructor indites them; for in the knowledge of those momentous truths the believer finds his deepest humblings, and his highest triumphs.

Seeing that these infinitely important doctrines are opened and revealed to the church in consequence of God the Father's love, and were all provided by that love in Christ to be known

by his dear children through fellowship with Christ by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, it therefore follows that as all spiritual understanding must flow from Christ and increase in proportion to the knowledge the believer obtains of him; that it is the privilege of every new born soul to be seeking continually the closest communion and familiarity with Christ; because, knowing Christ, *as Christ*, ensures to the soul a just apprehension of all the Gospel truths before mentioned.

Persuaded that my dear brother is no stranger to these things, I can cheerfully in spirit accompany him to our Father's footstool, and look up with him in the name of our All-glorious Christ that we may obtain and retain the fullest possible knowledge of him as Jehovah our Creator, and still know more and more of him as our perfect and glorious Redeemer, made of God unto us our wisdom, our righteousness, our sanctification, and our redemption; that we may always enjoy our pardon, justification, purification, healing, health, and soundness in his most precious blood; that we are richly clothed, and for eternity adorned, in his glorious righteousness; that we are always secure, though constantly encompassed with foes; that our necessities are all fully provided for in his exhaustless fulness; that our title stands firm in him, to the everlasting inheritance; and that our union to him secures our entrance on that inheritance, in our Father's appointed time. These are the privileges of the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty. Alas! how little known by those to whom they belong, and how awfully contemned by many, and blasphemously opposed by others, in this day of boasted light. But I think I am not in error, by believing them to be the daily food and comfort of my brother's soul.

Thus far I had written on Saturday evening, intending to add a few more thoughts after worship to night; but find myself incapable from exhaustion. This you may not wonder at, when I say that my bodily strength is so reduced that I have not been able to go to meeting without help for these two months. Nevertheless, blessed be my gracious God, while the outward man decays, the inward man is renewed day by day. I am quite satisfied that all is well,

I remain, in the strong Bond of Truth,

Yours affectionately,

June 11th, 1826.

E. GOLDSMITH.

KEEP ME FROM EVIL THAT IT MAY NOT
GRIEVE ME.

My dear Friend,—I was very glad to see your letter lie on the board when I came down stairs this morning, more so when I read the contents. We shall publish you (God willing) to preach for us on Tuesday evening, 3rd Nov., and leave Wednesday evening open till you come down, as you say in yours, if Tuesday or

Wednesday will suit us, and that when I write, you hope to obey. Now, my friend, these few words caught my eye directly; and I hope the Lord will incline your heart to obey, and to speak both evenings to the few tried ones, so that we may have a fresh lift by the way. It is really a rough and trying path indeed, and I am ready at times to give it all up; but the Lord knows what is best for us poor, short-sighted mortals, that can only see from day to day what straits and difficulties we have to pass through. Still his almighty arm upholds and carries us through every trial, and we can but bless and praise him for it afterwards. By these things men live and know somewhat of the Lord's teaching to profit. J. C. P. spoke sweetly from Isa. xlvi. 17, at Leicester, and I heard him well that morning. May the Lord be with and bless your soul, and give you a word to speak in season when you come amongst us. He knows best what we stand in need of, and all our thoughts, words, actions, and ways are all naked and open to his view. But, O, how little do we at times act up to this, though we know that it really is so, by real heartfelt experience of it, which makes me often cry, sigh, and mourn over my sinful heart and base thoughts; which makes me fear that I have no true religion in me, but that I am wholly deceiving myself and my friends. Yet the Lord knows my heart, and I cry to him to keep me from evil, and let me not be deceived. The friends unite with me in love, and believe me, Yours truly,

Standard Road, Faversham, Nov. 1, 1846. G. BROADBRIDGE.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A PRESUMPTUOUS CLAIM AND A LIVING FAITH.

Dear Children,—Having many things on my mind and hands, I have but little time to write. We are thankful to hear of your safe arrival, and hope shortly to hear of your getting into something to obtain an honest and comfortable livelihood, that Martha will experience a safe delivery in the hour of nature's sorrow, and, above all, that you both may obtain that salvation which is in Christ Jesus, which is a salvation from sin's power and dominion, and Satan's tyranny. He leads captive all the children of disobedience, and so led us; and if God has not convinced us of this, made us feel it, mourn and lament over it, confess it to God in secret, and cry unto God in heart-felt honesty for his mercy to pardon and deliver us, we are Satan's prey to this day, because he keeps possession of the heart, blinds the mind against vital godliness, the pure truth, the way of life, and deceives poor sinners by persuading them they are in the road to heaven, while they are on the road to hell. Thus they believe all will be well, and are lulled to sleep in carnal security with a dead faith, a hard and impenitent heart, and a presumptuous claim on the Almighty; while a poor sinner, who is quickened by God the Holy Ghost, is full of fear lest he should be deceived, or come short at last of eternal rest. Yet God makes

such a one honest. He is willing to come to the light, and begs of God to search and try his heart, his way, and his thoughts; for nothing seems so dreadful to such a one as being deceived, and going down to the grave with a lie in his right hand. Truth itself hath declared, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it; while broad is the way, and wide is the gate that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat;" and to such an enlightened sinner, daily observation demonstrates and confirms this; so that he is constrained to set to his seal that God is true. And sure I am that none but those who are oppressed by sin,—the guilt of it, the pollution of it—and feel what a dreadful thing unbelief is, how Satan works in the heart and oppresses them by it, can or will prize the Son of God with all his free salvation. He is called a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble; and they that know his blessed name will put their trust in him; and such a one will learn feelingly, that to believe in the Son of God is no easy thing, far beyond a mere assent and consent to the whole Scriptures; for the devils believe and tremble; and men in their natural state may know the whole of God's word, and yet be unbelievers; but true faith has life in it, and carries the heart to God in earnest desire, longings, and pantings, and God will avenge such, though he bear long with them, and such shall never be confounded, world without end.

And now, my dear children, I have written a few things, not out of my own head, but what God has taught me by his word and Spirit, which you can read in the word; and these things you must know for yourselves, if you ever enter the kingdom of heaven. You have my prayers for your welfare, both spiritual and temporal.

Your affectionate Father,

Wallington, Nov. 1, 1847.

THOMAS BOORNE.

THOUGHTS UPON REPENTANCE.

Dear Friend,—I will now endeavour to give my views on the different passages of Scripture included in your list. The three first contain the doctrine of repentance, and these, as well as many more to the same purport, show the necessity of it, for without it we can neither obtain the forgiveness of sins (at least the knowledge of pardon), nor eternal life; but the question is, what is this repentance, and from whence doth it come, and how is it obtained? Is it from heaven or from earth? Is it from God or from man? If it is from God, then 'tis his work, and not the work of the creature; but if it is in the power of man to repent by his own free will, then salvation, so far as repentance is concerned in it, must be by the will and power of the creature, which contradicts Paul's assertions when he saith, "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." There are three different kinds of repentance spoken of in the word of God: First, there is natural repentance, or that which is sometimes to be seen in men that are in their natural estate, and know no more about God savingly than the brutes that perish. Witness the case of Nineveh. The Lord sent the

prophet Jonah to cry against the city, because their wickedness was come up before the Lord, and the message sent was this: "Forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown;" and they believed the prophet's prediction; and when the heavy tidings reached the ears of the king, he proclaimed a fast, and commanded every man to be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily to God; and they obeyed the king's voice; and when the Lord saw their works, and that they turned from their evil ways, he repented of the evil he said he would do unto them, and did it not. For temporal mercies they prayed, and this they obtained. When they saw their city was doomed to destruction for their sins, they repented; they prayed for the preservation of their city, and for their natural lives in it, and the Lord heard their cry and spared the city; but it is one thing to spare men's lives, and another thing to save their precious souls from everlasting destruction. Many experience the former mercy that never experience the latter. Something of this kind of repentance may be seen in Ahab, that monster of iniquity, and in several others. Second. There is what the apostle calls the sorrow of the world, which worketh death; and this kind of repentance in some amounts to desperate sorrow, as may be seen in the case of Judas, one of the twelve; for after he received the sop, Satan entered into him, and he went out and covenanted with the priests, and betrayed Christ into the hands of sinful men; and when he saw that Christ was condemned, his sins stared him in the face, his conscience accused him, and the wrath of God was let loose upon him; and then when he saw, and felt too, that his sin had procured the wrath of God, he repented of what he had done, and went and confessed his sin to the High Priest, saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood; and they said unto him, What is that to us? See thou to that; and he went out and hanged himself. Thus his repentance was the sorrow of the world that worketh death; and there is much of this kind of repentance to be found in some of the professors of religion in this day that have a form of godliness, but not the power, a name to live but are dead, in words professing to know God, but in works denying him; who, having made shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, are concerning both faith and good works reprobates. Such are led captive by the devil at his will, and are overcome and held captive by every besetting sin; so that, notwithstanding their knowledge and profession, sin still reigns in their mortal bodies, and they are holden in the cords of their sin. So when their conscience accuses them, and their sins stand in battle array against them, and God appears as a swift witness against them in judgment, and the rebukes of the Almighty within them make them afraid, then they repent and cry like Esau, with exceeding great and bitter cry. But as soon as there is a little cessation, then, like Pharaoh, their hearts are hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, and like the sow that was washed, they turn to their wallowing again in the mire; and thus they go on sinning and repenting, sinning and repenting, all the days of their life; and, after all, 'tis but the sorrow of the world that worketh death. But the third kind of repentance is what the apostle calls a godly sorrow, that worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of, or sorrowing after a godly manner. This repentance is not natural but spiritual, neither is it the work of man, but the gift of Christ; as it is written: "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." (Acts. v. 30, 31.) And again: "When they heard these things they held their peace and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also granted to the Gentiles repentance unto life." (Acts ii. 18.)

Now, if repentance is the grant of God and the gift of the Saviour, it is evident it is not the work of man or in the power of the creature, for nothing short of the power of Christ can work this in a perishing sinner, as I think the following parable fully shows: "Son, go work in my vineyard; he answered and said, I will not, but afterwards he repented and went." But how came he to change his mind? Why, the psalmist says, that the hearts of all men are in the hands of the Lord, and that he turneth them as rivers of water whithersoever he will. Thus repentance to life was granted unto him, and the power of God was displayed within him, and he was made willing thereby to go and do the will of his Father. And if my friend will watch things closely, she will find that there are two things which will always lead to repentance. The first is a manifestation of the mercy and goodness of God; as saith the apostle, "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" And this, I think, was verified in the character of Ephraim. The Lord smote him, but this smiting did not produce repentance; for he went on frowardly, in the way of his own heart; but by-and-by the Lord said, "I have seen his ways, and I will heal him; I will also restore comforts to him and to his mourners." Then the next account we hear of Ephraim is this: "I have heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus: Thou didst chastise me, and I was chastised as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke; turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God. Surely, after I was turned I repented; after I was instructed I smote upon my thigh; I was ashamed; yea, was confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth." Thus it appears that it was not the Lord's smiting of him, but his mercy and goodness towards him in healing his backslidings that led him to repentance. The other thing that will do it is a believing view of Christ crucified, as saith the Lord: "And I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplications, and 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 firstborn." And Job was a living witness of this truth, for he says, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." Job saw him as his crucified Saviour, for he saith, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself; my eyes shall behold him, and not another, although my reins be consumed within me." Thus, upon the whole, it appears that a revelation of the wrath of God in the conscience of an ungodly sinner produceth the sorrow of the world that worketh death; but a manifestation of the mercy and goodness of God to a perishing sinner, and a believing view of Christ crucified,—nothing short of this will produce godly sorrow, that worketh repentance to salvation that needeth not to be repented of. So I believe, and so I write, for so I have found it. And there are three things that always attend a godly sorrow, and are fruits brought forth meet for repentance. The first is, confession of sins: "I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight," saith the prodigal; "We have sinned, both we and our fathers," saith Ezra; "Woe be unto us that we have sinned," saith Jeremiah; "I have sinned against the Lord," saith David; and again: "I said I will confess my transgressions, I will be sorry for my sins." The second is a humbling sense of our unworthiness: "I am not worthy to be called thy son," saith the prodigal; "I am not worthy of the least of thy mercies," saith Jacob; "What am I, and what is my father's house, that thou hast brought me

hitherto?" saith David. Thirdly, self-loathing and self-aborrence: "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself," saith Job; "And then shall ye remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein ye have been defiled; and ye shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that ye have committed, saith the Lord." But do these things attend the sorrow of the world that worketh death? I answer, No; but things just the reverse; namely, rebellion and desperation; as it is written: "And they shall pass through the land hardly bestead and hungry; and it shall come to pass that, when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and shall curse their king and their God, and look upward. Thus they set their mouths against the heavens." Secondly, despondency and despair is another thing that attends the sorrow of the world: "My punishment is greater than I can bear," saith Cain. And thirdly, a fearful looking for of judgment; for the expectation of the wicked is wrath. Now, hear what Christ says of those that repent with a godly sorrow: "There is joy in heaven amongst the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance." These just persons are those that are clean in their own eyes, and pure in their own sight; although they have never been washed from their own filthiness. It was persons of this cast to whom Christ said, "Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you nay; but except ye repent" (ye that think you have no need of it) "ye shall all likewise perish." Now, as repentance is necessary to salvation, Christ commanded it to be preached; for thus it is written: "And thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Paul preached repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ. And John said, "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand." And when the word preached is attended with the power of God, it is quick and powerful; sinners are convinced by it, and fall before the force of it, as may be seen in Peter's preaching on the day of Pentecost: "They were pricked in their hearts, and cried out, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Then said Peter, "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of the Lord Jesus, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." With the word there went the power. Repentance unto life was granted unto them. They were made willing in this day of his power; for they gladly received the word, and there was added to the church about 3,000 souls.

Thus I have given you my views about repentance. Compare what I have said with the word of God; prove all things, and hold fast that which is good. I will consider the other passages as soon as time will allow.

Thine to serve in the gospel of Christ,

V. M.

I HAVE been intimately acquainted with several persons who informed me they were drawn by love, without either rebukes, chastisements, or terrors; and I must confess they continued under their drawing for many years, and were drawn a great way, some of them to eminent gifts, and to cut no despicable figure in the ministry, and others to build chapels and contribute largely to support them. I have lived to see them all, except two, drawn into the world again, into sin, into bondage; and no wonder, when they were unacquainted with the plague of the heart, a contrite spirit, godly sorrow, and repentance unto life.—*Huntington.*

“WITHOUT ME YE CAN DO NOTHING.”

NOTHING, Lord, nothing, worse than nothing, O this I daily feel;
But who is there in heaven or earth sin's maladies could heal?
Who but Immanuel could have stooped down to the gate of hell;
There in my conscience thundered the law's deep curse and knell?
Without thee in that wrathful place, I surely there had died.
Who was it brake the tempter's power and turned the knife aside?
Who was it dropped that gracious word which by the Spirit's power
Appeared to me the only word to suit that dreadful hour?

And when Nature's deep brake up and opened to my view
The inmates of that living tomb, a monstrous hellish crew;
When every thought, and word, and deed was stained with its deep dye,
Who was it brake my rocky heart and made me weep and sigh?

Under such fearful sense of guilt, whose was the secret hand
That held my soul from sinking in despair's dark barren land?
Without thee I had tried to climb false error's dizzy height;
Without thee I had sunk to hell, like many a barren light;

Without thee self-righteousness would have wrapped me in her shroud
And I, like many thousands, to my idol self had bowed;
Without thee felt quite satisfied with all that was my own,
And, traitor-like, upon my head placed thy most righteous crown;
Or keen as vulture scanned my way at once from earth to heaven;
Without true godly penitence, without my sins forgiven,
Like thousands in vain confidence had made my empty boast,
And thundered on presumptuously without the Holy Ghost.

Without thee, like old Sodom, produced but sour fruit;
Sin practised most abundantly with knowledge most acute;
Or else, like Baal's worshippers, had bowed to Rome's false shrine,
Loving vain, empty ceremonies, instead of thee and thine.

Instead of this, O glorious Christ, thou'st lived and died for me,
The Holy Ghost once witnessing that thou hast set me free;
Revealing thee, my ransom, full of truth and grace;
Revealing God the Father as my hiding-place.

No motive power like pardoning love the sinner's heart to win;
No power like this to break the chain of Satan, self, and sin;
Nothing like this to keep the sinner in the strait and narrow way,
And none like Christ to land his soul in everlasting day.

When soul and body were chastised, commissioned from thy hand
To rouse my sleeping conscience and bring me to a stand,
“Not chastisement,” cries unbelief, “but God's avenging sword;”
“Not chastisement,” cries feeling, losing sight of God's own word.

And Satan joins the hue and cry with all his hellish crew,
And conscience ratifies their voice, “Most justly 'tis thy due.”
Who was it then with pitying look, and love's all-conquering power,
Proved all my enemies false liars in that desponding hour?

Who but Immanuel put to flight the army of my fears?
Who turned my darkness into light and dried up all my tears?
O for an angel's trumpet-tongue to sing thy deathless praise,
Who kept my life amid such death, and such mysterious ways.

O from this moment may Christ Jesus ever live in me,
That all his saints in heaven and earth his workmanship may see;
That, like a loving, faithful, trusting, true, obedient wife,
I from this moment may be his in heart, and lip, and life.

Jesus, by these cords of men, and by these bands of love,
O draw me to thy bleeding heart, a mourning, trusting dove;
And as from nothing thou didst form this fair and fruitful earth,
So from nothingness of mine form thou a glorious birth;

A new birth unto righteousness, a death to every sin,
And through thine arm, and thine alone, eternal victory win;
And from this very moment to my last expiring breath
Be thou my shield and hiding-place 'gainst Satan, sin, and death.

O! what are sun, and moon, and stars, when once compared to thee?
Like to a speck of mortal dust to vast eternity.

Yea, heaven with all her glory fades before thy sight,
Where angels veil their faces in thy immediate light.

Then how can I, polluted worm of earth, approach to thee?

How can a fallen sinner live, before thy purity?

I come behind one drenched in blood. O Father, view that face,
'Tis Jesus, thy beloved Son, my shield and hiding-place.

With broken heart, and weeping eye, I'd bathe thy wounded feet,
Lost in wonder, love, and grief, my Father here I meet;
Safe in this Rock, in life and death, all enemies I face;
'Tis here I ask for mercy, 'tis here I plead for grace.

Away, ye lying professors, who talk so light of sin,
You have never felt the war that daily waged within,
Where faith, and hope, and love, Christ's soldiers, loyal and true,
At times are fighting to the death with sin's dark hellish crew.

And all ye mock gospelists, however sound your creed,
To whom the law has never come, who never felt your need;
Who talk of Mount Sion, and clear doctrine fast recount,
While your hearts are glued firm to Sinai's burning mount.

Never did you with broken heart a suffering Jesus meet,
Never like weeping Magdalene, sit down at his dear feet;
But clothed with your own clothing, eating your own bread,
And placing Jesu's rightful crown on your own guilty head.

Nothing like covenant mercy a sinner's heart to win,
Nothing like Jesu's presence to cut the roots of sin;
Vain are Sinai's duties, though ever so well done;
'Tis Christ alone makes willing feet in swift obedience run.

Without thee, when the tempter came, and threw his fiery dart,
Without Christ as my glorious shield, he had pierced me to the heart;
Without thee, when he pointed out dark Spira's fearful case,
Loud whispered, "Thine is just the same—lost, lost, beyond all grace."

Who was it then so suddenly brought forth the Spirit's sword,
And by the Spirit's mighty power dropped in that precious word?
"Flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father which is
in heaven,

O this can never quite be lost, when by the Spirit given."

And sure I am in all future trials will be no peace or rest,
Till the Holy Ghost doth lay my head on Jesu's loving breast;
For who, when darkness, unbelief, pride, and all their race
Can chase away this hateful crew, but Jesu's lovely face?

Good confidence, and vain confidence, who can their difference tell?
One the child of heaven, the other a child of hell;
The one raised in a broken heart, by Jesu's love and power,
The other puffed up by Satan, in pride's presumptuous hour.

A MEMBER AT GOWER STREET.

MEDITATIONS ON DIFFERENT PORTIONS OF THE WORD OF GOD.

MEDITATIONS ON THE FIRST CHAPTER OF THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER.

As heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people (John xiv. 2; Isa. xliii. 21; Col. i. 12), so, according to Peter's testimony, it is a reserved inheritance for preserved heirs. The firm decree of God, which fixed the inheritance itself, secured the possession of it to those whose names were written in the Lamb's book of life. But these "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ" have to pass through such a wilderness before they reach their heavenly inheritance that, to use an expression of Bunyan's, "had they a thousand souls, they had in reason been cast away" but for the mighty power of God, whereby they are kept through faith unto salvation.

Here, then, we resume our exposition: "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations." (1 Pet. i. 6.)

"Wherein ye greatly rejoice." According to the strict literal and grammatical interpretation of the words, the expression "wherein" or "in which" refers to the antecedent word "time," mentioned in the preceding verse. The salvation unto which they were kept by the power of God was "to be revealed in the last time," that is, at the second coming of Christ, when he will come in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels. (Mark viii. 38.) In the anticipation of this time they greatly rejoiced, for then salvation in all its blessedness and glory will be revealed, not merely as now inwardly and partially to the soul, but outwardly and fully, in the appearing of all the saints with Christ in the glory of their resurrection bodies, all fashioned like unto his glorious body. (Zech. xiv. 5; 1 Thess. iii. 13; 2 Thess. i. 10; Phil. iii. 20, 21.)

But we need not limit the expression, "wherein" to "the last time," thus spoken of, but may extend its meaning to include the salvation itself, for it is not so much the time that is to be greatly rejoiced in, as what will be revealed at that time. This is salvation—the salvation unto which the elect strangers are kept by the power of God.

Now, in this salvation there is matter to fill the hearts of the saints with joy. Its freeness, fulness, completeness, and suitability to all their wants and woes; the way in which it comes down to them in their low estate, comforts their hearts, supports their minds, and soothes their sorrows, affords matter to fill their souls with joy unspeakable and full of glory; and the apostle no doubt assumed that those to whom he wrote were greatly rejoicing in this salvation from a knowledge and an enjoyment of their personal interest in it. In those early days, when the Holy Spirit was poured out in so large a measure upon churches and individuals, we may well believe that there

was a stronger assurance and a fuller enjoyment of the blessings of salvation than is often or usually given now. The salvation is the same; as full, as free, as complete, as suitable to our lost state and case, as glorifying to God, as reaching down to every individual's case and state as then; but not being revealed to the soul in the same powerful way, the faith which embraces it is weaker, and therefore has less assurance and less joy. And yet with all this, there are times and seasons when the weakest believer who has ever had a view of this salvation or a taste of its sweetness and power greatly rejoices in it. It so lifts him up out of sin and self, out of bondage, guilt, fear, condemnation, and apprehension of the wrath to come; it so shines in his eyes as bringing the highest glory to God, and the greatest of all blessings to man; it is so sweet in the sips and tastes which are given of it, in the glimpses and glances of Jesus whom it reveals, in the breakings-in of light, life, liberty, and love which attend it; it is so sanctifying in the spirituality of mind and heavenly affections which it produces, as tasted, felt, and handled, that even the weakest believer can rejoice in it as opened to his enlightened understanding, commended to his conscience, sealed upon his heart, and made life and spirit to his soul.

But we see also that the partakers of this salvation, though they greatly rejoice in it, are very heavily weighted. "Though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations." If these early believers had their abundant joys, they had their surpassing sorrows. God usually sets one over against the other. A path of joy without tribulation the Scripture knows nothing of; nor can a saint be found in the word of God or out of it who ever had very great joys without either very great sorrows, or very great trials, or very great temptations, or very great persecutions. Now, the effect of these sorrows and afflictions is to weigh down the soul with heaviness. It is literally in the original "being grieved, or pained, or made sorrowful;" and we know what a weight upon the spirits is produced by sorrow and trouble from whatever quarter it may come. That lightness of mind, cheerfulness of disposition, buoyant sense of pleasure and happiness in the enjoyment of health, strength, and good spirits; that loving life for life's sake, and what it gives or what it promises; that seeking for amusement or delight in things apart from God; that eager pursuing of the natural bent of our mind; that running with eagerness in the path which promises most success or most advantage—all this which in its highest or lowest state, in its most refined or most sordid character, is, after all, but the very breath of the carnal mind, the very spirit of the world, and the very spawn of the worldly heart, has in the child of God to be subdued, crucified, and mortified. And for this simple reason, that the spirit of the world which is born with us, grows with our growth, and strengthens with our strength, is utterly opposed to the life of God in the soul; and as the Spirit of God will never sanction

or countenance any joy or happiness which is not of himself, he has to crucify this eager bent of the carnal mind, for where it reigns and rules there is neither a knowledge of salvation nor a rejoicing in it.

But the apostle opens also the *reason* why those who greatly rejoice in God's salvation are often in heaviness. "It is through *manifold temptations.*" By the word "temptations," we may understand not merely temptations in the usual sense of the word, such as those which proceed from Satan, or an infidel, unbelieving heart, but what is meant also by the word "trials." So, in a similar way, the word "manifold" means not only that these trials and temptations are very numerous, consisting, as it were, of many folds, like a folded-up garment, of which fold after fold becomes successively drawn out, but *varied* in nature and degree, as well as many in number and quantity. Thus we may render the words, through "many and various trials and temptations." By thus extending the meaning of both terms in full harmony with the original, we find them to comprehend all those numerous, varied, and diversified trials and temptations which are allotted to the family of God in this time state. We may add, also, that, in our judgment, there is a special blessedness in the wide comprehensiveness of this expression, as it takes up and takes in every trial and every temptation from whatever source it may come, or of whatever nature it may be. Each child of God has his own peculiar trials allotted to him by a wise, unerring hand, precisely adapted to his spiritual state and case, and just what God designs to make of special profit to his soul. It is impossible, therefore, to lay down a certain path in which each and all of the family of God must walk. It is true of all the heirs of salvation that "through much tribulation they must enter the kingdom of God;" but each has his own peculiar trial, his own daily cross, his own special temptation, his own much tribulation through which he enters the kingdom. Thus one child of God cannot say to another, "You are not tried, because you have not my trial;" or, "You are not tempted, because you have not my temptation." Could heart discern heart as in water face answereth to face, each would see that his trial was the right trial for him, his temptation the right temptation for him; and that as infinite Wisdom had appointed to each his peculiar trial and his special temptation, we should rather look at the effects produced by it than at the nature of the trial or of the temptation itself.

But these trials and temptations are almost as various and as diversified as the persons who are called upon to pass through them. Thus to some are allotted most painful *family afflictions*, either by bereavement of beloved objects, or by what is almost worse than death, grievous and disgraceful misconduct of those who have been brought up with the greatest care and tenderness. Job, Jacob, and David drank deeply of this cup. How deep the grief of the heart-broken father when he said, "Would God I

had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" To others is appointed that almost greatest of temporal afflictions, *shattered health*, entailing with it inability to follow any profitable employment, and thus often adding poverty of circumstances to bodily affliction. Others, again, nearly all their days have to grapple with trials in their *circumstances*. Whatever they do seems to fail; however they strive with honest industry to earn an honest livelihood, loss upon loss, disappointment after disappointment, scatter their little all, so that they seem only held on, day by day and week by week, from sinking into debt and disgrace. Others, again, who are, perhaps, exempt from severe temporal trials, are more deeply exercised with those of a *spiritual* nature. Their spiritual life seems as if ever to hang in doubt and fear; guilt, bondage, darkness, gloom, and desponding sensations continually rack their mind; and though they are continually crying to the Lord under their burdens and sorrows, yet, for the most part, they get but little relief; or if now and then a gleam of light shine upon their path, or a ray of love and mercy break in upon their soul, yet it is soon gone, and they sink again into the old spot of calling every thing into question.

But we observed that the word included, as, indeed, it is rendered, "*temptations*," as well as trials. Now, it would seem as if some of the Lord's family were comparatively exempt from temptations, in the usual sense of the word; at least, they are not so continually or so painfully exercised by them as others who are called to fight more strongly, and as if more desperately, the good fight of faith. Thus many who are deeply tried as to their own state and standing are not tempted to infidelity, to question the whole truth of God, nor are they exposed to such suggestions as we shall not name, lest we kindle a secret fire, and thus help Satan to harass and distress those whom he cannot destroy. But there are those amongst the living family of God who know what is meant by "the fiery darts of the wicked one;" who painfully feel what it is to have every corruption of their carnal mind stirred up as if to its lowest depth, and set on fire of hell. There are those who on their knees, or in reading the word, or under the preached gospel, or even at the ordinance, are so tempted with everything that is vile and villainous, foul and black beyond description, that they scarcely know what to do with themselves, as these fiery darts are shot fast and thick into their soul.

But we shall not further enlarge upon these points, and if we have thus far touched upon them, it is to show that they are such temptations as, to use the apostle's expression, "are common to man." (1 Cor. x. 13.)

We shall, therefore, observe that, as the apostle tells us, there is a needs-be for these trials and temptations: "Though now for a season, if *need be*." And, indeed, as everything by nature in us is contrary to the life of God, there is a needs-be for these manifold trials and temptations to bring us out of those things

which are opposed to the grace of God, and to conform us to the image of his dear Son. Thus we need trial after trial, and temptation upon temptation, to cure us of that worldly spirit, that carnality and carelessness, that light, trifling, and empty profession, that outside form of godliness, that spirit of pride and self-righteousness, that resting short of divine teachings, heavenly blessings, and spiritual manifestations, that settling on our lees and being at ease in Zion, that being mixed up with all sorts of professors, that ignorance of the secret of the Lord which is with them that fear him—all which marks of death we see so visibly stamped upon the profession of the day. There is a needs-be to be brought out of all this false, deceptive, hypocritical, and presumptuous profession, whether high or low, sound in doctrine or unsound, so as to be made simple and sincere, honest and upright, tender and teachable, and to know something experimentally of that broken heart and contrite spirit in which the Lord himself condescends to dwell. And as the Lord works this spirit of humility and love for the most part through trials and temptations, there is a needs-be for every one, of whatever nature it may be, or from whatever quarter it may come.

Look at the light and trifling professors whom you may occasionally meet with, and let them be a looking-glass for you. What a poor, empty religion is theirs! What death and bondage, what darkness and misery, their company and conversation, if you are for any time with them, bring into your soul! How glad you are to get away from them, and be alone by yourself, that you may breathe out your very soul before the Lord, and get from him, if he will but speak it, a word on which you may hope! Do not you see that they are not “in heaviness through manifold temptations,” as you often are, and that this is the reason why their profession sits upon them so lightly and easily? Asaph well describes them, for they plagued him, as, probably, they have often plagued you: “There are no bands in their death;” living and dying, they are just the same, full of presumption and vain confidence, which even a deathbed cannot destroy; “but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men (that is, good men—the Lord’s men), neither are they plagued like other men.* Their eyes stand out with fatness; they have more than heart could wish.” (Ps. lxxiii. 4–7.) Now, compare with such as these the afflicted family of God, who are “in heaviness through manifold temptations,” and we may add, if you are one of them, compare also your feelings, and what is brought into your soul, by their company and conversation. What savour and power attend their word, and how you feel your soul blessed and profited by what drops from their lips, and by what comes out of their broken and exercised heart!

* It may be observed that “other” is in italics. We may, therefore, supply an epithet to “men,” as we have done to denote good men.

But we will say no more on this point. You that know the things of God in their life and power, judge for yourselves whether these things be so.

But observe also it is but "for a season." With some, indeed, this season may be a very long season; as with poor Mrs. Wild, it may last a life, and that a long one. With others the season may be shorter, and the trials and temptations may, as it were, come and go. There are remissions, times of relief, a cessation for a while from the trial, or, at least, the severe pressure of it. But even if these trials and temptations be spread over the whole life, they are still but "for a season." They will cease when life ceases; and death, which is to the ungodly only the entrance into endless misery, will be to the righteous an entrance into endless joy.

But the apostle himself explains very clearly the reason of these manifold temptations: "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. i. 7.) They are meant for "the trial of faith," and are, therefore, compared to a furnace used for the purifying of gold from the dross which is mixed with it in its native ore. We thus see that faith is compared to gold, and this chiefly for two reasons: 1. On account of its *value*; 2. For its *indestructibility*.

It is the testimony of the Scripture and the experience of all the saints of God, that wherever the Lord gives faith, he sends trials and temptations, to manifest it as his own gift and work. We see it in Abraham, in Jacob, in David, that every promise which was given them and on which their faith was built, was tried as by fire; and we also see that the stronger the faith the sharper was the trial, and the hotter was the furnace. It is in this way that the faith of God's elect, the faith which is of the operation of God, the faith of which the Lord Jesus is the Author and Finisher, as well as Object, Subject, and End, is proved to be wrought in the heart by a divine power. The furnace consumes and burns up all imitations of gold. Like much modern jewellery, a false faith may appear more bright and shining, more glittering, more polished, more bulky, more artistically worked, more attractive to the eye, more calculated to adorn and set off its possessor than that true and genuine faith, which is often small and scanty in size, dull in appearance, worn and wasted, or deficient in attractive beauty. But put the two articles, the two faiths, side by side into the same crucible; let the burning furnace try which is the genuine metal; let the hot flame play around them both and penetrate into their inmost substance, their very pores, then the false faith will melt away into a shapeless mass of base adulterate metal, and the true faith will come forth untouched and uninjured by the flame, and having lost nothing but what it may well spare, the alloy with which it may have been mixed.

But it will be observed that the apostle, in comparing faith with gold, puts upon it a higher stamp. It is "much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire." The last words, according to the construction of the original, refer not to faith or to the trial of faith, but to the gold with which it is compared. It is as if he meant to convey this idea; faith, like gold, must be tried in the fire to prove whether it is genuine; but gold, though tried with the fire, and though it comes safely out of this ordeal, is yet but of a perishing nature. It may be tried by fire and come uninjured out of the fire, but it may be worn out; it may be broken to pieces; it may be lost; at any rate, being but of earth, coming out of the bowels of the earth, and only fitted for earthly pursuits, it perisheth. It dies to us when we die; no man can take it with him into a future life; nor will it be of the least avail on a dying bed or on the great day. How "much more precious," then, than all the gold which men so dearly love is that faith which leaves us not on a dying bed, but "the end of which is the salvation of the soul!" How much more precious is that faith which, instead of, like gold, leaving its possessor under the frowns of an angry God, will "be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ!"

But the point to which we would call special attention is that it is not so much the faith itself as "the *trial* of faith," which is more precious than of gold that perisheth. Nor is the reason why it is so far to seek. Trials and temptations are the means which God employs to manifest to the soul the reality and strength of the faith which he bestows upon it; for there is in every trial and temptation opposition made to the faith that is in the heart; and every trial and temptation, so to speak, threaten the life of faith. And they threaten it in this way. Under the trial God for the most part hides himself. He puts forth, indeed, a secret power whereby the soul is held up, or otherwise it would sink into utter despair and be overcome and swallowed up by the power of unbelief. Hence comes the conflict between the trial that fights against the faith and the faith which fights against or rather under the trial. Now, when in this trial, in this sharp conflict, in this hot furnace, faith does not give way, is not burned up, is not destroyed, but keeps its firm hold upon the promise and the faithfulness of him who has given it, this trial of faith becomes very precious. It is precious to the soul when God again smiles upon it, and becomes thus manifested as genuine. It is precious in the sight of God's people who see it and derive strength and comfort from what they witness in the experience of a saint thus tried and blessed; and it is precious also in the sight of God himself, who crowns it with his own manifest approbation, and puts upon it the attesting seal of his own approving smile. But above all things, it will be found precious at the appearing of Jesus Christ, and that not only in his various appearings in grace, but in his final appear-

ance in glory, for of that the apostle mainly speaks when he says that "it may be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

Obituary.

MARY WILD.

(Concluded from page 160.)

WE continue our extracts from the memoranda which Mary Wild has left behind her of her mother's experience, before we give what she has written concerning herself :

"June 27th. My mother said, 'What a horror of darkness was over my mind this morning before daybreak.' What I went through, I can tell to none. Do, dear Lord, of thy mercy keep me from having such despairing feelings. But afterwards, I had those words, 'O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted.' I said to her, 'Did you not have the connection as well?' She immediately said, 'Yes, and I have not sunk so low since.' She then said, 'Is there any one else in the room besides yourself?' Being told there was not, she began praying to her dear Saviour, to keep and preserve her whilst in this world, adding, 'What a welcome messenger death would be to her.' She then said, 'Ah! what a world is this. How blessed, how truly blessed are the dead in Christ.'"

"July 10th. She much wished again and again to have the 705th hymn read to her, saying how much her heart truly pined after Jesus."

"Dec. 22nd, 1862. My mother quite cheerful, attempting to sing two of her favourite hymns, one

"How hard and rugged is the way
To some poor pilgrims' feet,' &c.

The other,

"What tongue can fully tell
That Christian's grievous load?"

Of Mr. P.'s 'Meditations on the Sacred Humanity of the blessed Redeemer,' published in the 'Gospel Standard' in the Oct., Nov., and Dec. Nos. of the year 1859, she would often speak with apparent pleasure, and would sometimes say, 'When I am enabled to go to the dear Redeemer as the poor incurables did in the days of old when he was on this very earth, I then find the greatest access and nearness to his blessed Majesty.' Then again would she quote Dr. Watts's lines,

"Till God in human flesh I see,
My thoughts no comfort find."

In May, 1863, our thirteen years' term at Shaw Farm expired, and we had to leave the place for the in-coming tenant. No doubt the thoughts of her son leaving the farm, and the many unpleasant circumstances connected therewith, tended much to worry and confuse her poor mind, and bring on darkness of soul; but we got her removed to Allcannings, about six miles distant from Shaw, and a mile from Allington, although unconscious of what was going on at the time of moving. She recovered strength however to be helped downstairs to her sitting room in a few weeks, and having now oftener the company of several much valued Christian friends, whose prayers and conversation she much prized, she seemed more comfortable and quiet, and we thought the Lord intended to spare her life longer than it proved; but his thoughts truly are not ours.

"I must, however, record two blessed visits she was favoured with in her bedroom. One was in July, when the Lord sweetly applied to her heart the words, 'Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for thy love is better than wine.' At the other time she said, 'I felt like Peter this morning, and I told the dear Lord so. I said, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.' She wept at the time of relating it to me, saying how very barren and beclouded her poor mind had been for a long time.

"A few days before her death, she was conversing on spiritual matters, when she said, 'Ah, Mary, after all, none but Christ, none but Christ will do to die by.' I have endeavoured to give her own words as nearly as I possibly could all through this account.

"On Thursday, the 6th of August, as my brother was helping her to bed, she said, 'I shall not go up stairs many more times at this rate, I am so weak;' but as I had heard the observation times before, I did not take particular notice of it. On Friday she remained in bed till near noon, and sat up in the evening, conversing with two valued friends, and was quite cheerful.

"Saturday, 8th, she seemed much weaker. We got her down into the sitting-room at noon. About 3 o'clock her old and much esteemed friend Mr. Philpot, who was fulfilling his annual preaching engagement at Allington, called to see her. He conversed with her for some time, and she told him Christ had been precious to her in days past, but that she could not feel him so precious at that time as she could wish. Mr. P. read John xiv., and after praying with her, he left, not thinking it would be the last time he should see her on earth.* She told me she felt very comfortable with Mr. Philpot's visit and conversation, and soon desired to be helped to bed, as sickness and vomiting seemed coming on, which she, I believe, as well as myself, thought to be an attack of biliousness. Knowing she often suffered from those attacks, I did not feel alarmed, or think her end was so near, and having to wait up for a friend, whom we expected to come from a distance to sleep at our house, to get to hear Mr. P. preach at Allington, I did not go to bed till eleven o'clock, and had often to be out, as nothing but a little brandy and water, which was often given her, would allay the sickness. At six o'clock the servant brought her some warm tea. Mother said to her, 'You must stay with me, and let Mary have an hour's sleep.' I said, 'I do not think I can go to chapel to-day.' 'O, you must,' she observed quickly. When the tea was placed before her it seemed to overcome her, and she said, 'I cannot take it; give it to Mary;' and turning round, hurried out of bed, saying, 'I must get out,' an act she had not done without assistance for some time. I very soon followed, sat her up at the side of the bed, when she leant her head on my arm. I thought her faint, and that in a little time she would come round again. Washing her temples with cold water this time had no effect, and the servant went and fetched a neighbour, who on entering the bedroom said, 'O, Miss Wild, your mother will never rally again in this world, she is dying now;' and so it proved, for after a few more heavily drawn breaths, all was over. I said, 'Mother, Mother, Mother,' but there was neither voice nor hearing. Her unfettered spirit, I truly believe, entered the realms of bliss to enjoy an everlasting sabbath with her dear Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Sunday, August 9th, 1863."

The account we have thus given of the experience, life, and death of one of the most tried, tempted, exercised, and afflicted women we ever knew, has been long, perhaps too long for some of

* I saw, however, death on her face.—J. C. P.

our readers; but we really did not know how to shorten it, and, indeed, we have omitted a good deal of the original memoranda.

We shall now, therefore, give from her own pen, some of the experience of Mary Wild herself, adding to it a short account of her last days by a valued friend.

We shall omit the account which she gives of convictions in childhood, though they seem to have made deep and permanent impressions, and come to a period of her life when the Lord wrought more clearly upon her conscience:

“When about fifteen years old, meeting with a disappointment in a visit from a cousin where I had expected much pleasure, I fell into a low way, feeling myself a poor sinful creature. I also recollect crying to God and promising if he would but forgive me how much better and holier I would live for the future. These were my promises, and were soon forgotten. This happened one Easter Monday, and every Easter Monday for years it would recur to my memory, and I wondered what could have ailed me to have been so sorrowful and broken-hearted as I was, as I still went on in vanity and loved my sins. When about twenty years old, and being very weak and poorly in body, and many prophesying consumption would follow, I began to think that I must really try and pray to God, but I did not know how to pray nor what to pray for, nor what about. I got a book, I believe, of Mr. Toplady's Prayers. He being a churchman and a good man, I thought I could not do better than read his prayers every night, as I did not know how to pray of myself; but I soon got to slacken even to attend to reading prayers, nor could any one make me believe at that time that any creature could have wished to go to heaven were there no hell to escape, so much was I in love with the things of this present evil world, and so bent on having my own way; and so I did as long as I possibly could. The words, ‘Come out from among them and be separate’ would often follow me, but I knew not how, nor did I of myself want to do so. When about 24 years of age, news of the death of a young woman who had a short time before been staying at my father's house was unexpectedly brought to me, and in my own mind being conscious how I had secretly envied her her good looks and gay, sprightly manners, the tidings cut me to the heart, believing she was now in that place where hope could never enter. I thought what a mercy I was not cut off and sent there too, knowing I deserved the same fate. Her death stirred me up. I began again to be more diligent in the use of means, hoping to please God, often on a week evening going to Manningford chapel to hear Henry Huntly with my parents; and as the preacher exalted Christ very much, many and many an evening have I wept the whole time I was there, sitting at the back seat that neither my parents nor any one else should see me crying; for usually I stayed from going there till some secret trouble or other drove me there again, as I intended only sometimes to go to chapel, so glued was I to our parish church. Soon after this, as I had been brought up to hear the doctrines of the gospel and I knew them in theory, I was so beset with blasphemous thoughts that I knew not how to keep them under, nor how to contain my feelings. I was constantly in my mind quarrelling with God's way of saving sinners, election, &c., often thinking and saying the punishment of being sent to hell for ever for only a lifetime of sin was more than the crimes deserved, and to make a law which no one could keep, seemed so unjust. I was sitting up in bed under desperate feelings of the kind above written when I was mercifully delivered by the application of those

words of the Apostle James, 'Resist the devil and he will flee from you.' I was enabled to reply in faith aloud, 'So he will;' and I thank God, I have never been so harassed since; but many times have I shuddered at the thought, for fear the feelings would come on again, so that I have been obliged to hurry out of a room, or, if up stairs, to come down and try and busy my thoughts in my household work to get rid of those wretched feelings. Well do I know by experience 'the rebellious shall dwell in a dry land.' About this time I read Leigh Richmond's writings, and often felt much affected by them, and as I could not pray I repeated a hymn, or verses, or anything suitable to my feelings to satisfy conscience; for there appeared a blight, and withering, and vanity to me on all things below the skies. This was in the year 1835, and my feelings were often as if the avenger of blood was at my heels and get out from the city of destruction I must, or I should be lost. Those words would stare me in the face, 'Come out from among them and be separate;' but how to do so I did not know. About this time, or soon after, I heard a Mr. Brown* preach in Pewsey chapel one Sunday evening from a text in Matthew about the house being swept and garnished and the devil going out of the heart, but not turned out. That sermon truly searched me through and through, and I really thought some one must have told the preacher about me, for my heart had never been shown up to me like it before. I recollect getting my father and mother to go on the Tuesday following with me to hear again. His text then was, 'Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?' taken out of Genesis; but I did not feel as I did the previous night; nor do I now recollect that my friends thought very much of his preaching. This puzzled me, as on Tuesday evening my heart seemed turned in and out, and myself terribly affrighted. I was glad it was dark when walking home that nobody might see how I had been crying, and wondered my companions did not feel more alarmed, as we were all, I thought, in the same danger, my brother and another young neighbour having gone there with me; so I tried to keep my feelings from them, and would willingly have remained ignorant if I could. Truly must I say, if ever my soul is saved, 'Not unto me, not unto me be the praise, but unto thy name, O Lord.'

"A few months after hearing Mr. Brown, I heard Mr. Beard preach at Pewsey one Sabbath afternoon about the cities of refuge and the manslayer fleeing there, &c., and he much surprised and alarmed me. I stood amazed, and said to myself, 'Has such preaching as this always been preached? Why, where, or what have I been doing? Everything seems new to me;' and true enough, often had I new thoughts and feelings after. Strange is it that one who from childhood had been brought up by God-fearing parents, and had so many checks of conscience as I had should forget all, and sink into such a death-like sleep; but in my own case it was a solemn truth, and had I not been driven by fear, in that state I should have remained. I was soon again haunted by the fear of going to hell when I died, and imagined the moment my body and soul were separated, that Satan would grasp my poor, wicked spirit, just as a hawk or bird of prey would pounce on a sparrow; so that I shrank to nothing, for I felt there was ample room for him to fly off with me into endless misery. At such times, how have I gone about the garden and premises bowed down in spirit! Then, again, would my pride rise up, and I have tried to banish all those gloomy fears I was the subject of, and be like others of my age. The first text of Scrip-

* This was not our friend the late William Brown, but a much older and very different man in every respect.

ture I recollect coming to me was, 'Whatsoever maketh manifest is light.' I was sweeping up the fireplace in our sitting-room; but it seemed gone almost as soon as come. And for years after this I knew I had light to see my sins. Then, again, I knew light was not grace, and the thought, 'If the light that is in you be darkness, how great is that darkness,' would terrify me; for I could not tell which it was. The second text I got a little hope from. I was alone, except our servant-girl, on a Sabbath morning, in 1837, and as the evening before I had experienced a very heavy trial, I was thinking over it, and seemed distressed, so I went into another room, and took up the Bible, thinking I might open on some verse or other that might comfort me. The fact was, I did not know where to go or what to do. I opened on the words, Isa. xii. 10, and following verses: 'Fear thou not; for I am with thee. Be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will help thee,' &c. It broke my hard heart to pieces, so that I was made willing to bear the disappointment; and it revived my hope of better things in store for me than this world could give. But soon after, because I went into the room and opened on the text, I thought I was deceived, as it was not brought to my mind without opening the Bible. I thought I might just as soon have opened elsewhere, and that it was only by chance. Satan, also, would so show up to me what a poor, melancholy life a religious life was, that many times I have thought I could not and would not live like it; and shame would so follow me that I have often thought a child would confound me respecting religion. But I cannot write even a tithe of how I have been worried by shame. It was also a great trial to me to walk to Pewsey chapel once a fortnight or so, as I had to pass by and meet my schoolfellows, whom I had not seen for many years; and sometimes I have gone there different ways, that people might not be aware where I had been to. Besides, Satan would suggest to me that I should never hold on my way. But the words, 'He that is ashamed of me and my gospel,' &c., have many times quickened my pace up Pewsey Street. I have many times given my youngest brother Edward money to accompany me there, little thinking that he would be mercifully dealt with by the good Lord, whom I was trying to get away from; and that he would be taken to rest, and leave me herebelow, still groping on. About this time, how plainly did I see that had not God's choice prevented mine, I must be damned. I had also for several years laboured against a suitable temptation; and many times had prayed earnestly to the Lord to be delivered, and the good Lord, in his own time, did deliver me; but not till I had many times been made willing to give up my idols, come what might. I had heard Mr. Philpot preach at Pewsey chapel on a week-night from, 'Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe;' and before getting into bed, I felt a strange softness of spirit come over me, and the words in Philippians came to my mind, 'And I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.' My former idols and all connected with them were shown up to me, and it seemed to me as though the Lord said, 'Can you give up so and so?' and I was enabled from that time to give it up gladly, and wondered how the Lord should show such kindness to such a rebel. This was, indeed, a bright spot to me, and a real lift by the way, for which I would even now be thankful. The next help I remember being favoured with, was on reading the words in Hebrews, 'By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house,' &c. The words 'moved with fear,' led me to hope that I had been moved to leave the pleasures of this world by the same fear. Mr. M'Kenzie preached once on a week night at Allington, and I was led to hope I believed in God

whilst hearing him; and Mr. Godwin showing what the fear of God in the heart was, first showed me I had it, and it broke my hard heart so that I could believe I then possessed a soft one; for many times I had told my mother I never had had a soft heart, and she would say, 'The Lord can make it so in a moment if he chooses.' 'Well,' I did think, 'if he can, he does not do it;' and as for prayer generally, that was my task and burden. Sometimes I crept into bed without it; but if I did not try and do double duty the next night, I was condemned for my negligence. Thus I went on for years, self-convicted that I was half-hearted in the ways of God. But to return to the next lift by the way. I had been with my friend Mrs. P., in London, to Gower Street, to hear Mr. Kershaw preach, and as it rained much on my way after leaving her to go to my brother's house at some distance, I got wet through before I arrived there; so directly I got home I went to bed. I could not hear their Independent ministers, and I knew they could not make me out, nor could I make out myself or their ministers, which they did not approve of at all. I was mixed up in trouble also with my relatives at the time, and my friend Mrs. P. said, 'My dear Miss W., if you do not pray to God to stand by you, you will get wrong.' I recollect being struck that she should think God would answer any prayer of mine. Soon after I was in bed I felt my heart softened, and text after text came into my mind with verses of hymns and such a spirit of prayer for every one of God's people, great and small; and the fear of death seemed gone, so that I could have gladly died then and there. My eyes were so swollen with my weeping, that I recollect I kept down in the underground kitchen next day, nursing their baby, or in my bedroom, as I did not want to be seen, nor did they know what my feelings had been.

"Finding London was not my right place, I soon packed up my all, and ere a week had passed I got into another temptation just suitable to my flesh, so that I fell on my knees ashamed of myself, and said to the Lord that I was as a beast before him; and truly did I feel what my lips expressed. How true is it to be out of the path of affliction is to be out of the narrow way that leads to life. The next help I recollect came as I was in my bedroom at Stowell. I had a peculiar trial to go through which burdened me very heavily, so that I much dreaded the time; but I had been reading a sermon of Mr. Kershaw's from the words, 'Cast thy burden on the Lord, and he shall sustain thee.' This text of Scripture was powerfully applied to my mind, so that I did cast my burden on the Lord, and was brought through the trial so much better than I expected, that I could not but see how the Lord helped me through it. Since then, I am thankful to say, I have been holpen with a little help in reading Mr. P.'s sermons and other good men's writings, and also at times have been favoured in hearing ministers. I believe all that have come to Allington have been blessed to my soul, though some more than others; also verses of the hymns, and at the prayer-meetings my soul has been fed. I hope I can say I have a few times in my life of late years felt Christ precious to me. The different texts that I humbly hope have been blessed to my soul when I have got to a stand and been cast down in spirit, which I have often been, mostly through family troubles are, 'As thy day, so shall thy strength be;' 'My soul, hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him;' 'Cast thy burden on the Lord and he shall sustain thee;' 'Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it;' 'Consider him that suffered such contradiction of sinners, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds;' 'Though we believe not, he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself;' 'Like as a father pitieth his children so the Lord pitieth them that fear him;' 'The righteous shall hold on his way.'

From the year 1851 to 1863 I have passed through seas of trouble in body, in soul, and in circumstances, but I may say with Newton:

“Many changes have I seen,
But have been upheld till now.
Who could hold me up but thou?”

“Towards the end of the year 1863, and for several months of 1864, I was much exercised respecting the ordinance of believer's baptism, being much condemned for not attending to it, once in particular whilst hearing Mr. Hazlerigg, and another time under Mr. Knill, so that I hinted my fears to several of the friends, who kindly received me, after hearing a few of the Lord's dealings with me. I was admitted into the church with nine others on Whit-Sunday, May, 1864, and though very trembling and fearing for several weeks previous, was brought through the ordinance better than my fears suggested, feeling no condemnation for attending to it, nor dare I write of great joys as some have had in attending to it. Having my name written in the church book below at Allington chapel will not satisfy me, unless it be recorded as Dr. Watts writes:

‘In thy fair book of life divine,
O may I find my name
Beneath my Lord the Lamb.’

And glad I am to write what a suitable, precious Saviour I have at times experienced, the Saviour of poor, vile sinners to be to unworthy me, who sometimes really think there is not such another poor, weak, unstable, sinful creature as myself, that can ever hope to be saved, or can live at such a poor, dying rate in soul matters.”

Here her memoranda end, but we append the following account of her last days from the pen of a dear and valued friend:

“About the last week or so in September, 1868, she related to me several blessed visits that she had been favoured with from the Lord, during her affliction, which was disease of the lungs. At the commencement of it, which was in June, she had the application of those words in Revelation iii. 10, which was a great help and support to her mind. Another text of Scripture, in the early part of September was, ‘His name shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.’ She said, ‘Christ was so precious to my soul. Precious to me! Indeed, he has been precious.’ I don't say now as Mr. Hazlerigg once preached from at Allington, which was so sweet to my soul, ‘Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth;’ for he has now done it. Another time she told me of two hymns that had been specially blessed to her soul:

“‘Jesus, thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress;
Midst flaming worlds, in these array'd,
With joy shall I lift up my head.”

The other hymn was:

“‘When languor and disease invade
This trembling house of clay,’ &c.

The whole of that hymn also was very sweet to her. She also observed she never could have thought the feelings spoken of in the above hymns could have been so descriptive of her present state. Another hymn she very often spoke of as being so suitable at the present time:

“‘What is this world to me?
This world is not my home,’ &c.

‘Blessed be God,’ she said, ‘I long to lay my poor body down in the grave to be with my blessed Saviour.’ I do, indeed, pant for it as the hart after the water-brooks. I have no fear of death now, no terror or fears of hell, as I used to have. All I lament now is when the blessed Jesus hides his sweet presence from me. I am then just like a child pining after its mother. I cannot do without his coming to be with me. His absence is my greatest trouble now. It is no pleasure to me to hear people say, when they come to see me, ‘I wish you better,’ for I long to die. My prayer to God is to leave this wicked world and go to him; he alone knows that this is my longing desire. There is nothing now that I want to live for; my only desire is to be for ever with the dear Saviour. Years ago I used to feel I should like to stay here a little longer; but it is not so now. I can truly say, What is this world to me? Nothing but Christ will do to die by. My longing desire is to be free from this body of sin and death.’

“October 16th was the last interview I had with her, as she died the following Monday, about four o’clock in the morning. She conversed very freely and sweetly on spiritual matters; and being a great reader of Hart’s hymns, it was very pleasant to hear her repeat some of them with which she had been blessed in reading. She repeated them in such a way as none beside could, being in the very feeling and experience of them. ‘How sweet,’ she said, ‘these lines of Hart’s were to me this morning:

“Not a glimpse of hope for me
Only in Gethsemane.”

‘Ah!’ she said, ‘What a welcome messenger death will be to me! O what a world is this! I never enjoyed so much of the felt presence of God in all my life as I have the last six months.’ I said, ‘Miss Wild, could you not record a little of his kind dealings with you during that time?’ ‘I could,’ she said, ‘if I were able.’ ‘Do try,’ I said, ‘a little at a time, as you can bear it.’ But her time was so much shorter than expected that the desire to do so was not granted. She said she should never go down stairs much more, if ever, but I did not think so.’

“On the evening of next Lord’s day, after service, two of her female friends went over to see her. She appeared to them to be much weaker, but neither of them thought it was the last time they would ever see her alive on earth. Her nurse, who was the only person in the house besides her brother and a young girl who lived with Miss Wild, did not go to bed. In the night she said, ‘One more smile, one more smile, Lord, before I depart;’ and on turning round hurried out of bed, which she could not have done before without help, when after a sigh or two, her unfettered spirit entered the joy of her Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.
“J. P.”

[Though the *Obituary* has been so long, too long, I fear, for some of our readers, yet I cannot forbear adding a few words as a slight testimony to the memory of Mary Wild, whom I knew for so many years and whom I so much valued as one of the sincerest characters that I ever met with in my life. Her path was one of much trial and difficulty, but one which she trod with great propriety, firmness, and consistency. For many years she had to bear all the weight of attending to the wants of two blind persons, her mother and her youngest brother, besides all the household cares of a large farm; and nothing could exceed her unwearied kindness and attention to both. Upon her mother she waited with the utmost tenderness and care, having to cut her food for her, dress her, lead her about, and, above all, to read to her, which she did continually both from the Scriptures, the “*Gospel Standard*,” my

sermons, and other works of good men. They were indeed not only mother and daughter, but bosom friends and companions in the things of God, being for the most part kept very low, much tried in soul matters, and pressed down also with family troubles in which they alone could mutually sympathise and freely communicate. They both possessed much the same make and character of mind, being naturally acute and intelligent, with great sincerity and uprightness of disposition, with a certain outspoken bluntness of manner which, however, was never offensive or unbecoming, being so characteristic and stamped with such clear marks of downright honesty both in nature and grace. Whatever they said you could depend upon. There was nothing put on to make you think well of them. Religion with them was a solemn reality, and nothing short of the power of God felt in their souls and his blessing in their hearts could satisfy them. And thus they lived well and died well, and have left a sweet savour behind them which will not soon be forgotten by those who knew and loved them.

I called to see her during my last visit to Allington, and felt much sweetness and savour in her conversation. That bondage under which she had so long walked seemed gone, and she could speak with a sweet confidence of the Lord's dealings with her soul and of his felt goodness and mercy to her, such as I never saw in her before. She was in the last stage of consumption, and I felt convinced that her days were numbered upon earth; but when I parted with her I felt well satisfied that, whether her days were many or few, when they came to an end she would enter into eternal rest.—J. C. P.]

AN inordinate carnal concern for sinners often opens the heart too wide; and selfishness, through a blind, bigoted spirit, contracts and makes it too narrow. The only things to counteract both, are a rich experience of the kindness and love of God as declared in the scriptures, and displayed to the world; and of his distinguishing mercy by which alone any can be saved.—*W. J. Brook.*

ACCORDING to the scriptures, a man cannot be a believer without being born of God and having eternal life in him. Nor is anything in the New Testament more clear, or oftener asserted than that, "who-soever believeth in Jesus Christ shall be saved." And this experience proves true, for none have perished finally who believed. They, already, have a heaven upon earth.—*Cennick.*

THE husbandman finds his work as he left it; he can begin one day where he left off the other; but it is not so with the Christian, —a bad heart and a busy devil disorder and spoil his work every day. The Christian finds not his heart in the morning as he left it at night; and even when he is about his work, how many set-backs does he meet with! Satan stands at his right hand to resist him. When he would do good, evil, the evil of his own heart and nature, is present with him.—*Flavel.*

THERE is yet another parable of a merchant's seeking costly pearls, who, having found one of great value, went and sold all he had to purchase it. The merchant is a soul athirst for salvation, and who is like a merchant travelling sea and land to find it, who having found Jesus, the most costly pearl, parts with all he has, and counts all dross and dung that he may inherit this Pearl. What he before esteemed precious, or served him instead of holiness, he undervalues; and whatever before he counted riches, wisdom, good deeds, gifts, graces, and qualities, esteems nothing now but this jewel, this elect precious Stone, and is richer in the possessing of him than if he had all heaven and earth without him.—*Cennick.*

JULY 1, 1869.

THE
GOSPEL STANDARD.

JULY, 1869.

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

“ HE WAS KNOWN OF THEM IN BREAKING
OF BREAD.”

“ For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.”—Heb. ii. 18.

To the spiritual eye and exercised soul of a real Christian, what great changes are seen in the life of the great Redeemer, both in grace and providence, ushered into the world by the triumphant songs of angels! Directly after this, Herod conspired against his life. He himself declared he had not where to lay his head, and numbers, no doubt, who cried, “ Hosanna to the Son of David,” directly afterwards cried out with more fiery zeal, “ Crucify him! Crucify him!” And who is there that has not at one time or other received from saint and sinner something similar? He who writes these feeble lines has been led into this meditation by the great and often sudden changes which have past in his own soul; but it is his earnest desire and cry that the Lord the Spirit will powerfully shine upon the two paths of experience, the one gloriously bright with the manifest presence of the Saviour, and the other in the dark valley of the shadow of death, though ending in a rich display of the suffering Saviour's love. May the Holy Spirit for a few moments turn the eye of faith to that wondrous scene in Jordan's river. There stands the Baptist in the deepest humility, and there stands a greater than John, while the Holy Ghost descends on his glorious head, while the voice of his eternal Father proclaims him as his beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased. Now contrast this with a different scene, which occurred almost immediately afterwards. The Evangelist declaring, “ He was led into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.” Only a few months past, the writer of this, after enduring a severe conflict on the very edge of the pool, in a few moments, when in the water, had a revelation of the dear Redeemer in the unction, power, and strength of which he walked some time in peace, but for two hours before the ordinance of the Lord's supper, a fearful storm of temptation broke into his soul. He knew of no special outward cause at that time; but it really appeared as if Satan was

determined to carry away the very foundation, such new scenes and terrible openings in this fallen nature, never to be named to mortal ear, were opened up. O how different to the dear Redeemer, his spotless nature repelling the tempter, and conquering him at once; but O, how the tempter laughs at the Christian's vain efforts, bringing a thick darkness over all God's former dealings, whispering that now all is indeed over, filling the soul with the most gloomy apprehensions, and painfully entering into the Psalmist's experience when he said and felt, "The overflowings of ungodliness made me afraid. Hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit." "And now," says the tempter, "how dare you go to worship or the ordinance in such a state as this?" Blessed be God, although the enemy really seemed most sensibly repeatedly to pull me back, in which it seemed to me (and this was the most terrible of all) as if my wretched nature joined; but there was One greater than Satan and all his host, and, against sense and feeling, he irresistibly led me to Gower Street; even when there, the enemy more than once made me decide to go away. I know if he had prevailed, there would have been indeed great guilt; but he who before had taken the prey from the very mouth of the destroyer would not lose the travail of his soul. O these silent, unspeakable pantings and groanings, dictated by the Holy Spirit in the midst of the horrid tumult raging in my bosom; for if ever a cry went up from a tempted soul for the Lord to appear, it went up from mine then. It seemed to me that I dared not touch the bread and wine; but in that very moment the great Deliverer came, just as the bread was handed round by the deacon, and these words of Mr. Hart's fell with solemn power into my very soul:

"On the cross thy body broken,
Cancels every penal tie;
Tempted soul, produce this token,
All demands to satisfy."

O, my readers, what are all the graceless gifts that ever adorned the most presumptuous hypocrite to such a sacred moment as this? For the first time the Lord admitted me into the sacred reality of this most blessed ordinance. O the glory and salvation which flowed into my soul, not from the outer sign, but from the shed blood and broken body of my suffering Lord. Every word of this precious verse seemed impregnated by the Holy Ghost. The last line,

"All demands to satisfy,"

was truly the sword of the Holy Spirit; for the host of hell and all my wretched feelings were put to flight, and I was alone with my dear Lord, mourning over him with mingled joy and godly sorrow, and feeling most blessedly that all my accusers were fled.

If ever the soul would rather die than ever sin again, or have one thought, word, or deed contrary to the Lord's will, it is in

such a moment as this. Sure I am that Satan no more cares for the brightest doctrinal professor without the life of God in his soul, than he does for the open ungodly. O that I may ever have not only a living, but a lively faith; and if I have, by God's grace, it will have to be tried to the very quick in many a hard battle against Satan, sin, the world, and, worst of all, this wretched self. The following words sweetly followed me as I returned home, "He was known of them in breaking of bread."

May the Lord graciously keep you in that faithfulness and love which he has already most richly, through his dear Son, so manifestly wrought in you. Bunyan says in one of his books that he believed the Lord often took the worst of nature's children to form his building of grace, and often left the best. I can most solemnly testify to this in my own experience, the chief of sinners.

A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH AT GOWER STREET.

"LIGHT FOR THEM THAT SIT IN DARKNESS."

BY JOHN BUNYAN.

By this doctrine, sufficiency of argument is ministered to the tempted, to withstand thereby the assaults of the devil. When the soul begins to seek after the Lord Jesus, then Satan begins to afflict and distress, as the Canaanites did the Gibeonites, for making peace with Joshua. (Josh. x. 1-6.)

There are three things that do usually afflict the soul that is earnestly looking after Jesus Christ: 1, Dreadful accusations from Satan; 2, Grievous, defiling, and infectious thoughts; 3, A strange readiness in our nature to fall in with both.

By the first of these, the heart is made continually to tremble. Hence Satan's temptations are compared to the roaring of a lion (1 Pet. v. 8); for as the lion by roaring killeth the heart of his prey, so doth Satan kill the spirits of those that hearken to him; for when he tempteth, especially by way of accusation, he doth to us as Rabshakeh did to the Jews; he speaks to us in our own language; he speaks our sin at every word; our guilty conscience knows it; he speaks our death at every word; our doubting conscience feels it.

2. Besides this, there do now arise even in the heart such defiling and foul infectious thoughts as put the tempted to their wits' ends; for now it seems to the soul that the very floodgates of the flesh are opened, and that to sin there is no stop at all. Now the air seems to be covered with darkness, and the man is as if he were changed into the nature of a devil. Now, if ignorance and unbelief prevail, he concludeth that he is a reprobate, made to be taken and destroyed.

3. Now also he, feeling in himself a readiness to fall in with every temptation; a readiness, I say, continually present (Rom. vii. 21), this throws all down. Now despair begins to swallow it up. Now he can neither pray, nor read, nor hear, nor meditate

on God; but fire and smoke continually burst forth of the heart against him. Now sin and great confusion put forth themselves in all. Yea, the more the sinner desireth to do a duty sincerely, the further off he always finds himself; for, however much the soul struggleth under these distresses, so much the more doth Satan put forth himself to resist, still infusing more poison, that, if possible, it might never struggle more; for strugglings are also as poison to Satan. The fly in the spider's web is an emblem of the soul in such a condition. The fly is entangled in the web. At this, the spider shows himself. If the fly stir again, down comes the spider to her, and claps a foot upon her. If yet the fly make a noise, then with poisoned mouth the spider lays hold upon her. If the fly struggle still, then he poisons her more and more. What shall the fly do now? Why, she dies, if somebody does not release her. This is the case of the tempted. They are entangled in the web; their feet and wings are entangled. Now Satan shows himself. If the soul now struggleth, Satan laboureth to hold it down. If it now shall make a noise, then he bites with blasphemous mouth, more poisonous than the gall of a serpent. If it struggle again, then he poisoneth more and more, insomuch that it needs at last must die in the net, if the Man, the Lord Jesus, help not out. The afflicted conscience understands my words. Further, though the fly in the web is altogether incapable of looking for relief, yet this awakened, tempted Christian is not. How should he contain hopes of life? If he look to his heart, there is blasphemy; if he look to his duties, there is sin; if he strive to mourn and lament, perhaps he cannot; unbelief and hardness hinder. Shall this man lie down and despair? No. Shall he trust to his duties? No. Shall he stay from Christ till his heart is better? No. What then? Let him now look to Jesus Christ crucified. Then shall he see his sins answered for; then shall he see death a-dying; then shall he see guilt borne by another, and then shall he see the devil overcome. This sight destroys the power of the first temptation, purifies the heart, and inclines the mind to all good things. And to encourage thee, tempted creature, to this, consider that when Jesus Christ read his commission upon the entering into his ministry, he proclaimed, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted; to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke iv. 18, 19.) These things, therefore, should the tempted believe; but believing is now sweating work; for Satan will hold as long as possible, and only stedfast faith can make him fly. But O the toil of a truly gracious heart in this combat! If faith be weak, he can scarcely get higher than his knees: "Lord, help! Lord, save!" And then down again, till an arm from heaven takes him up, until Jesus Christ be

evidently set forth crucified for him, and made a curse for his sin; for then, and not till then, the temptation rightly ceaseth; at leastwise for a season.

Now, the soul can stand to look about it, and thus consider with itself: "If Christ hath borne my sin and curse, then it is taken away from me; and seeing thus to take away sin was the contrivance of the God of heaven, I will bless his name, hope in his mercy, and look upon death and hell with comfort: "Thine heart shall meditate terror." "Thou shalt see the land that is very far off." (Isa. xxxiii. 17, 18.)

This doctrine makes Christ precious to the believer: "Unto you, therefore, which believe, he is precious." (1 Pet. ii. 5.)

This head might be greatly enlarged upon, and branched out into a thousand particulars, and each one full of weight and glory: 1, By considering what sin is; 2, By considering what hell is; 3, By considering what wrath is; 4, By considering what eternity is; 5, By considering what the loss of a soul is; 6, What the loss of God is; 7, What the loss of heaven is; 8, And what it is to be in utter destruction.

THE OLD BEATEN PATH.

Dear Brother,—May the God of all comfort and consolation be with you and bless you.

I am still holding on in the old beaten path of tribulation. Sometimes things appear all straight, and then again all appears all wrong. I still find that none but God can make darkness light, and crooked things straight. I do know this, and feel confident of it, that there never was a greater pauper upon the grace and mercy of God in this vale of tears than I am. Really it does appear sometimes that I have not one spark of grace in my heart. I seem, at times, so entirely left to myself, as if there were nothing to be seen but the world, the flesh, and the devil. I feel and see more of my own wretchedness than ever I did in all my life. How it is I keep preaching, week after week, is sometimes a complete mystery, for it does actually appear sometimes that I must give it all up. I am confident that, if the people had the same views of me that I have of myself at such times, they would never hear me again. But I must say that I have now and then moments when I am humbled and crumbled at the feet of a dear Jesus with love, wonder, and adoration to his blessed Majesty, for the kindness, mercy, grace, and unmerited favours he has manifested and still does manifest to such an out-of-the-way wretch. I am confident of it, that it is by the grace of God I am what I am.

I had a little lift last night from these words: "I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling; and my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the

power of God." And I am more and more confident that "it is not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."

Ah! What a horrid day of blasphemy we live in. Truth indeed has fallen in the streets, and equity cannot enter. But, blessed be the Lord, he has not left us without a few witnesses, that are not ashamed of the gospel of God, but have proved and still keep proving it, by soul experience in their hearts, that it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; and how can these hold their peace? O that the Lord might increase their numbers! He has encouraged us to pray that he would thrust out more labourers into his vineyard; and O that he would pour out the Spirit of supplication into the hearts of his dear children, that they might give him no rest till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

God Almighty bless you, be with you, keep you, preserve and deliver you, and ever supply you with needful blessings. This is the prayer of

Your unworthy Brother,
Trowbridge, April 5th. J. WARBURTON.

THOU WILT MAKE ALL HIS BED IN HIS SICKNESS.

My dear Friend and Brother,—I have two letters from you unanswered in the letter but not in the spirit. When my poor body was weak and in sickness on my bed, enjoying the love of God my Father and the dear Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, through the comforting testimony of the Holy Spirit, I could then have written and told you a little of the goodness of the Lord to me, a poor, helpless sinner, being then, as I thought for a time, near my departing time; but now my body is stronger I am inwardly weaker and getting poor. Still I must say the Lord has been good and better to me than all my fears, a present Friend in trouble. He removed all my fears with the manifestation of his love, and I have proved again his grace to be all-sufficient to make me willing to live or die. I could feelingly say, "Thy will be done." I had that sweet assurance as expressed in the 468th hymn. The Lord Jesus was very precious, and I in him without spot.

I had been, at times, very tried for a long time previous to my illness, for fear I did not love the Lord Jesus. This fear was removed, for I loved him with mind and heart, his people and his ways; and the best of all was Jesus loved me with an everlasting love. How blessedly he did reveal himself to me! The truth I had preached was the truth I felt would save me, and I should enjoy it to all eternity.

Another fear I had been tried with was how it would be with me in affliction and on my death-bed. This was all taken away. A sweet peace rested on my heart. I had salvation and the joy

of salvation. The first two days I was in the dark; but the sun arose, the Lord appeared, and the word came, "I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely," and "He is the Rock; his work is perfect." What an opening up I had of the word of the Lord and the way he had led me, of my state as a sinner and his deliverances, his keeping power and saving grace. I was obliged to say, "Light afflictions." O the wonders of redeeming love and grace! Yes, free grace. Every trial appeared a blessing, crooked things were made straight and all right. I felt to be less than the least of all saints. I had no promises to make for the future. I know what a poor, helpless worm I am; when left to self and Satan, I am blind and a fool. The Lord is faithful; again and again I have proved him so. He has supplied my every need, and once more helped me to sing of his love, his mercy, his salvation, and his goodness to unworthy, sinful me.

I have now been kept from preaching three Lord's days. If I continue to improve as I have done for the last few days, I hope to go to Malmsbury next Lord's day. I walk a little in the garden daily. My appetite is much better. The doctor thinks I can do without him, and I hope so too. I thank you and Mrs. D.

My dear wife unites with me in love to you both. She has been a good nurse to me. What a gift is a good wife, and to be of one heart and mind in sickness and in health. According to age, I must expect infirmities and changes; but I have the many promises; as Peter saith, "Exceeding great and precious promises."

"E'en down to old age all my people shall prove
My sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love!
And when hoary hairs shall their temples adorn,
Like lambs they shall still in my bosom be borne."

I was with you yesterday in mind, and asked the Lord to bless you and the word to his dear people. Should the Lord spare me, I hope to write when I get stronger and the springs rise. I shall be glad to hear from you when you feel inclined to write.

Yours in Jesus.

Hilperton, Nov. 9th, 1868.

WILLIAM FERRIS.

A LETTER FROM THE LATE DANIEL HERBERT.

My dear Friend and truly-esteemed Sister in Jehovah's chosen and blood-bought Family, who are loved with the same eternal and everlasting love, redeemed by the same immense price, called by the same efficacious grace, quickened by the same Almighty Spirit, heirs of the same eternal inheritance, and shall assuredly be sharers in the same everlasting glory,—Grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied to you, through the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, as your hope, your way, your end; and may the Lord grant that you may be enabled firmly to believe that what our adorable Immanuel (God in our nature has done and is doing is put to your account.

I have taken this liberty, my dear friend, to acknowledge the receipt of your truly kind and affectionate letter, which I esteemed both an honour and a pleasure I shall not attempt to describe. That I should be so kindly remembered by you and others of my truly-beloved friends is often a source of pleasure to my mind. Though we are at so great a distance, my busy spirit is often hovering round you; and I sometimes think that were I near, I should be as often a visitor. Ah! my dear friend, I have no return to make for such unmerited marks of esteem, but to implore my heavenly Father to settle the account with you, and all my other dear friends, with a tenfold interest; for which I shall ever feel myself grateful; for gratitude I do verily conceive to be one of the sweetest sensations of the soul.

The very day I received your truly gratifying letter, I received a most kind and affectionate one from my truly worthy and liberal friend, Mr. Smith, whose kindness and generosity really confound me. I assure you, my dear friend, I endeavour sometimes to persuade myself that my coming to Lincolnshire must be of God; and that I should so many times meet with such a kind reception with my dear friends, Mrs. Smith, Mr. and Mrs. Belton, and with you and many others, I am truly astonished at. I am conscious of having but one thing to recommend me, —God has made me honest; for my whole dependence is upon my God, who led me to wrestle with him for what I delivered while I was with you; and none but God knows anything about the distress of mind I sometimes labour under. I know my dear Lord sometimes make uses of poor, weak, contemptible instruments to accomplish his great and glorious designs; and if my poor, unpolished, and unstudied addresses were approved of by the people of God, then I am sure my God is entitled to all the glory.

I often think of you on the Sabbath afternoon, and wish I could just step in and make one with you; but whether that will ever be the case again, I must leave with him who overrules all mortal things, and manages my mean affairs, even my little minutiae.

I observe in your letter, with some degree of concern, but with little surprise, that you have had many enemies to compete with from without, as well as from within, since you saw me last. Tribulation, you know, my kind friend, is our heavenly Father's legacy.

But is that all? No, no. That God who weighs and measures our tribulation counteracts them by saying, "Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will help thee." May the Lord enable me and enable you to live upon such precious declarations, believing the world to be overcome, sin and hell subdued, redemption completed, salvation secured, the law fulfilled, justice satisfied, the debt paid, and God well pleased for his own righteousness' sake, and well pleased with you and me, my dear friend, being clothed with it.

If I have written you too long a letter, you must pardon me, and blame yourself for being so kind; and if, my dear friend, I should never see you again at Donnington, I expect to see you amongst the redeemed throng, and to hear you, with your poor friend Herbert, shouting eternally, "Victory, through the blood of the Lamb!"

Please to present my very affectionate regard to my much-esteemed friends, Mr. and Mrs. Belton. Tell them I often think of them, often wish I could see them, and often pray for them. As for yourself, take all that love and gratitude would dictate, and that a friendly, affectionate heart can say.

Sudbury, Jan. 20, 1822.

DANIEL HERBERT.

A LETTER BY THE LATE MR. CROUCH.

My very dear Frank,—I knew that I was in your debt before your last came, and this morning had set me down with an intention of sending a few lines by way of an answer. Now one must do for both.

I am truly glad to hear from you, and that your health is very good. I was also a little prepared to rejoice at the happy and triumphant end of the dear man. I have myself, at times, been a subject of fears as touching what would be the state of my mind at the end. I have thought, if darkness and doubting of my interest in the Lord Jesus, that it would be an unbearable place for any of my friends to witness. But past experience and the present state of my mind, the sure word of prophecy, together with your account of Warren, encourage me to hope that it will be well with me. This I can assure you, and any others whom it may concern, that my soul is continually in my hand, and my ministry occasions heavy and deep exercise; but all seems to come out right and well for the people, and I hope will be found to be most for the honour and glory of the Lord. Tokens for good, and testimonies from the Lord, both at the beginning and at the midway of life, that we are his, are very desirable indeed; but then at last to be visited and borne up in such faith and hope, and to have a sweet sense and feeling of the Lord's gracious presence, seems beyond all, and that which I desire to be favoured with.

I was a subject last week of such things within as I wish to hate, namely, rebellion against the God of gods. I was afterwards let into some considerable discovery of how much flesh mixes up amongst those with whom we can but hope are one in the spirit, and presenting a spiritual service unto the Lord. And I think I can say that this wretched ingredient was made hateful unto me. Afterwards I came into close exercise respecting my real state and standing before the Lord. Then fervent prayer followed, and I hope the issue was thus: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ." And whilst I was delivering my thoughts upon and from the subject, hope sprang

up that I was one. Good cooks are wanted in the church as well as in the world, and boiling and roasting to be well done. I have often read with some attention the last part of Ezek. xlvi., particularly the last verse: "Then said he unto me, These are the places of them that boil, where the ministers of the house shall boil the sacrifice for the people." Now, if I am not mistaken, I get a little sight of these places by the weighty and deep exercises of soul, then of the issue as above; then is there some boiled and palatable food for the hungry of the family of the Lord. Hot fire and hot water must be had and in use where there is any cooking done that is to any real purpose.

What a sinful nature mine is! I felt rebellion against the Almighty, because that it was so very dirty after the frost that we could hardly get about from place to place. Mr. — came into our neighbourhood and passed my house without calling; but he shortly returned, still not seeming free, not offering his hand to my dame. She felt much about it. Afterwards remarking this to a friend, the friend said, "Do you think that he will ever serve me in that way? If he does, I shall be much hurt." Here the subject of flesh began to open: "Think well of me, I shall be comfortable; think well of me, I think well of you; treat me kindly, and you are a nice man; send me away without meat or drink, then I don't know what to make of such a one." Then in it pours upon me, "Are we not all in such a case?" Then came the trial in my feelings, and what then must be the end, but the pale horse, and Death and Hell to follow thereupon? Therefore now, to use the weapon of All-Prayer; for I knew that the Lord knew that I would be right, and not be carried away by the flesh, neither be deceived and overcome by the flesh; and the issue is as already shown. Then forth I went to attack the flesh that is so much mixed up, even amongst those who are the children of God; and I insisted, and do insist, that we must stand as if alone before the Almighty, let men think well or ill, let them bless or curse, let them smile or frown, let them approve or disapprove; and thus to appeal unto the high throne, "Lord, thou knowest that it is thy testimony I want; it is that I crave; it is that that will satisfy. It is likely that I shall make your sitting uneasy unless there is godly sincerity within your hearts."

Many other things there be of which I might write; but I write not to display the horrible monster of the flesh, nor to be thought that I have enlarged much, or that I think to edify you, but simply to correspond. And may godly sincerity be one of the principles that dwell within, and that shall be perceived, more or less, to run through the whole of what I speak or write.

An alarming robbery took place in our neighbourhood last week, through which we have been the subjects of fear: but last evening, as I sat reading in the book of Psalms, several parts were particularly engaging. This for one: "I will both lay me

down in peace and sleep, for thou, Lord, only makest me to dwell in safety." And this also: "I laid me down and slept; I awaked, for the Lord sustained me." Ps. xxxi. was very sweet to my spiritual taste, and it made me weep a little for joy. And although there was none in the house with me but the servant, yet I retired to rest, thinking more of Him who neither slumbers nor sleeps than about thieves, who sometimes not only plunder, but abuse the body or deprive it of life.

I am showing very visible signs that my age is considerable, as you will say if ever you see me again. But I still love my Frank and his, with all the remnant according to the election of grace that are with you.

My dame has had better health this winter so far than usual; and although not at home, I know that I am authorised to send her love. My family are about as usual, for aught I know. But I must leave them. I am looking for the end. I am pressing forward. I am reaching forth to lay fast hold upon eternal life. Believe me to be,

Yours in Christ,

Wadhurst, Feb. 5, 1850.

H. CROUCH.

A PASTORAL LETTER BY THE LATE W. GADSBY.

To the Church of Christ meeting for the Worship of the Glorious Trinity, in the chapel, George's Road, Manchester.

Beloved of the adorable Jehovah and of me his poor servant, and your servant for his sake,—Through the matchless kindness of the Lord, I arrived safely here on Saturday afternoon, about four o'clock, and preached on Lord's day to the largest congregation I ever preached to in my life; and I believe the Lord was there. One of the deacons tells me they let 2,200 sittings in the chapel, and it was quite crowded, aisles and everywhere; so you may guess at the number which was there. God willing, I have to preach again this evening (Tuesday), and they say it will be as full to-night as it was on Lord's day; but I can say nothing to that till I see. But be there more or less, if the Lord be there, all will be well.

I wrote to my family yesterday, and did not intend writing to the church till next week; but some of the friends tell me that a letter is written and sent to you for the purpose of getting you to allow me to stop here six weeks. As soon as I heard this, I thought it best to write, lest you should think this was by my desire. I assure you it is not; nor do I wish you to consent to any such thing, unless you do it cheerfully, with a view to serve them, considering the situation they are in. If you refuse them, you will not in the least hurt my mind. The friends at Bath wanted me to promise to stop there one Lord's day; but I told them I could not promise to do any such thing. They said they would write to the church. I told them if they did, I thought you would not let me stop; so you perhaps have a letter from

there also. Now I want you in these cases to act for yourselves; and if you agree to let me stop six weeks, if I must have any choice in it, I would rather be five here, and one at Bath; for it is a long journey to take in one week, being about 330 miles; and we have to stop one night at Exeter, another at Bath, and another at Birmingham; and what with having to get up soon in the morning this winter time, and other circumstances, it makes it very tiresome;* but observe, I do not desire you to grant me any more time than my month, which you agreed to at first; so you will act for yourselves.

Do pray the Lord of the harvest to send more labourers into his vineyard; for if I were ten men, I could have plenty of work; but the Lord can raise up more and send them forth.

I hope brother Franklin† is well, and that the Lord is with him and you, and that his visit will be made a blessing unto you and unto himself. Give my love to him, and tell him I wish him well in the name of the Lord; and ask him whether he will have any objection to coming to Plymouth Dock in the summer, if I were to name him to the people here. They are not Baptists.

My dear brethren and the flock of my charge, I can assure you you are in my heart, and I never feel more union to you than I do at times when I cannot see you; and in my right moments, I hope and pray that nothing but death may part us; and sure I am that death itself will only draw a curtain between us for a short season. Strictly speaking, it cannot part us, for Christ and his beloved bride are but one, and shall ever be one; and all circumstances must unite under the divine management of our ever-to-be-adored Guide, to work for our real good, and his immortal honour. To live and walk by faith in Christ is to live in eternal life and walk upon sure ground. Bless his precious name, he is all and in all unto us. Part with us he never will; do us harm he never can. It will ever be his honour and his bliss to do us good and to bless us. May you be directed by his wisdom to settle all the matters of the church which may come before you, with a view to his glory and the welfare of the church; and may each of you, both in the world, the family, and the church, walk as it becomes that blessed Gospel which has made you free; and then you will have no cause to fear any circumstance from any quarter whatever.

May God support you night and day,
 And keep you stedfast in his way;
 Direct and guide you in that path
 Which leads from bondage, guilt, and death.

May the Eternal Paraclete
 Upon each conscience Jesus seat;

* The fatigue, expense, and inconvenience of coach travelling in those days are little dreamt of by this railway generation.

† Author of Hymns 511-513, "In mounts of danger and of straits," &c. supplying at Manchester during Mr. G.'s absence.

His matchless beauties there unfold,
And make you humble, meek, and bold.

May love divine cheer every heart,
And make you with all idols part;
May you have intercourse with God,
By faith in Jesus' precious blood.

May you upon him cast your care,
Nor death, nor world, nor devil fear,
But his dear name and words revere.
So prays your pastor, worthless me,
Known by the name William Gadsby.

Do, my dear brethren, pray for me and mine. I hope you will not forget my dear wife. The Lord lay her upon your hearts, and hear and answer your prayers. O what a jubilee it would be to me to see my dear wife restored. The Lord bless her and my family in my absence, and the Lord bless you all with wisdom and grace from above. My heart is with you, and in my very soul I can in the best sense say, Fare ye well.

Plymouth Dock, Feb. 22nd, 1822.

W. GADSBY.

IF IT BE SO, WHY AM I THUS?

My dear Friend and Sister in Him that was dead, and is alive again, and lives for evermore,—Your faithful letter came safe to hand, wherein you are enabled to lay open honestly before the Lord a little of the path that you have travelled, desiring his gracious hand to still lead you on in that path alone that shall be for your future good and his own honour and glory. How blessed, my sister, that we have a God to go to, a throne of grace and mercy to approach; that we are drawn by the blessed Spirit, and that Jesus, the Lord of glory, kindly listens to the cries of the poor and needy. He understands all our needs and necessities, sorrows and afflictions. His ear is ever open, and he waits to be gracious to the lost, ruined, and undone, who have found every other refuge to fail, and been brought through necessity to anchor in him for life or death, for time and eternity.

Blessed art thou of the Lord, my sister, who hast been and still art constrained to seek the mind of the Lord in your movements of life, looking to him to reveal his mind to you, to show you what is his will towards you, and making you willing, by his special love and mercy, to be anything or nothing, that his name may be glorified—willing for him to fix your lot and dwelling-place and choose your inheritance for you. How safe and sure is the ground to move upon, to be kept looking up to the blessed throne of God and the Lamb, from whence cometh all our help.

You seem much perplexed concerning your hope of life and immortality beyond the grave, Satan thrusting sorely at you, casting floods of doubts into your path, so that you seem full of

fears that your precious soul at the last will miss the promised rest and never see the face of Jesus with acceptance. You still feel the plague of sin and burden of guilt remaining upon your conscience, which makes you groan beneath a corruptible body of death, so that you feel full of inward questionings, "If I am a child of God, an heir of glory, why am I thus? If I ever have been renewed by grace and quickened by the blessed Spirit, and brought into the bond of the everlasting covenant, why should I feel all this inward strife and contention? If my body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and the inward kingdom of Jesus was ever set up in my heart, should I feel such evil thoughts, such unholy desires? If I have the mind of Christ and his likeness and image stamped upon me, should I feel such inward corruption?" And so on. Yes, my dear sister, it is because grace hath reached your heart, and that holy, incorruptible seed is implanted in your soul that all this warfare has arisen. It is because you are in the covenant of God's eternal love and grace and that your soul is quickened and redeemed with blood divine, that you have these changes. It is to cause you to fear his great name, to be daily brought into that spot and place, to need to be washed in the fountain flowing from the wounded side of Jesus, to be sickened of all your best performances, and to be brought as a ruined sinner to the foot of the cross, to be enabled with precious faith to look upon him whom you have pierced, crucified, and slain, and to feel the stream of mercy flowing into your conscience, healing up the breach that sin has made between the Lord and your soul; and though you may still fear that you never have been washed, nor felt your sins put away, yet the fountain still stands open for every poor and needy, helpless, craving soul; and the more the blessed Spirit teaches you your utter ruined, lost state, the more will the fulness, suitability, glory, and Person of Jesus shine with a marvellous light before the eyes of your enlightened understanding, as the sure and only way through which mercy and pardon can flow; and your soul will follow hard after him, through floods of sorrows, griefs, and troubles, with ardent longings and pantings, to press through the crowd of fears, to touch the hem of his precious garment; and when you are enabled to lay hold on him, and he turns and looks in mercy upon you and speaks the pardoning words to your heart and conscience, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," and shows you his hands, feet, and side, and the atoning blood that flowed from his sacred body, you will then sink to nothing at his blessed feet and exclaim, "Why me, Lord? Why me? Why such a wretch as I?" Then will sin appear more than ever exceeding sinful, tears of godly sorrow will flow from your weeping eyes, and love and gratitude, praise and thanksgiving, burst forth from the inmost depths of your soul.

O my sister, this is the spot to be brought to, to experimentally feel the inward power and life of vital godliness, the super-

abounding grace of God. When the blessed Spirit reveals the Lord Jesus, in all his beauty and glory, so suitable to our state and case, how it kills the soul for a time to everything in this fallen state, and how we long to be with him in glory, to adore and praise the grace that hath reached us, the love, mercy, and favour that were fixed upon us, and have rescued us from the bitter pains of eternal death. All the redeemed must be taught, in a measure, the same things; all must feel their lost estate, and Christ alone revealed as the only channel through which mercy can flow.

I was sorry to hear of your dear sister's illness, and the thought of leaving three dear little ones is indeed a trial; but it is a mercy for your sister that she has a good hope through grace. This is worth ten thousand worlds. This will bear up the soul through the swellings of Jordan and land it safe in a blessed immortality, far away from all temptations, afflictions, and sorrows; and the redeemed soul will be for ever in the sight and presence of the Lord the Lamb, casting the crown at his blessed feet and for ever crowning him Lord of all.

The Lord bless and preserve you, and lift upon you the light of his blessed countenance, and lead you into the promised rest.

Yours sincerely in the truth,
Market Lavington, March, 1857.

T.

SOME THOUGHTS ON JOSHUA STANDING BEFORE THE ANGEL AND ON THE LAW.

Dear Friend,—God willing, when I have time, I will send thee, according to promise, my thoughts on sanctification. But first accept of those that struck me as I returned home respecting those things which you and I were conversing about, namely, Joshua and the law.

Joshua appears to me to be a true emblem of all the elect, when God's Spirit begins to work upon them. s

First, this standing before the angel of the Lord showeth a sinner that has not only been awakened, convicted, and convinced, but one that has faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Angel of the covenant. For it is said, he was "standing before the angel," which he could not have done without faith and hope, for the apostle declareth that it is "by faith we stand" (2 Cor. i. 24); and a man truly awakened with a sense of his sins without hope is described in God's word as not standing but sinking. "I sink in deep waters," says David, "where there is no standing." "Behold," saith another, "we are before thee in our trespasses; for we cannot stand before thee because of this." (Ezra ix. 15.) Here you see a sinner, under the sense of his sins, without faith and hope, cannot stand.

But Joshua is described as standing before the angel, the Lord Jesus Christ, for it was no other; and you may depend

upon it, he was begging and praying for mercy, or the devil would never have resisted him. For this resistance is not outward or visible, but in the mind and conscience, for as fast as he asketh for mercy, the devil asketh how such a sinner as he could expect mercy, and suggesteth to his mind that the day of mercy is gone, and sets before him God's righteous law, and at the same time the pollution of both mind and conscience, and the filth that there is in the best of his performances. This makes the loins to bend, the knees to stagger, and the face to turn pale; and was it not for the rebuke of the Lord, he must utterly fail. But just as the soul is sinking by Satan's temptation the Lord steps in with, "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan." But how does the Lord rebuke Satan? Why, when Satan charges the sinner's sins on his conscience, the Lord Jesus applieth his precious blood, and purgeth them away, and this resisteth him with a witness. And, again, when Satan points to the filthy garments that are upon him, the Lord bringeth near his righteousness, and justifieth the sinner from all things or charges that might be brought against him; for "it is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?" Why, Satan would, but the Lord this way rebukes him, and plucketh the sinner as a brand from the burning, which the devil tempted him to believe would be his lot.

Now, respecting the law, I cannot imagine how thou canst think that the law was not in existence before it was given on Mount Sinai; as it is unjust in any king to punish without a law. And sure I am that there is no unrighteousness with God, which there would certainly be, if the law had not been in existence from Adam to Moses. For there is scarce a command in all the moral law, but the breach thereof was punished by God himself, long before the giving of it on Mount Sinai, which if it had not existed could not have been done, according to Paul: "For where there is no law there is no transgression." And, again: "Sin is not imputed where there is no law." (Rom. v. 13.) And how could God charge Cain with the murder of his brother if there had been no law which forbade murder? And by what authority dost thou think Noah cursed his son, which curse was approved of God himself, by its falling on both himself and his posterity? Why, by the fifth command, which says, "Thou shalt honour thy father," &c., which he broke, and so fell under the curse; for "cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." And how could Abimelech have known that adultery was sin, if there had been no law that forbade it? For "by the law is the knowledge of sin;" and God tells him that it was he that kept him from sinning. Against what? Why, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." (Gen. xx. 6.) And how could God have condemned the Sodomites without a law that was pointed against their sin? It is unjust in the extreme to punish without a law, which is far from God, for with him there is no unrighteousness at all.

Now, it is plain God speaks of the keeping of his law before it was given on Mount Sinai. Now, I should be glad to know what this law was if it was not the moral law. It is something very strange that our Lord, to prove the first and great command, cites a verse that is not in the ten commandments and declareth it to be the first and great command. (Mark xii. 30.)

Now, if it be the first it must be included in that given to Adam, otherwise it cannot be the first. (Gen. ii. 16.) Ponder this and give me an answer, and

I remain, thine to serve in the Gospel,
P. BRICE.

JESUS WALKING ON THE SEA.

Beloved Friend,—Your epistle came safe to hand, was cordially received, and gladdening to myself and others who heard and read the same. That you are the better man, it was soon proved by your zeal in returning an answer to mine in so short a time; that you are more favoured your letter was and is a proof, for the state described is said by the Psalmist to be “the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers of yellow gold.” However far off you might have been, you were brought nigh again by the blood of the everlasting covenant; however low, you were raised up again, and made to sit together with the Lord Jesus in heavenly places. However great and heavy your bondage might have been, you became like a “hind let loose.” Your heart sprang up with thoughts, and your pen went nimbly to set them down; and great and grand truths they were. But what have you thought of your prophecy? You said before I wrote again my soul would be comforted, that it would be released again. Now Moses said the prophet that speaketh, and his word cometh to pass, the Lord has sent that prophet. Did you believe that the Lord would shortly release me, and that you would soon hear from me, or that another year might pass in silence again? Now, I will inform you that after receiving your kind and encouraging letter, my bondage, darkness, and misery increased considerably, not occasioned by your kind letter, but by the devil and my wretched heart of unbelief; that as I was sitting down to my breakfast on a Monday morning with my family, I felt as if I was almost driven in rebellion against God and men, to commit acts of outrage. I could just resist the devil sufficient to cut a little food, though he wanted to signify that notwithstanding there was sufficient for the present, a famine would surely come. What a sly, subtle, artful foe he is! If there is no want at present, he says it will surely come; therefore you ought to look out in time, for with all your care and guard, you will surely come to poverty and want, and will cheat people of their right, will bring a disgrace upon the cause of God, and will be unable to look your fellow-creatures in the face. Well, as the Scriptures say, that

“the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth,” so this worketh like steam, and putteth forth many and vain and unbelieving words.

Well, in this wretched work, when breakfast was over, my daughter, that I once lost in London, took the Bible and began reading John vi.; and coming to these words, “And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would,” I thought within myself, “My dear child wants to encourage me, and to show that great things have been done, or great supplies have been administered from small portions.” She continued reading until she came to the account of their voyage over the sea towards Capernaum; and when she arrived at this part: “And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them,” she paused, and could scarce refrain from weeping, knowing the case both as it respected herself in spirituals, and myself in spirituals and temporals in the foreboding thereof. After a short pause, she resumed her reading, and came to this part: “So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship; and they were afraid.” As she read, “They see Jesus walking on the sea,” so could I see that he made the heaven and the earth, and the sea and the dry land. And now he makes a sea of troubles, and then walks upon them. Here she ended her reading for that time, and silently wept for a few minutes, and then broke forth and said, “O father, help me to praise him! O father, help me to praise him! I never saw such beauty, I never felt such sweetness in the Saviour’s name before.” With this I made the feeble attempt, and when I had ended, she farther said, “When I took the Testament, my whole heart went out unto him, that he would direct me to read something that might be of comfort to my father, not thinking of myself; therefore he is come when I did not look for him nor expect him. O bless him! I think none ever need to fear, seeing he has looked upon one so unworthy as I am, who have been so many times tempted to give it all up, thinking and fearing that I should never find.” Thus, beside many other things, the dear Lord gave her a sympathising spirit with mine when in trouble, a labouring spirit that the Lord would release me out of it, and rewarded her with his gracious manifestations for that which he had wrought within her, and then gave me and her mother hearts to rejoice with her, and to give thanks to the Father of all mercies for having comforted her poor heart after many months of darkness, bondage, fear, and despair.

By this visitation and event, I was led in some small measure into these words in Ruth: “The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.” This work, although it

was gleaning corn, was a "work of faith and labour of love;" and her believing was "according to the working of his mighty power," and her faith stood, "not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God," and therefore sure of success, whatever and whoever oppose, and how long soever the delays may appear to be. The Scripture, when speaking of the seedsman and his sowing, shows that whatever trouble attends him, success is certain, and a luxurious crop will be the harvest home. (Ps. cxxvi. 5, 6.) And the same of them that reap or glean; for he that preacheth God's word in faith and faithfully, and those who hear it in faith, shall reap the reward of their labour in an everlasting salvation by the grace of God through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, revealed and applied by the eternal and ever-blessed Spirit. (See John iv. 36; Matt. vii. 7, 8.)

The circumstance as above led me also a little into the case of the woman of Canaan who, labouring for her daughter, obtained the blessing herself, and thus rejoiced and triumphed in the words, works, and the ways of the dear, and ever-blessed Redeemer of poor sinners from sin, death, and hell.

I thought that I loved my daughter before as well as parent possibly could; but now it was abundantly increased, not because she was my child only, but because I had seen her in a great measure satisfied that she was a child of God, a subject that I believed before as well as at the above time. My affection was also kindled to a greater degree to find that she was labouring for me in the spirit, and that she had found a present and sure reward. And this is the way if the church, or any individual of the church, would have preachers sent to them, and their labours blessed, and their ministry made manifest,—if the church would prosper and increase in all grace, wisdom, understanding, and strength. This will be the way if a man prophesieth aright, he will or should ask the Lord to make it sure, and after he has spoken or written, he will wait and pray, and pray and wait, to hear of the issue. (See Habakkuk and Jonah.) So I humbly trust it was with yourself respecting my deliverance; and although it was not directly myself, yet my darkness fled, and light returned; my sorrows subsided, and joy succeeded; and my mind has been in a more steady, fixed, established state ever since; for although I am not favoured with the cup of strong consolations, yet I am enabled to believe that he is mine and I am his; a much more pleasant state than to be tossed to and fro as the locust.

If you ask, how the babe went on and continues, I answer, "Bowels of mercy were given;" for she said at the time, "O that I could see my sister, who had gone home in great trouble the day before." The next journey that I took, she said, "Give my love to Mr. and Mrs. D., and tell them that I believe I shall never die." The following morning she said, "I never got up from my bed so easy and pleasant in my life before;" and many other things beside. Therefore I say,

“ Rejoice, O ye heavens, and all that dwell therein; and be joyful, O earth, for the Lord hath done great things for my dear child, and her poor father likewise.”

And let me tell you and yours, and any others that may hear or read this poor scribble, that I esteem it a great favour to be borne of you or them in prayer, and that you should be moved to prophesy of the Lord's delivering power and mercy to such a poor unworthy worm.

And now, as I believe you will never be as the grass upon the housetop, which withereth afore it groweth up, wherewith the mower filleth not his hand, nor he that gathers sheaves his bosom, of whom, when the servants of the Lord pass that way, they never bless them in the name of the Lord. But of you, I say, the Lord hath blessed, and will bless you in Christ Jesus with all spiritual blessings; and I pray him that he will fill you with faith, and make you abound in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost.

April 21, 1840.

W. C. F.

LINES WRITTEN TO MR. G—, ON HIS BIRTHDAY.

BELOVED friend, again this day we hail,
 Though clouds and darkness o'er the mind prevail,
 And something seems to wish me to resign
 And leave the task to nobler minds than mine.
 Yet something inward prompts to persevere,
 Aspires to greet thy six-and-sixtieth year,
 And speak the honours of His lofty praise,
 Who has thus far lengthened out thy fleeting days
 To sixty-six. Ah! but a little span
 Ere thou wilt reach the days allotted man;
 Or if ere then thy Master calls thee home,
 And speaks the word, “Come, faithful servant, come,”
 Gladly thou'lt hear't and lay thy armour by,
 Well pleased to join the ransom'd host on high.
 To thee such message would be endless gain,
 But to those left behind sad grief and pain.
 And Zion still puts in her fervent plea
 That here for future years thy days may be.
 Surely 'tis needful that thou here abide,
 And watch and warn of dangers which betide,
 To comfort those by sin and sorrow worn,
 And feed with milk sincere the newly-born.
 For who would take the precious from the vile?
 Or who for sinners' souls so much would toil?
 Where should we find a shepherd, friend, and guide
 In whom we could so blessedly confide?
 For over seven years have sped their flight
 Since thou camest here, clothed with Jehovah's might,
 To preach the word in faith, with zeal, and power,
 And God has stood by thee unto this hour.
 Beneath thy care the church has prospered well,
 And trembling souls have been brought forth, to tell
 Of the Redeemer's conquering love and grace,
 That gave their names in Zion's walls a place.

And though the proud, self-righteous scorn and jeer,
 And those who once we hoped to be sincere
 May turn aside, reject the free-grace plan,
 And seek a refuge in the works of man,
 Yet truth shall stand and ever must prevail,
 And not one jot or tittle ever fail.
 For those who know and feel the plague of sin,
 And pant and thirst for righteousness within,
 Want not the gaudy show, the gilded bait,
 But in the house of God they humbly wait.
 No mongrel preaching suits such needy case,
 For first and last they want it all of grace.
 And though perchance some reckless ones may dare
 To turn those gospel truths into a snare,
 And while they listen to thy warning voice
 Still make the paths of sin their constant choice,
 And try to screen behind God's firm decrees,
 Though sin and Satan all the while they please;
 Such awful ones will sure thy spirit grieve,
 Wound living souls, and their own selves deceive;
 Yet must thou preach—fearless of friends or foes—
 Salvation free,—whoever may oppose;
 For living souls who Jordan's waves have trod
 In death, have proved such preaching is of God.
 Ah, blessed souls! we hug their memory dear,
 And hope to meet ere long without a tear.
 They need no preaching now, nor praying souls,
 For perfect bliss in endless pleasure rolls.
 But ah, dear friend, so swiftly thought moves on
 And half forgets the subject of my song;
 'Tis thy birthday—thy six-and-sixtieth year—
 We wish to celebrate with holy cheer.
 This special day may'st thou be blest indeed,
 From worldly cares and earthly sorrows freed;
 With heavenly streams refresh thy weary soul,
 And on thy dearest Lord thy burdens roll.
 This natal-day be it a "Mizar Hill,"
 Where thou with choicest loves thy soul mayst fill.
 From Zion's heights this day with joy record
 Another Ebenezer to thy Lord.
 And may thy dearest partner catch the flame,
 And both rejoice together in God's name.
 And if Jehovah's will her life to spare,
 To nurse and cherish well thy aged care,
 Till toils all o'er, thy spirit sweetly blest,
 Is gently wafted into glorious rest.
 Here now I close this greeting which I send,
 No worth or merit have I to commend;
 So frail a worm, beset with numerous cares,
 Still asks an interest in your fervent prayers.
 For ere another year has winged its flight
 These hands in silence may forget to write.
 So once again in bonds of love and grace,
 Which death nor life I trust will e'er erase,
 I leave, and hope with thee and saints to dwell
 Through countless ages! dear friend, farewell, farewell.

MEDITATIONS ON DIFFERENT PORTIONS OF THE WORD OF GOD.

MEDITATIONS ON THE FIRST CHAPTER OF THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER.

THERE is a day of which all the inspired prophets of the Old Testament, from Enoch to Malachi, and all the inspired evangelists and apostles of the New, from Matthew to John, have alike testified as the greatest of all days. Thus the very first note which was struck on the golden harp of prophecy and the very last was one and the same, viz., to sound forth the coming of the Lord in power and glory to the joy and salvation of his saints, and to the confusion and destruction of his enemies. The first recorded prophecy is that of Enoch, which belongs virtually to the Old Testament though preserved to us in the New. "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." (Jude 14, 15.) And as the coming of the Lord with his saints and to execute judgment upon the ungodly was the grand theme and subject of the first prophecy, so it is of the last, both in the Old Testament and the New. The last prophecy of the Old Testament is, "For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall." (Mal. iv. 1, 2.) And the last promise and prophecy of the New Testament is, "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." (Rev. xxii. 12.) As then between these two covers, so to speak, of the word of God lie all the promises and threatenings from the mouth of the Almighty, with the eternal destinies of all the children of men, so will this day, this great and terrible day of the Lord, be God's final decision and determination of the great controversy between good and evil, the vindication of all his ways, the fulfilment of all his counsels, the avenging and glorification of all his saints, and the banishing from his presence of all impenitent and unbelieving sinners. This day is spoken of by Peter in the chapter now before us as "the appearing," or as the word literally means, "the revelation" of Jesus Christ: "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. i. 7.)

The trial of faith, though exceedingly precious in the sight of

God, has no praise, honour, or glory now. The work of faith with power in a believer's heart, the various ways in which his faith is tried as with fire in the furnace of affliction and temptation, and yet shines all the brighter as the dross and tin of creature strength and wisdom are purged away, the deep and painful exercises which are carried on in secret between God and his soul, in which his faith often seems at the last gasp and yet is continually revived from its lowest sinkings and is strengthened once more to look and live—all these more or less daily fightings and fears, defeats and victories, ruin and destruction of self, and yet being held up in life by the power of the Lord, as they are little understood and less experienced by a generation settled on its lees and at ease in Zion, meet with little praise and honour from men. Those who are thus exercised and who are weaned and separated thereby from the careless, the indifferent, the slothful, the contentious, the erroneous, the proud, the covetous, and the worldly-minded professors of the day are considered bigoted, bitter-spirited, and narrow-minded, and are more hated and despised than the very ungodly. But a time is coming when the trial of their faith will be found unto praise and honour and glory. At the appearing of Jesus Christ, the righteous Judge, the faith of those who have glorified him in the fires, cleaved to him with purpose of heart in the furnace of temptation, looked to him and to him alone, and been determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified, will receive his solemn approbation. It was his own work, and he will praise it, and smile upon it, and crown it too with honour and glory. When all whom and all what man has praised, honoured, and glorified will sink and perish under the frowns of the Almighty, when shame and everlasting contempt (Dan. xii. 2) will be the portion of the great ones of the earth, who have boasted themselves in the abundance of their riches and honours, titles and distinctions, and walked in pride and self-indulgence, the Lord will crown with praise, honour, and glory his poor, despised people. The trial of their faith will then be seen to have been more precious than of gold that perisheth, for it will be found unto praise and honour and glory. And this will be true in two senses. This once tried and tempted but now glorified people will praise him, and he will praise not them but his own work in them; they will give him all the honour due unto his name, and he will put honour on his own grace, and crown the faith of his own giving and maintaining with eternal glory. And thus the trial of their faith will be found to praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. Will not this be a sweet reward for all the troubles and trials of the way; and should not the hope of this expected end, which shall not be cut off, animate and encourage every tried and tempted saint to hope to the end for the grace which is to be brought unto him at the revelation of Jesus Christ?

This we believe is the primary meaning of the words before us, the chief mind of the Spirit in them. But, as the scriptures from their fulness often admit of more than one signification, we may allow a secondary meaning of the expression "the appearing or revelation of Jesus Christ" as indicating his appearing and revealing himself in grace here as well as in glory hereafter. Thus, whenever the Lord appears in and for the soul, revealing himself to the heart in and after seasons of affliction and temptation, the trial of faith is found to praise and honour and glory; for praise is given to his name, honour put on his brow, and glory ascribed to him with the whole heart and soul.

But we pass on to the words so full of sweetness and power which immediately follow: "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; receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." (1 Pet. i. 8, 9.) What a note is here struck by the hand of the apostle which finds at once an echo in every believing heart! "Whom having not seen, ye love." Peter had seen him both before and after his resurrection; and indeed the last was necessary to qualify him to be an apostle. (Acts i. 22.) Peter had been with him in the holy mount, had seen him transfigured, when his face did shine as the sun and his raiment was white as the light, and heard the voice from the excellent glory which so testified of and ratified his divine Sonship, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (2 Pet. i. 17.) Peter had been with him in Gethsemane, and seen him condemned by the Jewish council, but saw him not on the cross, for he had basely denied him, and as all the disciples forsook him and fled, it would seem that none but John witnessed his crucifixion. But Peter saw him after the resurrection, when he was sweetly restored from his backsliding, and witnessed his glorious ascension. But those to whom Peter wrote had never thus seen Jesus in the flesh, and yet they loved him as much as if they had actually beheld his bodily shape and heard his natural voice. But how could this be? How could they love one whom they had never seen? Is not sight necessary to love? O but they had seen him, but not by the eye of flesh and sense. Thousands saw him with the natural eye who saw no beauty in him that they should desire him. To them he was "without form or comeliness," and "his visage was more marred than any man;" nay, what was worse, they hated him for what they saw in him, according to his own words: "But now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father." (John xv. 24.) Hundreds saw him hanging on the cross who only reviled and derided him. Why then should these elect strangers love him whom others hated, and love him too though they had never seen his face or heard his voice? Because they had seen him by faith. "In whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

But how this speaks to our hearts; and cannot some, if not many of us say too, "Whom, not having seen, we love?" Do we not love him, dear readers? Is not his name precious to us as the ointment poured forth? But we have not seen him. No, not by the eye of sense and nature; but we have seen him by the eye of faith; for he has manifested himself to us, or to some of us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. It is, then, by faith that we see Jesus. We read of Moses that, "by faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible." (Heb. xi. 27.) So by faith we see Jesus who is invisible; for as faith is "the substance of things hoped for," so is it "the evidence of things not seen." When our gracious Lord was leaving the world, he said to his disciples, "Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me. Because I live, ye shall live also." (John xiv. 19.) But how could they see him when he was gone away from them? He himself shall answer the question: "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you." (John xiv. 18.) "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." (John xiv. 21.) Thus we see that it is by Jesus coming to the soul and manifesting himself unto it that we see him. And as he always comes with his love, and in manifesting himself manifests himself in his love, that manifested love kindles, raises, and draws up a corresponding love in the believer's heart. It is the express, the special work of the Holy Ghost to testify of Christ (John xv. 26), to glorify him, to receive of the things which are Christ's, and to show them unto the soul (John xvi. 14); and thus in the light of Christ's own manifestations of himself, and the blessed Spirit's work and witness of him, what faith believes of the Person and work of Christ, love embraces and enjoys. We find, therefore, the apostle speaking in the words before us: "In whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Here we have linked together faith, love, joy, and glory. The word translated "rejoice" means a high degree of joy, and signifies, literally, to leap with joy. It is, therefore, rendered by our translators, "be exceeding glad" (Matt. v. 12), and in the epistle before us, "greatly rejoice" (1 Pet. i. 6), and "exceeding joy." (1 Pet. iv. 13.) Spiritual joy, holy joy, is therefore distinguished from earthly joy, natural joy, not only in nature, but in degree. Natural joy can never rise very high, nor last very long. It is of the earth earthy, and therefore can never rise high nor long endure. It is always marred by some check, damp, or disappointment; and as in the bitterest cup of the righteous

"There's something secret sweetens all,"

so in the sweetest cup of the ungodly there is something secret embitters all. All their mirth is madness (Eccl. ii. 1); for

even "in laughter the heart is sorrowful, and the end of that mirth is heaviness." (Prov. xiv. 13.) God frowns upon all the worldling's pleasure, conscience condemns it, and the weary heart is often sick of it, even unto death. It cannot bear inspection or reflection, has perpetual disappointment stamped upon it here, and eternal sorrow hereafter. But how different is the joy of faith and love. It is *unspeakable*, for it is one of the things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man; and therefore human language, which can only express human thoughts and feelings, has no words for this. Those who have experienced it understand it when spoken of by others, but not from the words themselves, but because those words are as if broken hints, dim and feeble shadows, imperfect and insufficient utterances, but interpreted by their own experience. "*And full of glory.*" It is literally "glorified," that is, the joy is a joy which God especially honours by stamping upon it a divine glory. Our blessed Lord said of his disciples, "And the glory which thou hast given me I have given them." This he had done by giving them of his grace, of which it has been well said that it is "glory begun, as glory is grace perfected." So we read, "And whom he called, them he also justified, and whom he justified, them he also glorified;" as if even now, when they were still in the flesh, God had already glorified them by the earnestness and foretastes of glory which he had given them in and by his grace. The sight of Christ by faith, and beholding his glory, has a transforming efficacy, as the apostle beautifully speaks: "But we all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. iii. 18.) This glass is the glass of the gospel, the word of grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ; and thus as the Person and work, beauty and blessedness, love and blood, grace and glory, condescension, suitability, pity and compassion, infinite loveliness and desirableness of the Son of God are viewed therein by faith, the sight has a transforming power and efficacy, so that the soul is changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. It is, therefore, a blessed preparation for, and foretaste of the glory that shall be revealed.

Now compare with this all earthly, carnal joy. It is in its highest and best form but a sowing to the flesh, and it therefore can only reap corruption. Take the highest success in life, the crowning of every ambitious wish, the full swing of every earthly pleasure, the utmost gratification of everything which health and strength, wife and family, house and home can give; add to it all that money can buy, rank command, love supply, or heart enjoy, a lot which has never been any man's, and not likely even in part to be yours; and yet how soon old age or sickness may mar, and death put an end to all. How blessed, then, it is to have a joy which death will not put an end to, but rather

consummate, by liberating the soul from the present bondage of corruption, to enjoy for ever the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Peter therefore adds, "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." What a blessed, what a glorious end is this; what a prize to win, what a victory to gain, what a crowning consummation of all that faith has believed, hope expected, or love embraced! Whatever doubts and fears may have harassed the mind, whatever sore temptations may have distressed the soul, whatever deep afflictions, painful trials, heavy guilt and hard bondage may have sunk it low, so low sometimes, as if it never would get over them or rise out of them, still that faith, which is God's gift and work, lives through all, and there is a blessed end in store for it—the salvation of the soul. And O, what does this not comprehend and imply? Think of what salvation is from; think of what salvation is unto. Neither the one nor the other can be fully known on this side of eternity. You may have had some glimpses of hell; you may have had some glances of heaven; some taste of the wrath to come, some taste of the glory that shall be revealed. But you have had only a small taste of either. The wrath of God, the horrors of a guilty conscience, the terrors of despair, the falling into his hands who is a consuming fire you may have, in some small measure, felt or feared; but you have never known, for nature could not bear it, the full and terrible extent of those dreadful realities. And so you may have had glimpses and glances, earnest and foretastes of the glory that shall be revealed; but you have never enjoyed, for nature could not bear it, what saints enjoy in the immediate presence of God. But if you have seen, tasted, handled, felt, and enjoyed a little of what you are saved from, and a little of what you are saved unto, it will make you bless God for having given you even a grain of that true and living faith, the end of which will be the salvation of your soul.

But here we must pause for the present.

Obituary.

A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE ILLNESS AND DEATH OF JESSE CRAKE.

In October, 1865, my dear husband was seized with a stroke of paralysis which took away the use of one side (extending to the foot) and of one arm. Through this affliction he was entirely laid aside from active employment, which was a heavy trial to him, as he had always been an active, energetic man. His mind had indeed been too deeply engrossed in the duties of his profession and the cares of this world. This was a source of deep regret to him, as I can bear witness, often hearing him bemoan his state while thus held captive. After the Lord laid

his afflicting hand upon him his soul was humbled in the dust of self-abasement, and he was made bitterly to lament his wanderings and all his heart backslidings. A Spirit of supplication was poured upon him, which the Lord heard and answered to the joy of his heart. The Holy Spirit led him back to the time when peace and pardon through the blood of the Lamb were first spoken to his soul, and then brought home again to his heart the healing virtue of the precious blood of Christ, cleansing his conscience from all sin and guilt. He felt the fear of death removed; it had lost its sting; and he then could triumph in redeeming love and adore and bless the hand that had smitten and laid him low thus to exalt the riches of his grace in restoring mercy. He enjoyed sweet communion with God and walked in the light of his countenance, and was after this kept exceedingly tender in the fear of God. He was made very diligent in searching the word of God, and during the three remaining years was not suffered to decline, but was kept most tender and also dead to earthly things and alive to eternal realities, and was often refreshed with the Lord's presence. He never sank again into a cold, dead, lukewarm state of soul, so as to remain in it, but when the Lord withdrew his presence, he bitterly mourned his absence. I will here record an account he gave me of his experience on a bed of sickness at the first attack of paralysis:

“I felt such nearness to the Lord, such sweet access, that I could look up to heaven and believe that when time with me should be no more it would be well with me. Those words were so sweet to me: ‘Whom he called, them he also justified, and whom he justified, them he also glorified.’ Those lines of Hart's were very sweet to me:

“O my Jesus, thou art mine,
With all thy grace and power,
I am now and shall be thine
When time shall be no more.

“Thou reviv'st me by thy death,
Thy blood from guilt has set me free;
My fresh springs of faith and hope
And love are all in thee.’

“Previous to this I had been looking back to my past life and my soul was cast down within me, and I was filled with shame and grief, so that I wept much. I was glad to feel this, as I had often tried to bring this sorrow for sin but could not produce it; it must come from sovereign grace. I seem to have lost those sweet feelings, and yet I am not greatly cast down, believing it to be the Lord's own work. I want an abiding sense of his love, and to feel the presence of God. I feel how uncertain my life is; I get weaker every day; I may be called away very soon; but I cannot trouble or care about anything here; the children and everything else sink into nothing when compared with things eternal.”

After this time he grew better, and was able to get to chapel and to walk out a little, although very feeble and lame.

On the 10th of November, 1867, my beloved husband was seized with another severe stroke of paralysis greatly affecting

the brain, depriving him of reason and laying him prostrate for some time. From this weakness he rallied in a measure, but his intellects were so impaired that he never regained them, neither could he read the precious word of God in which in times past he took such delight. This was a time of deep trouble indeed. In the dear sufferer grace and faith were made to triumph over the wreck of intellect. He had occasionally little returns of consciousness. When asked if afraid to die, he said in broken language, "No, I hope all is right," and he spoke of Christ as his all in all, feeling his safety alone in him. I was often led to beg of the Lord to display his power by enabling him to comprehend what I said to him and also in teaching me what to say. When repeating these sweet words, "I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed," he caught the sound and listened with evident joy, expressing himself in broken words; and, raising his hand, he said quite enough to make me understand that he felt the sweetness of the word and how near he felt the Lord to be to him, saying, "O, it was so sweet."

He was often in prayer and seemed to be holding sweet communion with the Lord. When asked if the Lord's presence was with him, he answered, "Yes, he does his wisest, his very best; he is so good to me." He always asked a blessing on every meal he took, although not outwardly.

One evening seeing him very restless and distressed, I prayed to be enabled to speak words of comfort, and said to him, "My dear, can you think of Jesus? You want that peace which he alone can give?" He answered, "Yes, I do, he can." I then spoke to him of Jesus stilling the storm and hushing the tempest for his dear disciples when tossed about on the waves, reminding him that Jesus had still the same power now as when on earth and was able to calm his troubled soul. I then repeated that sweet hymn:

"When through the deep waters I cause thee to go."

This he seemed much to enjoy. He became calm, his poor burdened mind was relieved, the storm was indeed hushed and peace and rest more evidently given. O the tender pity and compassion of God! O how he has made us to prove his power! On the 8th of December, 1867, Mr. Marshall came to see my dear husband. He had an interval of consciousness and conversed quite freely; he spoke sweetly of Jesus and his love, expressing his hope and confidence in him.

Mr. Marshall engaged in prayer, which my dear husband seemed to enjoy, and he was afterwards much in prayer himself, and seemed more sensible. His heart seemed so full of the love of God, he said, "I can believe in him, I can talk to him." He often said, "I am one with him."

One day I asked him to engage in prayer if he could. He said, "Yes," and then said, "Lord, have mercy on us, watch

over and bless us." He was often praying for his dear children, asking the Lord to watch over and bless them. The next day I said to him, "You seem more comfortable to-day," and he said, "Yes, I can pray to him about all and everything. To know him, when you can get your heart near to him, how sweet it is!" I said to him, "He has been our help," and he answered, "Yes, he has many times."

At one time I was greatly distressed because my dear husband had sunk into a low, desponding state, and also seemed to realise his bodily and mental weakness, but again the Lord showed his power, and enabled him to look to him as his only refuge, and brought to his remembrance past mercies. He conversed in a remarkable way with his son Augustine, showing him the importance of being taught of God, of being one with him; and another time he spoke to his son Ebenezer, and told him he hoped the Lord would guide him and take care of him.

One day he said to me: "My dear, 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' That is it; *just the same*, whether we see him or not. He is our God; he will take care of us. He has come into my soul. I want him again; I cannot do without him. He dwells in us; he is all, everything."

My dear husband seemed very happy, and to have sweet communion with the Lord. I said, "My dear, to whom have you been speaking?" He answered, "To him; he is my God, he is mine." His heart was full of the love of God, of which he spoke in broken language, saying, "O I want him to come a little nearer," and once suddenly breaking out, "O the love of Jesus, God-man," and more to the same effect. In speaking of what my dear husband said I give the substance in as nearly his own words as possible, as his language was so broken that I cannot always give his words *verbatim*.

My dear husband was rather low and tried in mind, but the Lord greatly revived his own good work in his soul, and greatly blessed him, enabling him to look back to the way he had been led, bringing to his remembrance what he had done for him in days gone by, even from his youth up, when first brought to a knowledge of his state as a sinner before a just and holy God, and also the time when peace and pardon were proclaimed and his sins put away through the atoning blood of the Lamb. Of all this he spoke with warmth and energy, and although the language was broken, I could fully understand him. He said, "Once *done, done for ever*; no change in him." He spoke of his dear mother and sister, with other dear friends who had died in the Lord, and said how he loved them. Once as I entered the room my dear husband said to me, "The Lord is ours; yours as well as mine. I love you and feel as much for you as I do for myself. We are *both one*."

March 24, 1868.—My dear husband has been very low in mind for some weeks, but at intervals more conscious in spiritual things. His sufferings have been great through imagining

evils, but the Lord has enabled him to pour out his heart before him, and to cast his burden upon him. Previous to this he had sunk low and wept much, but the Lord was very gracious to him, pouring out on him a Spirit of supplication. His face shone, and he looked so happy, and said to me, "O I have found the Lord there. He was so near I could tell him all, and O it was so sweet. I know that it all is right now. I shall soon die; it will not be long now." I answered, "Yes, my dear, he will come and take you to himself, that where he is you may be also." After this he seemed so calm and happy. At times after this he sank rather low, then again was raised up and blessedly comforted, thus proving the truth of those words: "They shall go in and out and find pasture." He was often much in prayer. Indeed the greater part of his time was spent in this blessed exercise. One day when he came in from a drive he said how the Lord had blessed his soul in that drive. His heart was so full that he burst into tears, and said, "O, my dear, it will not be long now." He told me how his heart had been drawn up to the Lord, and said, "O it was so sweet, the coming down and going up." He was made most diligent in the use of the means of grace, and although unable to read the Bible, he would often sit with it before him, and appeared to enjoy the same. I believe that the Lord blessed his hungry soul in so doing, also in attending a place of worship; in this he had much delight, and I believe he there found his dear Lord's presence. He was indeed one of the true worshippers; he would join in the singing, and often after his return said he had found the Lord there. O how he loved to meet with those that feared the Lord; they were dear to him above all others, as all could testify who knew him. Here I must bear my feeble testimony to the Lord's goodness and mercy in this our day of trial. He sometimes greatly favoured us in communion with each other, and was often pleased to draw nigh while we were engaged in seeking him together in prayer. Often did the Lord cause our hearts to burn while he in tender mercy drew nigh. O these times I never can forget while memory lasts. Affliction and trial had greatly strengthened that close bond of union we felt to each other.

I must now come to the time when the Lord in his most mysterious providence sent that trying and painful dispensation which caused our removal from Clifton, and consequently from the church at Abingdon and dear friends around, to whom we were so united. Painful as was the trial, the Lord brought our minds into submission to his will, and enabled us both to say, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." This was a time to be remembered indeed. This blessed portion was made so sweet to us: "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." My beloved husband was kept calm; was quite able to comprehend the need of our removal, and was willing to go wherever the Lord should lead. It was made quite clear that

our destined place of abode was Eastbourne, to which place we came on the 22nd of December, 1868.

My dear husband bore the journey well, and seemed as well in health as usual. He rode out every fine day, and showed no distress on account of the change, except once, when he said, "I should like to go home now; I want to go home to die." But the Lord mercifully delivered him from this feeling; and from this time it was quite evident to me he felt the presence of the Lord. The last evening of the old year he went to chapel; he seemed very happy and joined in singing that beautiful hymn,

"Awake, my soul, in joyful lays."

He kept in tune, and sang loudly. We little thought he would so soon realise the truth of those lines he then sang:

"Soon shall I pass this gloomy vale
To the bright realms of endless day;
To sing with rapture and surprise
Thy loving-kindness in the skies."

On his return from chapel he said, "O I so liked it; it was a good one" (meaning the sermon); but then he said several times, "Never any more;" meaning he should never go to chapel again. He looked so very happy. I was sitting close by him; he took my hand and kissed it several times. I was much struck by his manner. He said, "I shall soon be gone now;" and said several other things which showed how happy he felt. His dear face shone so that I began to fear that his time would not be long. On the 3rd of January, 1869, at noon, he was seized with a severe stroke of paralysis. The fit deprived him of speech; but shortly afterwards consciousness returned for a few moments. He was quite aware that he was dying, but apparently very happy in mind, and said several times, "Jesus, for ever and ever; Amen;" meaning he would be "for ever with the Lord;" and, speaking of the pain, said, "No more, for ever." When my niece said, "You are going to heaven, uncle;" he said, O so earnestly, "Yes, my dear." Another fit came on, followed by severe convulsions. From this time the physicians said hearing, sight, and all sensation were gone. The Lord dealt very gently with him in the end. He lay perfectly still, as though asleep, although breathing deeply, until about 7 o'clock Sunday morning, when his spirit departed to spend an eternal Sabbath above. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

MARTHA CRAKE.

THE gate which leads to life is a strait gate, therefore we should fear; it is an open gate, therefore we should hope.—*Mason*.

THE law is the glory of God in justice and wrath; Christ is his glory in mercy and grace; and both these glories are unbounded and eternal, like himself. So I am favoured in blessed enjoyments, at times, thus to behold his love and his grace; and then nothing appears wrong or ill—*T. Hardy*.

AUGUST 2, 1869.

THE

GOSPEL STANDARD.

AUGUST, 1869.

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

THE ROSE OF SHARON AND THE LILY OF THE VALLEY.

A SERMON BY THE LATE MR. ABRAHAMS, FEB. 24TH, 1850.

"I am the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley. As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters."—SONG II. 1, 2.

JOHN, the beloved apostle, being favoured by the Holy Ghost with a view of God's deep mysteries, and to see something of the glory of the Son of God, after he had led him to give an account of his majesty as the eternal Son of God, he gave him this glorious anthem: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us; and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

The church of God in olden days was greatly helped to speak of the excellence, the majesty, the grandeur, the beauty, and the loveliness of the Christ of God; and in this song, called the Song of songs, that is, the best of songs, Solomon represents this glorious One again and again, and speaks some blessed things concerning him and the church of God. This is truly mutual comfort. It is not sufficient, at times, for friends to comfort their friends concerning their ability to help them; but they say the whole of it is this, what David once said to Abiathar: "He that seeks thy life, seeks my life." If he touches you, he touches me. Such is the case sometimes with God's people. It was so with Jonathan and David. How often they tried to comfort one another against all the spite of Satan. Jonathan saw that a free spirit came upon David; and this freedom being the liberty of the everlasting gospel, he could not help loving him. I admire the dear youth's conduct to David. He said, "You see I am dressed up like a prince, and am the first man in Israel; but to show you what is the love of my soul to you, there, do you take all of it; for my soul is so bound up with yours, we must stand together or fall together." If, therefore, poor mortals are thus able to comfort each other, so that we have heard men say in the warmth of their soul and being persuaded the characters are God's elect, "My soul for yours, if you come not right," yet what is this comfort to that

eternal blaze of glory which was and is without interruption and without cessation in Father, Son, and Holy Ghost towards his dear church? There must be, at times, a bursting out of this glory; and though we sometimes cannot bear so great a manifestation of it any more than we can bear the Lord's frown, so that we seem to swoon away and say, "Stay thy hand, dear Lord: I cannot for the present bear any more;" these are burstings forth of the glories of Christ in whom the dear souls are built together. I am commanded in the word to build you up on your most holy faith, to reprove, rebuke, exhort, and preach him more especially whom your souls love; for a glance of the Son of God makes all straight for the time being, so that their dear souls can say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth I desire beside thee."

Moreover, God's people do not meet with much encouragement in this world either from friends or foes, or from ourselves. There is something when we do not like to say too much, lest we should lift you up with pride. O the cutting work it has been to me, so that none but God himself knows my heart. Such is the timidity of a poor child of God that we are afraid to say much. Then what a mercy to have the dear Christ of God to tell us what we are; and he cannot make any mistake. While you were singing, these words came to my mind, and I thought to myself, "God's dear Christ will speak good of his dear people, notwithstanding they be in that awful spot where Joshua was, and the devil would pull him all to pieces and out of the hand of his Advocate if he could, till the Son of God rebuked the devil, and told him to stand behind, for Joshua was a brand plucked from the burning; and he took away his filthy garments and gave him a change of raiment and crowned him with loving-kindness and mercy." Well; I was thinking the Son of God could do so this morning; and as my text looks that way, my desire is that it may prove to you what it did to Joshua, that notwithstanding you are as black as Joshua ever was, and though you may feel in your heart that you are nothing but filth in your dress and inside too, for everything that draws out your pride becomes so much filth; and not only so, but you feel if you have to plead against the devil you will lose the day; yet if you can feel, through the blessing of God, that he will plead your cause, if he send you home with a little of what he says in my text, that will do. It is as though he said, "Do not fret at what you feel in yourself; only listen to what a title I myself give you." To this end he first speaks of his own self; for it is a sweet comfort that our Christ is set forth as the dearly-beloved Son of God's bosom, in whom he is well pleased.

The next thing is, he declares, over and over again, that his dear people are so united to him that, by virtue of that union, they claim to be as he is, and so shall stand before him finally. "O," says the dear soul, "that is too much." No, it is not. You are predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's

dear Son, and you cannot be that without union with his dear Son. This is the axe I should like to wield in the last sermon I have to preach; for it cuts down the rotten tree of Arminianism to the ground. Then in the first place he speaks of himself, and in the second of his dearly beloved.

The first verse is Solomon giving a description of himself as a type of him who is the Solomon of Solomons, Christ the Lord; and the next is Christ, through Solomon, speaking of the church.

Take, then, in the first place, the Christ of God in the *kingship* as the Prince of peace. Solomon also was typical of him in his infinite *wisdom*; for God gave him wisdom as the sand of the sea shore,—a singular figure.

Moreover, Solomon was not only typical of the Lord in his kingship and wisdom, but also as regarded his *glory* and *beauty*; for no king was like him. But all types are like a glowworm compared to the Sun of Righteousness; so that all types the ancient gospel could produce were like glowworms in the sun. What a blaze you would see in him if God would give you eyes to see. “I am like the great I AM, the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the valley.” This is a description of the beauty, the fragrance of him who is the altogether lovely; and even on earth the Son of God, as the Christ of God in human nature, was anointed with all the fulness of the Holy Ghost.

I will endeavour to open these words a little, for I have no idea that any man can do justice to this short description of Christ.

I. I will describe the *spot* a little; for he does not say, “I am Sharon, or an excellent rose,” but the “*Rose of Sharon.*” The servant of God, Isaiah, expresses it in chap. xxxv., where he calls it the excellence of Carmel and Sharon: “They shall see the glory of the Lord and the excellence of our God.” Thus, then, the excellence of Carmel is hinted at; and thus there is an excellence in it for a rose of a peculiar kind.

II. I will take a glance at the *figure* itself: “I am the Rose of Sharon.”

III. I will take notice of the Holy Ghost bringing, as it were, *the ends of the earth together*, to show something of Christ. Christ further says, “The Lily of the valley.” The lily is so very different to the rose that it is wonderfully figurative of the complex nature of Christ. “My beloved is white and ruddy.”

I. The *spot*. Sharon is a favourite place that you read of in God’s word, and is described as having many excellences—as a place where God showed his wonders; for when God speaks of a holy place, and a glorious place, it means that, by God being there, in his glory and holiness, it is made so. The places themselves are nothing; for when God is gone, the devil soon comes in. Such is the case with Jerusalem. It has been a cage of unclean birds for 1,800 years; and so far from being holy, I might as well point to the slaughterhouses of Smithfield as holy. So much for that.

You find, in the first place, Sharon was the spot where God appeared for dear Jacob and delivered him from his wily master; and here he set up a pillar or heap of witnesses, and they each put up a watch tower. This is the first thing we read of Sharon. Here was an excellence whereby you and I may feel out something of God. Has he ever appeared for you and wrought an excellent deliverance for your dear soul, that you may say, "Here God appeared and delivered me from my enemies?"

The next thing you read of concerning Sharon is, it was where Moses conquered the first king and took possession of the country; when the Lord shewed them what he would do for them, and that the land should be theirs, and he would be with them, and beat down their foes.

Again. Sharon is described in Chronicles as a famous place for David to keep his flock in. It was described as a fruitful country, though sometimes brought down for the wickedness of the people; and that you will find in Isa. xxxiii.: "The earth mourneth and languisheth; Lebanon is ashamed and hewn down; Sharon is like a wilderness; and Bashan and Carmel shake off their fruits." Thus you see it was a most famous country for food. Modern travellers say, with all the desolation around it, with all that was enough to make any country desolate; yet the beauty of the place, after a little shower, is to such an extent, with the fragrance of the roses, that it is wonderful. One traveller says he saw one rose tree under which thirty men might dine, always bearing roses, always shedding forth some sweet fragrance. But with all the beauty that art can paint, with all the wonder that earth could cast such a tree out of the ground which God had cursed, yet it cannot be compared with the excellence of Jesus. It is not to be named with the warm soil from which this tree is sent, namely, the ancient unchangeable love of God. That is not enough. There is a needs be for this; for why should the Son of God be compared by such a figure as the rose of Sharon? There are other places, in Persia, for instance, which are renowned for roses in a very wonderful manner. But no. It must be the rose of Sharon. Then something must be said about it. The excellence of the rose of Sharon is that it has no thorns. I know our blessed Lord has no thorns. Then if you be certain of the antitype, you may make sure of it with the type; for the antitype will throw open a larger field of the type. It says the church is a lily among thorns, but not that Christ is a rose among thorns.

Well; regarding the rose itself, not only is it without thorns, but the fragrance of it is so wonderful that when the wind blows from that quarter you may smell it miles off. Blessed be our God, he wafts a sweet savour into the heart of a poor sinner through his dear Son.

There is also an efficacy of healing in this rose of Sharon. Not only is its beauty so great, but it has such healing power

that some consider it ought to be called the rose of the field of Sharon; so they want to throw open a wider door. I don't know why they try to make it larger, for the door of the temple had a measure; and John Bunyan tells you why the size is given so particularly, that it was large enough to let a man in, but he could not carry the world through on his back. Well; the dear souls have taken a liberty with the words which I cannot see; but the healing efficacy of the rose seems not to be denied by any one; and if they do in the type, it is not to be denied in the antitype. So precious is his healing power that he is called the balm of Gilead; so gentle, that he is a pattern for physicians. His healing is in himself, which is more than any mortal physician can say; though I do not slight them. No. I despise those who say we do not want any physician. Then you are wiser than God; but we have to deal so much with fancies; and I believe it is one of the snares of the devil to mix up fancies with our most holy religion, to bring it into contempt.

Well; a little more of this rose. It is so beautiful that it is like an imperial flower. But I am tired of the letter, that I may come to him who is the life; but not in the sense you may take my words; for I love the letter of the word in every part; but who would not be glad to turn aside and view the wonder? "I am the Rose of Sharon." Well; how camest thou to be so, dear Lord?

"But," say you, "I think you had better finish the letter first." The other figure says he is the Lily of the valley. It puts me in mind of the figure that Hosea makes use of: "He shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon." The lily is a delicate flower, so beautifully white that it is purity itself. Something like what we have a glance of in what John saw,—the armies of heaven riding on white horses, and clad in white raiment, and with palms in their hands. White is that colour whereby God would give the church of God a glance of the purity in which they stand. How often I was all but publishing my thoughts about these white garments! But God kept me quiet, for there are many who have sent forth some scribblings in their early days that they would be glad to call back now. This is what I wanted to write about, that when the high priest went into the holiest he was to put on a white dress, which my brethren after the flesh (the Jews) make every young man in the day of his wedding be dressed up in,—a white robe and girdle. He also wears it on the day of atonement, and he is put into the coffin with it. But, blessed be God, I have a better robe.

This lily is beautifully white and is fond of low spots; namely, valleys. It is a flower we can have no conception of in this country, any more than we can of the rose of Sharon.

But I will not linger on the variety of the accounts of the beauty, loveliness, and extreme whiteness of this lily, but put the two together: "I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the

valley." Here is a description of the Son of God; the one of his divinity, the other of his being ruddy in his human nature, and of his perfect and efficacious healing for poor sinners. It sets him forth as lowly beyond description, and white beyond comparison. White is an emblem of purity. It is a hint of his eternal power and Godhead which made him in human nature holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. The Holy Ghost gives a description of him thus: "By whom also he made the worlds. Who, being the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person." Not he ought to be, or might be, or was something like it. No. "Who, being the brightness of his glory." And in another place: "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." What is the form of God? God has not a body; he is a Spirit. Yet it says, "The form of God." Then God has a form. We read of his arm. That is figurative. His arm signifies his omnipotence. "Ah; but we read of his feet; what is that?" Alexander skipped like a ram over the mountains; but our God, by his feet, showed that he travelled in all his decrees, unveiling his glory.

The dear Son of God is described in his Godhead, white; in his human nature, red. He was so lowly, sings dear Hart, that he stooped to come among men. Yea, he bowed the heavens and came down, and darkness was under his feet. Therefore one sings, "Who is a Lord like unto thee, that humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in earth?" The humility of the Son of God is a deep subject; but the humility displayed by him is something very sublime and glorious. Was there any condescension like it? Is it not enough to make you look and wonder, love and praise, that the omnipotent Son of God, equal with the Father in glory and majesty, should so stoop as to take such beggars as you and me from the dunghill, that he might exalt us among the princes of his people? It puts me in mind of the vision Zechariah saw of the angels standing among the myrtle trees. Those are ever lively; they are ever-greens. Who made them so? Their Creator did. I wish the Arminians would keep this in mind, that God makes a dear child of his lowly, and not John Wesley.

If you and I have to go through this valley, we shall find it is not so easy. I don't think Pilgrim went into the worst places of this valley; but my Master did; for it is he who is particularly declared to be the Man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs. He was grieved by the people round him; he was grieved by nominal professors; he was grieved by the temptations of the devil. This it was that made his visage marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men. What, literally? No; for he was the fairest of the sons of men. Thus, then, I would set forth the excellence of his Godhead; but what shall a poor worm do? I had better wind up thus, that "now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as I am known."

Christ is now in glory, glorious and beautiful. The beauty of holiness was from the womb of the morning. All ceremonial beauty, all moral beauty centres in Christ; all the beauties of holiness, not only one. There is plenty of beauty that the devil has made a handle of; so that you may look into the glass; but if the Holy Ghost shines into your soul, you would be glad to forget what you are like. Well; the beauty of the Son of God is such that the cherubim fall down and veil their faces while they chant, "Holy, holy, holy!" Yet, while he is all this, as the Rose of Sharon, he was "stricken, smitten, and afflicted." He offered up himself a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour to God, and the Lord smelled a sweet savour of rest. That refers to Christ again, for he rested in his love, and will rest in his love for ever in the delight that he has in you and me, poor sinners.

But God the Father and the Holy Ghost, too, had a sweet savour of rest. If God saw that everything that he had made was good, he had it in the new creation too; for he says, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

I am not surprised that the Holy Ghost should say God is refreshed as well as man. But the rose is still in beauty in heaven, still the Rose of Sharon; for there will be not only a rose tree of Sharon in heaven, which will cover thirty men, but under which the whole family of God in heaven shall sit down with great delight. It is a subject so out of the grasp of the most refined mind that it is like a sea that has neither bottom nor shore; and it is a mercy to have a mind to strip from everything that is selfish and swim in it.

Ask a dear child of God who has been in great distress, and he will say his precious Christ is his only refuge, and even on earth among bitter persecutors, his people find in him a sure defence.

Well; is it not a sweet savour? "Because of the savour of thy good ointment, thy name is as ointment poured forth." Ah, to be sure! We don't want it concealed, but we want to feel it; the power of Christ revealed over the crookedness in my flesh. "Ah," say you, "that is it. I want much of that power in the comfort of it."

Well; now I will drop the subject. In the evening I will tell you a little more of it, what a singular idea that the Son of God should take up the church and make her like himself: "As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters."

May God give you some sweet smell of the Rose of Sharon, some healing virtue from him, some precious reviving by him, that we may get a little honey out of that rock that our eyes may be enlightened; for unless the power of God is revealed we can get nothing. An Arminian may tell me of slips that God's children make, and call it falling from grace; but as sure as God's power is put forth, all comes right again. I add no more.

LUTHER ON THE BONDAGE OF THE WILL.

THERE are two kingdoms in the world mutually militating against each other. Satan reigns in the one, who on that account is by Christ called "the prince of this world," and by Paul "the god of this world," who, according to the testimony of the same Paul, holds all captive according to his will who are not rescued from him by the Spirit of Christ; nor does he suffer any to be rescued by any other power but that of the Spirit of God; as Christ testifies in the parable of "the strong man armed" keeping his palace in peace.

In the other kingdom Christ reigns; which kingdom continually resists and wars against that of Satan; into which we, the people of Christ, are translated, not by any power of our own, but by the grace of God, whereby we are delivered from this present evil world, and are snatched from the power of darkness. The knowledge and confession of these two kingdoms, which thus ever mutually war against each other with so much power and force, would alone be sufficient to confute the doctrine of Freewill, seeing that we so willingly serve in the kingdom of Satan until we be liberated by a Divine power.

If the nature of man be so evil, even in those who are born again of the Spirit, that it does not only not endeavour after good, but is ever averse to, and militates against, good, how should it endeavour after good, *i. e.*, *spiritual* good, in those who are not born again of the Spirit, and are still in the "old man," and serve under Satan?

As to myself, I openly confess that I should not wish freewill to be granted me, even if it could be so, nor anything else to be left in my own hands, whereby I might endeavour something towards my own salvation; and that not merely because in so many opposing dangers, and so many assaulting devils, I could not stand and hold it fast (in which state no man could be saved, seeing that one devil is stronger than all men), but because even though there were no dangers, no conflicts, no devils, I should be compelled to labour under a continual uncertainty, and to beat the air only. Nor would my conscience, even if I should live and work to all eternity, ever come to a settled certainty how much it ought to do in order to satisfy God. For whatever work should be done, there would still remain a scrupling, whether or not it pleased God, or whether he required anything more, as is proved in the experience of all justiciaries, and as I myself learned to my bitter cost through so many years of my own experience.

But now, since God has put my salvation out of the way of my will, and has taken it under his own, and has promised to save me, not according to my working or manner of life, but according to his own grace and mercy, I rest fully assured that he is faithful, and will not lie, and moreover, great and powerful,

so that no devils, no adversities can destroy him, or pluck me out of his hand.

Hence it is certain, that in this way, if all are not saved, yet some, yea, many shall be saved; whereas, by the power of free-will, no one whatever could be saved, but all most perish together. And, moreover, we are certain and persuaded, that in this way we please God, not from the merit of our own works, but from the favour of his mercy promised unto us; and that if we work less or work badly, he does not impute it unto us, but, as a Father, pardons us and makes us better. This is the glorying which all the saints have in their God.

THE ANOINTING WHICH TEACHETH OF ALL THINGS, AND IS TRUTH, AND NO LIE.

My dear Sir,—I had thought that you had entirely forgotten me, till a few weeks ago, when I received your very excellent letter; for which I thank you very kindly, for it came just at a time when a letter from a friend was very much needed. I was very much pleased to hear how the blessed Lord was helping you, and giving you those things which to my mind appear to be the most needed. Also I quite enjoyed the account of the Lord's goodness to you as a church and people, especially that part where you say that at the re-opening of your chapel the Lord re-opened you hearts. I felt I should have loved to have been there, and had mine re-opened too.

It has been a long time since I enjoyed the Lord's presence to my soul's satisfaction. I had anticipated having the pleasure of hearing you once again, but you see I was disappointed; but I find disappointments, crosses, losses, and vexations are the lot of God's people; and it must be so, for in the world the dear Redeemer said they shall have tribulation. The blessedness of it all, however, is, in him they shall have peace, and O what a peace there is enjoyed in the soul when the dear Spirit of all truth shows Christ up to our astonished sight, and applies his precious blood again to our guilty conscience. It is a peace which comes into the soul like a river, and a peace which passes all understanding. We may enjoy the bliss and blessedness of it; but understand it we cannot. I find it to be a very great mercy to enjoy any little favour from the Lord's hand; and I can truly say he has blessed me in a wonderful way and manner; so much so that I have to exclaim, "What hath God wrought!" Twelve months ago, I said, "Surely against me is his hand turned;" but now my soul can say, "The Lord bringeth down, and lifteth up; he openeth and no man shutteth." Moreover I can say, "The Lord is good, and his mercy endureth for ever." What a wonder it is that the Lord should take notice of such a poor worthless worm as myself, and give me answers to prayer in the way that he does. Really I have cause to say, "Wonder, O heavens, and be astonished, O earth, for the Lord hath done

it." It is really wonderful how the Lord supports me in all my trials, and grants me those things which I stand in need of; so that I prove the truth of that precious passage: "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." And what sweet asking, seeking, and knocking it is when the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. We then can ask in faith nothing wavering; for "he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, tossed to and fro." Really, dear Sir, when the Lord blesses our souls, we are as bold as a lion. We say with the great apostle Paul, "I can do all things, through Christ which strengtheneth me." Bless his dear spotless name, I am sure he is the best of all friends; for when all others fail, we prove him to be the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; and he is a friend that is touched with a feeling of our infirmities; for he was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. What a blessed distinction,—*without sin*. These words are as an excellent oil. They run into the very vitals of our souls; for had he not been holy, harmless, and undefiled, you and I could have had no hope in him; but we know that he is holy, just, and good, because his goodness has so many times been made known to our souls. I often think, "What should we do if the dear Lamb of God was not almighty; able to save to the very uttermost all that come unto God by him?" O what a load of guilt the Father laid upon him! Surely if he had not been God as well as man, he could not have borne up under it all. Bless his dear name! As Hart says:

"He bore all incarnate God could bear,
With strength enough, and none to spare."

When we are led into his life of trouble, and into his torturing death, it is enough to put our souls to the blush. I am often brought to say, "What are my troubles compared with his?" Why, they are as nothing; and yet I am often murmuring and rebelling against the Lord, because my path is not so smooth and soft as I would have it; but then there is a needs-be for it all. The Lord only knows what I should be, did he not bring me into these dark holes and corners. When in my right mind, I can see it is all for the best, all to wean me from the world and to humble me in the dust before him. There is a great deal in me that requires keeping down. The warfare is continually going on, and I am often afraid that the world, the flesh, and the devil will get the victory. Grace in my soul is often at a very low ebb. In truth I sometimes am afraid there is no grace at all; and I should believe this was the case, did not the dear Spirit of all truth enter again into the dark chambers of my heart with his life-giving power, and raise up my soul again to a hope in the mercy of God. I always know when the Lord the Spirit pays my soul a visit by the effects produced. It does not matter what commotion is going on within, when the Holy Ghost lets drop a little of God's eternal love into my soul, all is quiet and still,—not so much as a hard thought to be found.

And O what love springs up in a moment to the dear Lord, and to his dear people. We want no one to tell us then it is our duty to love God with all our heart; for we really do love him, and feel as though we would never sin against him again; but then these visits are so few and so far between. I should like them oftener, and for them to last longer; and so would all God's people; but, although they are so short and come so very seldom, they leave such a holy anointing upon our souls that we do not forget it for a long time.

My dear Sir, I can remember many of these precious anointings which I received under your ministry. O that it were so as I could receive another of them now; but, alas, alas! That cannot be; for we are too far apart. Nevertheless, though absent in body, I sometimes think we are present in spirit; for I often feel my soul going out in prayer for you, and love springing up towards you and towards your dear Master; and my prayer is that we may cling to him, trust in him, and hang upon him, that we may live with him on earth, and not be separated hereafter.

With very best love to Mrs. G. and yourself,

I remain, Yours very affectionately,

Balsall, Nov. 19th, 1865.

E. F.

A PROPER CHILD.

At last, dear friend, I am going to try and write a few lines to confess my fault, and to ask your forgiveness for not answering your kind and precious letter. I call it precious, because it contains much precious truth, and that contained in the form of a blessed experience of it in your own soul; and as face answers to face in a glass, so do some parts of my dear friend's exercises answer to mine. I am well persuaded he is a proper child, one who, through grace, has got the truth in the fiery school of affliction, a child whom the Lord will never permit to sell the truth because bought with the coin of sovereign grace; one who is not his own, being bought with the unspeakable, invaluable, precious blood of atonement; one who is loved with an everlasting love; one who will never come into the condemnation of the wicked, but will stand at last in the presence of his gracious God in the congregation of the righteous, accepted in the Beloved, washed in blood divine, clothed in the spotless, glorious robe that the dear Redeemer wrought out amidst temptations, tears, groans, sighs, sleepless prayerful nights, cold, hunger, cruel treatment of wicked professors, shame and spitting, bloodshedding and death; one who descended, mystically, with his gracious Lord into the tomb, and when he rose and ascended my dear and often-tried and suffering friend ascended with his blessed Redeemer, who ever lives to intercede for his poor child and honoured servant, and who will come at the fixed time and receive him to himself, to doubt no more, to fear no more, to

sin no more, but where your eyes will behold the King in his beauty, and be for ever in that happy, holy place where sin no more defiles—where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

Now, dear Mr. —, I believe all this respecting your state and standing in divine things; so I may well call you a proper child; and I believe the gracious Redeemer who has redeemed you from all iniquity is not displeased with me for thus, in my poor, lame, feeble way, trying to cheer and encourage his tried, afflicted, labouring servant. I believe the Lord will stand by you in every sorrow and temptation that may still await you ere you reach the end of your journey through the great and terrible wilderness, and will never leave you shut up in the hand of your enemies. The Lord will lift you up; you shall walk upon your high places, and, in the strength of the God of Israel, you shall tread upon the necks of your enemies, and cry, "Victory, victory, through the blood of the Lamb!" Yes, and my dear friend tries to lisp out a little of that precious holy song in these low lands of strong opposition both within and without; but when he reaches his distant port, he will then sing the song of songs: "Unto him who hath loved us and washed us in his own blood."

But, dear friend, the question has risen in my own mind over and over since I began this note, "Shall I be there? Shall such a sinner as I am be one amidst that washed, that sanctified, that redeemed company who are now singing the high praises of the glorious Lamb in the midst of the throne?" I should not like to say that I am without a hope in the mercy of God; but that hope has been often tried; and when I think of the many afflictions and trials I have passed through, that wonderful hope did not *entirely* fail me, and that it is a hope that did not forsake me in the fires of temptation nor in the chilling dark floods of soul-sorrow and desertion,—I say, when I am favoured to think on this, then I hope I possess a good hope through grace; and if so, then I have to do with a faithful God who has respect to the work of his own hands, and who is the God of all hope. Who ever trusted in the Lord and was confounded?

Ah, dear friend, it is the confusion and darkness of the working of sin within that hides the Beloved from my view. Some time ago I was deeply grieving over my sins when I received a gentle reproof. Something seemed to speak to my spirit in this way: "Why are you so troubled? Do you believe that your sins have more power to damn than the blood of Jesus Christ has power to save?" And I felt for a short time what a fearful God-insulting, Christ-dishonouring sin is the sin of unbelief; and yet this is the sin that does so easily beset me. I feel its iron grasp so strong, and my own sinful weakness so great, that I can in no wise shake it off. But something yet can do the deed. Yes; the Lord has but to say, "Loose her and let her

go," and I am soon out of my prison-house, and feel the peace of God which passeth all understanding; but sin, vile sin, either in the way of thought, word, or deed, soon drags my helpless soul down to the earth again; and then unbelief lays hold upon me, and in I go to the gloomy prison-house again, to bewail my folly and my shameful, base ingratitude. Sometimes, with shame I would confess it, I feel too hard in heart to be sorry for my transgressions. O, dear friend, what a shameful, shameless, wretched creature I am; and what a pitiful, gracious, forbearing, longsuffering God is the God of salvation, who comes again and again, and continues to do so all through the wilderness, to speak a word of encouragement to the poor self-ruined, hard-hearted sinner: "O, Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thy help."

Last month I was kept for some little time in a solemn frame of mind respecting the shortness of time, and how soon I should have to stand before that great all-seeing God who knows the baseness of my wicked, wicked nature; and my cry was:

"Prepare me, gracious God,
To stand before thy face."

On the 10th, when going to rest, I was solemnly impressed with the thought of how soon I must appear in the presence of that Almighty, holy, and just God. After I got into bed, I continued to dwell upon this truly solemn subject, when in a moment, in a way I cannot describe, heaven was brought near to my spirit, and a wonderful change took place in my soul. I seemed to want to leave the body, and cried out in my heart, "O when shall I come and appear before God?" and then these words dropped sweetly on my listening spirit:

"O happy hour, O bless'd abode!
I shall be near and like my God."

I went to sleep a happy, pardoned child. Heaven was, indeed, at my door. The next morning, I was taken poorly, and was confined to the house for some time with influenza, and before I was quite recovered, my mind sank into darkness, and some painful exercises; nor was it altogether hid from me why I was again put into distress. I remembered, a day or two before I was taken ill, I was guilty of carrying an unbecoming spirit toward a professor of truth, and a proud look toward an enemy of the truth, as I passed him in the market-place. I felt at the time that it was wrong, and wished I had not done it; but there was no hearty confession to the Lord for this unscriptural and unbecoming behaviour. "The proud he knoweth afar off, but the meek will he lead in judgment." The Lord marks proud looks as well as unkindness to our fellow-mortals. These things are unbecoming those who profess to be the followers of him who, in the days of his humility, took the lowest place, and bore the contradictions of sinners against himself, and hid not his face from spitting. But how slow I am to learn, and how unable to put in practice that which I see in the

word of the Lord to be right! for “the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.” We have to prove the truth of the words that fell from the gracious lips of the Lord Jesus Christ, when he said, “Without me ye can do nothing.”
 Wantage, Dec. 9, 1868. T. V.

A LETTER BY THE LATE JESSE CRAKE.

My dear Friend,—I received your kind letter, and hope you do not think it unkind in my not answering it earlier. I have but very little time on my hands; but the worst is I have so seldom an inclination, and when I do find a little inclination sometimes, then opportunity lacks, or before I can put my will into practice something occurs to stir up corruption, and away flies the inclination.

I think there are very few tried as I am,—a trying occupation, and trying circumstances connected with it; an unbelieving heart, and not much concerned to have it otherwise. I feel that mine is a lamp of profession which will one day go out into utter darkness, and again I hope, at times, that I am not altogether in a natural state. I am continually ebbing and flowing, seldom at a point about my state, yet dare not but say that I trust that God has translated my soul from the kingdom of darkness into his marvellous light; and if such be the case, how comes it to pass that I do not have the comfort of it, and that I should be left to walk in so much darkness? I very much fear, at times, getting into that state of hardness when iniquity is no burden, sin no grief, and backsliding ways bring no trouble of soul. One thing I know, I would not, at times, be the wretch I am for all the world, and yet, at other times, am quite unconcerned about the matter. I am looked upon by others as a saint indeed; but I feel within a most vile sinner; yet again, amidst it all, I find and feel that it is sovereign grace alone can reach my case, and all my trust is alone in sovereign, unmerited mercy; for well do I know, without it, I must perish for ever. One thing that I am well persuaded of is this, that one look of love from the Lord would make matters right in a moment; and I think I can say that my soul desires it more than all the world besides without it. Yea, at times, I feel that I could part with all things nearest to me to know that the time should come, for certainty, that I should have it again. Now, I know in my judgment that if I ever had it I shall have it again; but that is no stay to me now. I cannot see that I ever did have it; for “he hath made darkness his habitation, and clouds are about his throne.”

No thanks to any mortal living that he differs in any degree from the worst of reprobates about him; for I do think, if the children of God feel like me, that their sins are far beyond whatever any unregenerate or deluded man can go into, sins against light, sins against knowledge, sins against love, and sins against mercy manifested and grace revealed; worldliness, pride, carnality, light-

ness, deceit, envy, evil speaking, even sometimes against the dear children of God, because of some slight difference from ourselves, and all manner of evil. O! What weight was there laid on in that day when a sinless, sin-atonng Lamb suffered for our sake all the justice of a sin-avenging God! Ah! What love was there—threefold love—that the Father should, for love of sinful worms, lay on the dear Son of his own bosom that weight of punishment and deserved wrath that would have crushed a universe to hell, and for justice sake not allow him the least relief; no, not even when he cried out in agonies, “I thirst;” but to allow him to be mocked by wretches of human kind by offering him vinegar and gall; and even in strict justice to hide his face from him, and permit, yea, even cause him, to sink beneath it all, as far as his humanity was concerned; and not only to hide his face, but to pour out upon him all that fire of his divine wrath to the uttermost, without the least item of mitigation, all his just fury and indignation against sin without the least abatement, and to cause him to die the awful and dreadful death of a sinner feeling alive to sin and its consequences, that sinners like us might have the mercy of dying the death of a saint; for never could any of Adam’s fallen race have died the death of a saint, and entered eternal glory, had not the Lord Jesus Christ first died the death of a sinner in his room and stead.

Then the love of the Lord Jesus himself, to give himself up, freely and willingly, to this cruel death, to this amount of his suffering, which, according to his Godhead, he knew the amazing extent it reached to; and as he says, “I have power to lay it down;” “I lay it down of myself;” and yet to know, and not to shrink; here was love:

“This was compassion like a God,
That when the Saviour knew
The price of pardon was his blood,
His pity ne’er withdrew.”

To think also of his sinless, spotless, immaculate Person, soul and body, that had never known the stain of sin in thought, word, or deed, to be dyed all over from head to foot with the guilt of others, not his own! let those who know by feeling what the feeling of unatoned guilt is, judge; none others can. His white robes of spotless humanity to be dyed with blood! None but God himself can tell the horrors of that night. And then, not only the feeling of the stain of sin, which to his righteous soul must be so dreadful, but to bear the wrath and indignation of a justly incensed God against it, and to knowingly meet it beforehand, so that his humanity shrank from the view with, “If it be possible, let this cup pass from me.” And O, how passing sweet the love that resigned all his own unto his Father’s will, with, “Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done!” I fear to say all I have seen and felt respecting these matters. It is such solemn ground to tread upon; but I never can express in words what I felt once from these lines:

“He sank beneath our heavy woes,
 To raise us to a throne.
 There’s not a gift his hand bestows
 But cost his heart a groan.”

Who can ever tell what those words contain: “He laid down his life for his sheep?”

Also the love of the Holy Spirit, in quickening and making manifest to the objects of this great love, the greatness of which, the more it is looked into, the more wonderful it appears.

“Imagination’s utmost stretch
 In wonder dies away.”

To reflect upon the time when and in what places they are generally when the Holy Spirit first begins his strange work upon their souls,—some sunk into the lowest state of sensuality and wickedness, living in all manner of sin and loving it, in bondage to Satan, yet hugging their chains; others in a more moral condition, full of vain conceit of the goodness of their state, not wishing at all to be undeceived; and others in a vain profession of religion without the power, full of high notions respecting religion and dreaming of going to heaven, but all the while entire strangers to the only way of getting there; and one and all wrapped up in a most awful security respecting their never-dying souls, though exposed to inevitable destruction. And not only so, but even opposing and fighting against the grace that reaches them and is for their salvation. Herein, again, shines the love of the Holy Spirit that even against themselves, and in spite of their own unrenewed will and wicked hearts, he takes possession of their hearts, and makes them willing in the day of his power to be saved by sovereign grace alone. For my part, I know that if the grace of God had not prevented, I should have taken up with anything short of vital godliness to rest upon; but herein is love, that he hunts us himself out of every lying refuge, and will not let us have our own way to our utter destruction, but by omnipotent grace makes us not only willing but really to long, beg, and cry mightily to him to save us himself by his own mighty power, and bring his salvation near, and cause us to lean alone upon him for everything, both for time and eternity. And when, in his own good time and way, after he has brought us entirely destitute beggars in ourselves and sensible of being utterly lost without him, he makes known in our hearts that we are indeed loved with an everlasting love, that we have indeed an interest in his great salvation, and in spite of sin, Satan, and our own hearts, shall never perish, how wonderful the grace appears! Herein the love of the Holy Spirit shines indeed in giving such tokens and testimonies as to make the soul feel sure, yea, more than sure, so as to look sin, death, and hell entirely out of countenance, while the sweetness remains and the power rests upon the mind, and so fills the soul with such solemn pleasure and delight as to beggar all words to express it. And, again, the sweet influence

of the Holy Spirit at such times is more particularly seen in sweetly resigning the soul to the will of God, as regards the things both of time and eternity, willing to be anything or nothing, just as he sees fit; feeling that all things are right and just as they should be, past, present, and to come; and would not hold up a finger to alter or change the most crooked dispensation or difficulty they may be in. I thought really and said to the Lord, when he revealed his mercy to my soul, I would willingly spend the rest of my days in prison or in a workhouse if it was his will and for his glory. God himself I felt was mine and I was his. My sins were forgiven, my person accepted, and I stood in my feelings before him as pure as an angel of light. I felt I was indeed a wonder of wonders, a sinner saved, and none could disannul or destroy the union. I sang with Hart:

"This union with wonder and rapture is seen,
Which nothing shall sunder, without or within."

And those blessed hymns:

"How high a privilege 'tis to know," &c.

"Blessed are they whose guilt is gone," &c.

I sang them all day long. They seemed to me to be worth writing in letters of gold, and to be sung by immortal songsters. You have heard me speak of this. But where the love of the Holy Ghost shines more to my poor soul than in any other thing is in bearing with our crooked, perverse, and rebellious ways from day to day. Who but God and our own souls know the God-dishonouring and dreadfully provoking things and places we get into? And after so much mercy sealed and made known to be yet borne with, and we such monuments of mercy, of sparing mercy, that ever his holy name puts up with it, is wonderful to me; but he is God and not man; therefore the sons of Jacob are not consumed. No sooner are we left to ourselves than, after the brightest manifestations, off we go into some crooked way or other; and if not prevented, we should damn our souls as sure as God lives. Now I know that what I am writing is truth, as sure a truth as any; but herein is love, my dear friend, we cannot, with reverence I speak it, we cannot. The bounds are fixed. What a mercy! or else, left to ourselves in a time of temptation, where should we go but to destruction? And herein is the love of the Holy Spirit. He sits as a refiner of silver over the vessel; and no sooner is the effect produced by the temptation or the affliction, whatever it may be, but the fire is stopped; and though we think we are going to be burnt up altogether, as we deserve to be, yet here it is: "Ye are not appointed unto wrath, but to obtain salvation by Jesus Christ." This solves the mystery. The love of the Holy Ghost is thus seen in "holding our souls in life that our feet are not moved." David knew this; and so do all saints, more or less; and though we are continually slipping, yet we stand. The blessed Spirit owns and holds us on amidst it all, and every now and then helps us with a little help, strengthens

the feeble faith to credit the contradictions felt within, though how to make them out we cannot tell; and he never leaves, but loves unto the end. Herein is love. "Who is a God like unto our God, passing by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage?" and no other reason given but because he loved them.

But I shall tire you out. I felt the things grow in my mind, or should only have written a few lines; but if you find it wearisome you are at perfect liberty to put it aside or burn it. I could not feel the liberty in writing to many as I have to you; but I know you know my heart and will pardon me.

That the Lord, of his great love and infinite mercy, may keep your heart and mine from dishonouring his great name and enable us to walk in his fear, is the sincere desire of,

Yours sincerely,

JESSE CRAKE.

Chalgrove, Nov. 26, 1843.

THE PRESENCE OF JESUS.

I HEAR the voice of my Beloved.

Poor soul, what doth he say?

"Arise, my love,

Awake, my dove,

Arise and come away.

Forsake thy sorrows, doubts, and fears;

I come to wipe away thy tears.

Behold the dawn of morn appears,

And night gives place to day."

I listen to my own Beloved.

His voice is sweet to me:

"Thou art my child,

My undefiled;

My love shall shelter thee.

My love, my fair one, cease to mourn,

For lo, the winter's past and gone;

The birds with songs of joy return;

Come, walk abroad with me."

O! How I love my own Beloved,

How precious is his name.

His love for me

No change can see,

'Twill ever be the same.

His robe of righteousness I wear,

And my Beloved calls me fair;

He bids me banish fear and care;

For none his bride shall blame.

How shall I praise my own Beloved,

For this his wondrous grace?

In him I'll hide,

In him confide,

And rest in his embrace;

And as he fills my heart with bliss,

I'll praise aloud his faithfulness,

For no employ can equal this

His matchless love to trace.

MEDITATIONS ON DIFFERENT PORTIONS OF THE WORD OF GOD.

MEDITATIONS ON THE FIRST CHAPTER OF THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER.

WHAT is to be compared with the salvation of the soul? What are riches, honours, health, long life? What are all the pleasures which the world can offer, sin promise, or the flesh enjoy? What is all that men call good or great? What is everything which the outward eye hath seen, or natural ear heard, or hath entered into the carnal heart of man, put side by side with being saved in the Lord Jesus Christ with an everlasting salvation? For consider what we are saved *from*, as well as what we are saved *unto*. From a burning hell to a blissful heaven; from endless wrath to eternal glory; from the dreadful company of devils and damned spirits, mutually tormenting and tormented, to the blessed companionship of the glorified saints, all perfectly conformed in body and soul to the image of Christ, with thousands and tens of thousands of holy angels, and, above all, to seeing the glorious Son of God as he is, in all the perfection of his beauty, and all the ravishments of his presence and love. To have done for ever with all the sorrows, troubles, and afflictions of this life; all the pains and aches of the present clay tabernacle; all the darkness, bondage, and misery of the body of sin and death; to be perfectly holy in body and soul, being in both without spot, or blemish, or any such thing, and ever to enjoy uninterrupted union and communion with Father, Son, and Blessed Spirit.—O what a heaven lies before the believing saints of God as the end of their faith in the salvation of their soul.

Now it was of this salvation that the prophets of the Old Testament inquired and searched diligently. To them it was but dimly revealed, nor did they perfectly understand the meaning or extent of their own prophecies about it. They knew from the power of the word in their own heart, and the way in which it was spoken in them and unto them that it was the word of the Lord, and that they were but penmen of the Holy Ghost, simply writing down, as bidden and influenced by him, what he inwardly dictated. They were, therefore, we will not say altogether unconscious agents in the hands of the Holy Spirit, for doubtless they not only felt the power, but also to a considerable extent understood the meaning of what they wrote. But such is the depth of the word of God, it is so enriched with treasures of grace and truth, it so contains stored up in its bosom the fulness of God's wisdom so far as it can be revealed to man, that they were but as little children now who when they are taught their lessons may to a certain extent understand their meaning, but not the whole or the fulness of their meaning, that being reserved for their riper years. To these ancient prophets, then, a salvation was revealed to be accomplished and brought to light in God's own time and way, and this they in-

quired and searched diligently into both as to its nature and the time of its fulfilment. When, for instance, Isaiah wrote such a prophecy as, "I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry, and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory" (Isaiah xlvi. 13), he would see that there was a righteousness, which God called his righteousness, to be brought near, that it should not be far off, and that he would "place salvation in Zion, Israel his glory." He would, therefore, search and inquire in his own mind what this righteousness would be, as distinct from the righteousness of Moses, and what was this salvation which should be placed in Zion for Israel, in whom he would be glorified. So when that wondrous chapter (Isa. liii.) was dictated to the prophet by the Holy Spirit, he would have a foreview of the blessed Redeemer as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; he would see that there was One to come who should be "wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities," and that "the Lord had laid on him the iniquity of us all." He would see, also, how it would please the Lord to bruise this man of sorrows, and yet that he would make his soul an offering for sin, and that this blessed Sin-bearer would "see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied." Now all this foreview of the sufferings of Christ and of the glory that should follow, for he would behold that glory as the necessary fruit of Christ's seeing his seed, prolonging his days, and the pleasure of the Lord prospering in his hand—all this revelation of the mind and counsels of God would be to the prophet a subject of deep and solemn meditation; and though he would not fully understand the whole meaning of what was thus revealed to him by the Holy Ghost, he would inquire and search diligently, and would sedulously compare Scripture with Scripture, to ascertain the mind of the Spirit in them. He would, for instance, look back to his own prophecy that "a rod should come out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch should grow out of his roots," on whom the Spirit of the Lord should rest. He would see his mighty power in smiting the earth with the rod of his mouth, and slaying the wicked with the breath of his lips; and yet he would see righteousness and faithfulness cleaving to him, and worn by him as the girdle of his loins. He would see also in this wondrous Redeemer the child born of a pure Virgin, and the Son, God's own only-begotten and eternal Son, given, would view the government upon his shoulder, and that his name should be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father (or Father of the everlasting age), and the Prince of Peace." (Isa. ix. 6.) The Spirit of Christ was in him, and in dictating these prophecies, not only testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow, but enlightened his understanding and fed his faith by a personal experience of what he thus revealed. And what was true in Isaiah was doubtless true in all the other prophets, for the same Spirit of Christ which

was in him was in them, and testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. The incarnation of the Son of God, his sufferings, bloodshedding, and death, with his resurrection from the dead, ascension into heaven, and present glory there, were all revealed by the Spirit of Christ to the prophets of old, and were embraced by them by a true and living faith. It is true that these heavenly mysteries were dimly seen by them, but not the less really. The faith of the Old Testament saints looked forward to the Christ who was to come, as ours looks back to the Christ who has come. But as the Object of their faith was the same, so their faith was the same, for there is but "one faith." And as Abraham rejoiced to see Christ's day, and saw it, and was glad, so these ancient prophets saw that same day of Christ and rejoiced in it with believing Abraham.

But the point which they chiefly inquired into and searched diligently was at "what, or what manner of time" the promised Messiah should come. It was with them as we read in Daniel: "And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?" (Dan. xii. 6.) They had a kind of holy impatience for the day of Christ's appearing, a longing for the time when he should come "to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness" (Dan. ix. 24); and thus as Daniel "understood by books the number of the years whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem" (Dan. ix. 2), so these Old Testament prophets searched and examined what indications they could find in the internal testimony of the Spirit of Christ which was in them as to the time when he would come to finish the work which the Father had given him to do, and what manner of time that would be. Their spirits were often bowed down and burdened by the wickedness of the generation in which their lot was cast; they mourned over the unbelief, infidelity, obstinacy, and determined resistance to every admonition, warning, or reproof, manifested by the people to whom they spoke in the name of the Lord. They saw the general oppression of the people of God, marked the groans and tears of the widow and the fatherless, and longed for the appearance of the promised Redeemer, for they foresaw by the eye of faith that there was a grace to be revealed in and by him; for as the law was given by Moses, so grace and truth were to come by Jesus Christ. He was to reveal the hidden counsels of God, and to bring life and immortality to light through the gospel. Upon him the Spirit of the Lord was to rest, and as he would be anointed to preach good tidings unto the meek, as he would be sent to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that were bound, so would he

save the children of the needy, and break in pieces the oppressor. Before their eyes lay outstretched the glorious roll of prophecy, and contrasting the happy, holy, and peaceful times there shadowed forth which should flow from the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow him in his sitting at the right hand of the Father in majesty and power, their spirits yearned for those blessed days.

But they also searched and inquired "*what manner of time*" it should be. Would it be a time of great distress to the children of Israel? Would the season be favourable for the appearance of the Messiah? Would Israel nationally be under a foreign yoke? and how would all this harmonise with redemption, and the work which the Redeemer should accomplish? These to them were doubtful points; but one thing was to them abundantly clear, and on that they chiefly fixed their eyes in subordination to their view of the Redeemer himself. The Spirit of Christ which was in them spoke plainly of a "grace which was to be revealed" under a preached gospel, of the power which should attend it, and of the blessings which should follow a large outpouring of the Holy Ghost after the ascension and glorification of the Son of God. They therefore clearly and distinctly prophesied of the grace that should come unto those who should believe in the Son of God; and it was revealed unto them that the gift of prophecy was bestowed on them, not so much for their own benefit and blessing as for those more highly favoured ones to whom the gospel, as preached by the apostles, should be made the power of God unto salvation.

From these words of the apostle we may gather several important and instructive lessons: 1. We see with what singular wisdom and with what heavenly and holy inspiration the Scriptures are written; for we may apply to the whole word of God what is here intimated as regards prophecy, and expressed by the same apostle in another place: "For prophecy came not in old times by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Pet. i. 21.) The Holy Ghost inspired the words in which the prophets clothed their testimony, and in so doing framed those words with such a depth of heavenly wisdom that the writers themselves only partially understood their meaning. But they understood this, that the two points which were the grand ends of all their prophecies were the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. In his sufferings they saw redemption accomplished, sin put away, and all Israel saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation. How far they saw Israel after the flesh rejected and set aside for unbelief and disobedience, and the Gentiles, as the spiritual Israel, called to inherit national Israel's blessings, we cannot pronounce; but they clearly saw that there was a glory which would follow the sufferings of Christ, not only as regarded his own Person after the resurrection, but as regarded the glory of that grace which should be manifested as the fruit and consequence of his sufferings. In that grace to be thus manifested,

whether to Jew or Gentile, they rejoiced. The glory of the Redeemer was dear to their heart, and this glory they saw to consist in the riches of his grace which they knew would not be fully manifested until after his entrance into his glory. This corresponds and harmonises with the words of our gracious Lord to the two disciples journeying to Emmaus: "Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." (Luke xxiv. 25-27.) The Lord here clearly showed that all the prophets, beginning at Moses, prophesied of his sufferings and of his entrance after his sufferings into his glory. These were the two grand subjects of all prophecy to which every other part was subordinate; and well might their hearts burn within them when such a gracious Interpreter opened to their wondering minds the Scriptures which, under his explanation, came with such warmth and power to their souls. If our readers will examine the sermons preached by Peter in the Acts of the Apostles, they will see how fully they correspond with his words now before us. Thus in his sermon on the day of Pentecost he quotes the prophet Joel to show that the pouring out of the Spirit then witnessed was foreshown by him (Acts ii. 16-21), and he brings forward the testimony of David as a prophet to the death and resurrection of Christ. (Acts ii. 25-31.) So in his sermon in Solomon's porch he thus speaks: "But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled." (Acts iii. 18.) And again: "Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days." (Acts iii. 24.) The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. xix. 10); and "to him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts x. 43.)

2. The second thing worthy of notice is the sweet spirit of union between Old and New Testament saints. It was revealed unto these ancient prophets that the grace of which they spoke, and the blessings which should follow the sufferings and glorification of Christ would not be bestowed on themselves, or at least only as a foretaste of the fulness of those mercies which would be manifested to believers in the ages to come. And yet such was their union of spirit with the whole of the church of God that they could, without envy or jealousy, rejoice in the blessedness which was to be given to those who should hear and believe the gospel which should be preached unto them by the apostles and ministers of the New Testament with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. It was the same Spirit, whether called the "Spirit of Christ," as coming from, and sent by him, or "the Holy Ghost," as especially distinctive of his divine

Person, who testified in them as prophesying of a suffering and glorified Christ to come, and testified to New Testament believers, who saw these prophecies fulfilled of a suffering and a glorified Christ who had come. They knew that God had provided some better thing than they themselves then enjoyed, or could enjoy, for the New Testament saints, and that this was necessary for the edification of the whole body of Christ, and that the Old Testament believers without the New could not be made perfect. (Heb. xi. 40.) Thus they could stretch forth the right hand of fellowship over all the intervening years, and grasp in a loving embrace those more highly-favoured souls who should live under the mighty outpouring of the Holy Ghost, as on the day of Pentecost; and they could feel an honour in ministering to them that food in its fulness, of which they had, in Old Testament days and under a legal dispensation, but crumbs and tastes. And thus they meditated on their own prophecies, fed on what was revealed in them of the sufferings and glory of Christ, and looked forward in faith and patience to the day when Messiah should come to suffer and to reign. They saw with him of the travail of his soul in a rich harvest of called saints, in whose blessings they could rejoice; for they knew that a fulness of blessing could not be given except by the fulness of a preached gospel.

These, we confess, are somewhat difficult and intricate subjects to understand, but they are full of blessedness when we can see and enter into the depth of their spiritual meaning. And do not these things deserve our thoughtful examination and meditation? Surely they do, for they are the subject not only of prophetic but of angelic inquiry and examination. "Which things the angels desire to look into." It is literally, "stoop down and look into," as the word is translated, John xx. 5. There seems to be some allusion here to the posture of the cherubim on the mercy seat on the ark of the covenant: "And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be." (Exod. xxv. 20.) Whether it be so or not, for there is a considerable difficulty as to the spiritual meaning of the cherubim in Scripture, one thing is abundantly clear, that the holy angels are engaged in contemplating and admiring the riches of God's grace as revealed in his dear Son to the members of his mystical body, the church. Thus the apostle says: "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." (Eph. iii. 10.) Nor are they mere admiring spectators of the wisdom and grace of God, but ministering messengers to the suffering saints in this their day of tribulation: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. i. 14.)

But we shall reserve our thoughts on this point to a future paper.

Obituary.

WILLIAM BOORNE, OF DEPTFORD.

COMMUNICATED BY HIS SON.

THE subject of this memoir was born at Deptford, January 1st, 1794. His father and mother were both members of a Particular Baptist church, at Keppell Street, Bedford Square, under the pastoral care of Mr. Martin. His mother died when he was nine months old, but his grandmother often took care of him. She was a strict Churchwoman, and taught her grandson hymns and prayers, which he frequently repeated. He had early natural convictions that he was wicked, and was taught that he must be good to meet the favour of God. As he grew older, his father was accustomed to take him occasionally on a Lord's day to Keppell Street. When about twelve years of age, he heard Mr. Martin from Col. i. 27: "Christ in you the hope of glory." He felt there was something in the words desirable to be known, and was by them led to think on God, his omnipresence, &c. He had also some thoughts upon prayer; but his father taught him no form, as his grandmother had done. He noticed, too, his father prayed without a book; so he arrived at these conclusions, that his father prayed from the heart, and that if ever he prayed himself, he must perform the exercise as his father did.

In 1808, he was apprenticed to a Mr. Barfield, Wardour Street, Soho. This person was printer to "The Society for the Promoting of Religious Knowledge amongst the Poor." Here he had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the works of some sound divines; but, being deprived of parental care, and necessarily cast into the company of ungodly workmen and youths, his mind became depraved. He frequently heard the truth; but considered religion a gloomy subject, and better adapted to persons who, by reason of age, were upon the brink of the grave. He heard that God was merciful; so he hoped he should go to heaven, or that at least he should fare no worse than thousands of his fellow-creatures.

But the time appointed by God to manifest discriminating grace and mercy towards him was in Sept., 1814, when he was effectually wounded, and plucked as a brand from the fire. He was asked one Lord's day to tea at the home of a work-companion, whose mother attended Tottenham Court Road Chapel; and as this youth considered it his duty to please his mother by going to chapel occasionally, he persuaded my father to accompany him that evening. The preacher was Mr. Parrott, of Reading. His text was John vi. 37. During this discourse, an arrow was shot by the Lord into my father's heart, showing him his sins against God, of which he had had but natural conceptions. Thus, while both youths went together, the one was taken and the other left. The convictions he received produced in his soul great fears of eternal destruction. He strove to be rid of them, and to make himself happy again; but they were

not to be shaken off, and he found he was sinking deeper into the mire. He endeavoured to undertake an entire change by repenting of his past sins, and reforming his future conduct. But all these strivings to work *with* or *against* his convictions proved abortive, and he had to return to view himself an undone sinner. Then he wished he had never been born; that he had been of the brute creation, or that he had died in infancy, that no sin might have stood against him; not perceiving the root of his transgressions in Adam, in which, in after years, he was deeply grounded. He now resorted to prayer; for although he had no hope of salvation, yet he was constrained to leave the outward world, and cry to God in secret. But it was suggested to him that his prayer did not come from his heart. He therefore thought his feeble petitions would not be regarded by the Lord. He looked upon some whom he thought to be gracious persons, and wished he possessed the holiness and enjoyed the peace they appeared to have. Now and then he had a glimmering hope of seeing better days; but it soon vanished, as he could not see how such a sinner could be saved consistently with God's justice.

In this state of soul he continued above two years, and was raised to a hope in the Lord's mercy by a secret visitation from Heaven. He was at his father's house at Deptford one Lord's day, and, as was his wont, he retired to a room for prayer and reading. While here, mourning and sighing over his state, it was as if a voice within him said, "Unclean! unclean!" This was shortly followed by an indescribable ray of light and hope of mercy. Christ was discovered as the door of access, and the only way of salvation. He saw that the invitations of the gospel suited his state and case, and the precious promises flowed in as pleas for him at the throne of grace. Speaking of his former condition of misery, he said, "Many and sore exercises I had during this period; and when I was sinking into hell, according to my feelings, a ray of divine light darted into my soul from the Sun of Righteousness in secret, by which hope was communicated, and I was enabled to seek for mercy and plead promises that I knew not before; so I believe it was the Holy Spirit helping my infirmities. Blessed be God for Jesus Christ. He, in his own good time, in 1816, delivered my soul, and for some months I lived in the happy enjoyment of peace with God; nor did I think I should ever stray from him as I have done. I do not mean outwardly, but in heart. I have been a base backslider; and had he not called me back again, I never should have returned."

Early in 1817, he was baptized, and became a member of a Particular Baptist church at Deptford. Being full of love and zeal, he counted much upon meeting amongst the people on Lord's days, to tell of God's love and goodness to him, and to hear the word preached; for now the Bible, instead of being as before, full of threats and condemnation, was replete with sweet consolation. Christ was seen in well-nigh every page. The

world had lost its charms, and his conversation was in heaven, where he hoped soon to be. When he retired at night, he felt he was the Lord's, and when he awoke, he was still with him. Pardon and peace were enjoyed. He could go with Bunyan to the cross, and say:

“Blest cross, blest sepulchre, blest rather be,
The man that here was put to shame for me.”

“On March 3rd, 1816,” he said: “I enjoyed much happiness while hearing a person preach at Deptford from Prov. viii. 17; and about this time I spent a happy day at an anniversary, where I heard Mr. Bailey, of Great Alie Street, in the morning, from Matt. xvi. 19; in the afternoon, Mr. Francis, of Snow's Fields, from Isa. liii. 1; and in the evening, Mr. Williams, of Grafton Street, from 1 Pet. ii. 4.

“At this time I was acquainted with several Christian friends who were hearers of Mr. Burgess at King Street, Deptford, and I occasionally heard him preach, and discovered something in his preaching different to what I generally found where I was a church member: so by degrees I was led to watch and wait to know the Lord's will, and was constrained at length to unite with those with whom I felt most of the blessing of God. I may say that under Mr. Burgess's ministry the eyes of my understanding became more enlightened; and the soul-establishing truths I received fixed my heart and caused me to turn my back upon many I had highly esteemed before. Light maketh manifest.”

I have many times heard my father say that when he heard Mr. Burgess preach from Eph. i. 18, such precious things were spoken that he felt compelled never to return to his former place of hearing; so he became a constant hearer and attached friend of Mr. Burgess's until the Lord removed him by death from the vineyard, which was in 1824.

After this, a division arose among the leading men at the chapel, which resulted in the majority of the church and several of the best hearers leaving the chapel and meeting for prayer, reading, and occasional preaching at the house of Mr. Burgess's widow. My father went with them. They assembled together for a time; but by-and-by a spirit of disaffection entered, and several, having strong confidence in Mr. Huntington's predictions of coming trial and persecution, resolved to emigrate to America, where they hoped to live in union one with another and be delivered from the calamities which they imagined were coming upon their native land. This to my father became a matter of exercise; but he saw eventually it was the work of him who separates chief friends; for the emigrants, instead of living so as to be able to worship together on the Lord's-days, were scattered in various parts of the United States and Canada; and the advice sent by one to a friend was, “Never leave England while you can get a crust.”

After the people had met at Mrs. Burgess's house for about twelve years, Mrs. B. died, and the cause was given up. But

now the Lord made a way for gracious men to supply occasionally at the chapel in King Street on week evenings, among whom were Messrs. Hardy, Fowler, Gadsby, Warburton, and Turner; but as the preaching there on Lord's days was for the most part of a different kind, my father went to London to hear, which, indeed, he often also did prior to Mrs. Burgess's death.

About 1825, my father's business becoming prosperous, he was permitted to fall into a state of heart backsliding from the Lord, which season of spiritual declension continued more or less for a period of seven years; whereiu, although his attendance upon the means of grace was the same outwardly, he sensibly felt he had not that keenness of appetite, vehement desire, and ardent love as formerly; nor did he find those heavenly refreshings from the word of God, either in public or in private, which he had formerly done. The Lord variously and mysteriously exercised him to restore himself, but Heb. xi. 7 was made effectual to that end.

The ministry of the late Isaac Beeman, on his occasional visit to London, was made a great blessing to my father. He also received profit in hearing the late Henry Cole, at the time of his secession from the Established Church. He was brought to consider deeply the state of his soul, of the church of God, and of the nation. In his note-book, he says, "The troubles I was thinking about had such an effect, at times, that I could not eat; and the Lord gave me these words with power and sweetness: 'To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the hidden manna.'"

There are notes in my father's book of having heard Mr. Beeman several times after this, wherein he was much established in the things of God. Subsequently he became a constant hearer at Zoar Chapel, Great Alie Street, where Messrs. Gadsby, Warburton, Kershaw, Philpot, M'Kenzie, Tiptaft, and others supplied. Here the word was blessed to his soul. Subsequently he returned to the chapel at Deptford, and had the appointing of supplies for week evenings; and although the congregation was small, yet some now in glory and others living had reason to bless God for what was spoken at various times from the pulpit. In 1856, the lease of the chapel having nearly expired, the friends removed to Counter Hill, where they still meet; but the church is now dissolved.

From the time of the spiritual deliverance experienced by my father in 1832, he was much exercised respecting the ministry, which troubled him more or less for about twenty years.

Writing to a friend, he said, "In 1832, I was visited in a powerful manner. It brought me into great exercises about following the Lord in word and doctrine; and this continued for nearly twenty years; but time has proved that the exercise was not to prepare me for pulpit service, but for another office in his church, in which he has used me as a humble instrument for his glory; so that those who knew the state of Ebenezer

Chapel twenty years ago, and compare it with its present state—I do not mean in reference to numbers, but to divine life in the pulpit and in the pews—may say, ‘What hath the Lord wrought!’ And whatever the heathen may say, some of us can exclaim, ‘The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.’”

As my father had been long and well established in the things of God, the accuser of the brethren was not able so easily to gainsay the reality of his religion as formerly; and although, as he often said, he could not boast of an unshaken confidence, yet for several years latterly his experience was described by Hart in these words:

“Neither lifted up with air,
Nor dejected to despair.”

To a friend, on June 11th, 1867, he wrote: “Writing seems to me more labour than formerly; yet I sometimes get a little spiritual feeling in writing to Christian friends more than I get in hearing many sermons; and a little spiritual feeling I prize now-a-days. I want to feel more of the power of that faith which works by love, and purifies the heart; but what an unspeakable mercy that we have any real evidence that we possess the least grain of that faith! The prayers of such are well described by Hart:

“The feeblest prayer, if faith be there,
Exceeds all empty notion!”

This I believe; and I hope I answer the description; but how poor and nothing worth my prayers appear to me at times, so that I wish no one was in hearing; but when alone sometimes I feel at liberty to say anything, without fearing how or what to say; for I believe the Lord knows all my weakness and infirmities, and all my wants and necessities; and if I forget to tell him all that is intended, which sometimes is the case, yet, blessed be his dear name, he does not forget, but kindly appears for me and helps me in my little difficulties; and this encourages me to believe that

“David’s Lord and Gideon’s Friend
Will help his servant to the end.”

To another friend, February 27th, 1867, he said, “We have been mercifully preserved, and we hope we shall be cared for while passing through this vale of tears. I believe with you that we learn more of the faithfulness of God in our latter years than in our earlier days. The Lord says to those he has visited, ‘I will see you again.’ The power of unbelief in my early days was so great, that I often questioned whether I knew anything real, and what it was to have a visit from the Lord; but I hope I am a little more powerfully persuaded now, though I cannot say much as to frequent and powerful visits, yet I feel more satisfied that

“‘He sees us when we see not him,
And always hears our cry.’”

This keeps me watchful, and at times I can say with the

psalmist, 'I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications; because he hath inclined his ear unto me, and heard my cry, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.'"

Speaking of the late Mr. Tiptaft and Mr. Tanner, he said, "They are both well laid in their graves, and I feel it a great mercy that I have a hope of the same; for I am quite sensible that nature with me is decaying. We know not the number of our days; but sometimes I think my time here will be short. The Lord be praised for a better prospect than what seems exhibited in these dark days. No night there! Cheer up!

"'He that conquered for us once,
Will in us conquer too!'

The battle is the Lord's; therefore boasting must be excluded; and we shall be led to say, 'Not unto us,' &c. In heaven, as the poet sings,

"'Our Redeemer lives, all bright and glorious;
O'er sin and death and hell he reigns victorious.'"

In October, 1868, it became evident my father was fast approaching his dissolution. Of this he was persuaded, and at times felt happy in the prospect. One evening he tried to sing with his wife Mr. Hart's hymn (Hart's 103rd, Gadsby's 681st):

"Blessed are they whose guilt is gone."

He could not get through it, but said, "We shall have immortal lungs by-and-by." She read to him 2 Kings ii., respecting the departure of Elijah. He said, "The Lord will send a chariot for me some day;" but the days of darkness were many. He stated that, although his former experience had been made out to him so clear, yet now he found his religion was brought into a very small compass; and he spoke very faithfully and affectionately to some who visited him, hoping the Lord might prepare them for the ordeal he was then passing through. He had many fears, at times, of what he might suffer in the article of death. One time, in answer to a friend's inquiry of the state of his mind, he said he was right in the main, but he had not the bright shinings he could wish. His feelings were described by Job: "Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit;" which, he said, was not pleasant to the feelings. He remarked he had lived to know what were the life of faith, the walk of faith, and in some measure the triumph of faith. The last words of David, as recorded in 2 Sam. xxiii. 5, were sweetly applied to his soul, affording him much refreshment. Speaking of this, he said, although he had not those heavenly raptures and sweet feelings many have in such circumstances, and although he was so burdened with bodily infirmities that he could not pray or meditate as he could desire to do, yet he was led by the Spirit to draw comfort from this, that the Lord had made with him an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure. This became a hill of help to him, and he referred to it several times in his affliction.

On Dec. 25th, upon inquiring how he was, he replied, "I have much to be thankful for, for I have had a good night, and have been enabled to eat a tolerably good breakfast; but what is more than all, I have a good hope through grace; and, whether this grace be in the bud or in the blossom, it is the same as that possessed by Simeon when he had the dear babe of Bethlehem in his arms and Christ in the heart the hope of glory." His countenance beamed with brightness while he spoke of the sweet hope he had beyond the grave.

As the year waned, he appeared to sink fast; so that it was doubted whether he would live to see the new year in; but after this he appeared somewhat better in health. This created in him a fear that it might prove a long affliction; and although he seemed to have a spirit of submission to bear all the Lord might be pleased to lay upon him, yet he said he felt himself such a rebellious creature, that he had to beg of the Lord to give him much patience and resignation to his will. He expressed gratitude to the Lord for the preservation of his mental faculties; for he said he felt sure his head was the weakest part. Some of the late Mr. Bourne's letters were read to him. He said, "They cast a light upon my path. David had to travel this way, and many others. I believe I shall be among the crowd in heaven." (Rev. vii. 9.)

On Lord's day, Feb. 7th, he was telling of some of his fears and troubles, when he burst into tears, and said,

"He sees what fears your soul alarms,
And smiling says, Fear not, thou worm."

Then these words: "Fear not, thou worm Jacob;" by which he was melted.

On Feb. 8th he was favoured with a manifestation of his best Beloved, by which his soul was much revived; but in the night he was sorely tempted by Satan, and felt as if the enemy were let loose upon him; by which he perceived the Lord had a special purpose in previously visiting him. Another day he was much favoured, and said to his wife, while tears rolled down his cheeks, "My blessed Saviour is coming to take me; yes, he is indeed coming to take me. . . . I long to be there, I long to be there."

On Lord's day, Feb. 14th, his sinkings were great; but his soul was full of prayer. He kept crying out, "Heavenly Father, heavenly Father, have mercy, have mercy!" He remarked, "I know he has said, 'For the oppression of the poor and for the sighing of the needy now will I arise;'" and he repeated other promises, saying, "I know the Lord will not be offended. God is my refuge and strength; underneath are the everlasting arms. I long for him to come and deliver me from this tabernacle." He felt he must cry all the day; for these words had been applied to him: "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."

From the time he was first taken ill he was unable to lie down; therefore he sat up supported by pillows; but on Feb. 15th he was removed to another room, and was enabled to lie down. The next day he said, "I know I shall not be here long now."

On Friday evening he appeared taken for death. I was sent for. On entering the room he was sitting up, painfully gasping for breath. He expressed a wish to know if the doctor thought him to be in dying circumstances; but he had not seen him in that state. I said, "It's all right, father." He replied, "O yes, my dear, it's all right; it's all right. God Almighty bless you all." After this, amidst his struggles, he lifted up his eyes and cried very earnestly, "Heavenly Father, heavenly Father!" I said to him, "You are looking for that blessed hope?" "Yes," he answered, "and the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ." Upon being told that the doctor had been to see him, he asked what he thought of him. I said, "He could not say for certain whether you were passing through death or not." He said, "Ah, well; I thought it *was* death, and you see he could not tell; but if the Lord does not fetch me by this post, he may by the next." After this, slight delirium was manifest, which continued more or less through the night.

On Saturday morning, before daybreak, he had the last attack from the enemy. He said the devil had come to him with many lies, and told him he would be cast into hell after all; "but," my father said, "it will end better yet." At night the delirium increased; yet of this he was very sensible, saying he felt as if the things in the room were going round.

On Sunday morning, the day of his departure from this world, the mental agitation had subsided, and he was sweetly stayed upon his beloved Lord. I called upon him about 6 o'clock, as I had to travel several miles that day. I told him where I was going. He said, "Good bye. May the Lord go with you, and be everything to you that you need." He continued very comfortable through the morning. About an hour before his departure, he said, "I am resting upon the Rock," and repeated a part of Toplady's hymn:

"Rock of ages, cleft for me," &c.;

and said, "What a mercy to be well laid in the grave."

His final struggle with death lasted only half an hour, and he quietly ceased to breathe at half-past one in the afternoon on Lord's day, Feb. 21, 1869. He was interred at Nunhead Cemetery by Mr. Cowley and Mr. Walker in the grave with his son Thomas and his former wife, whose obituaries appeared in the "Gospel Standard" respectively, July, 1850, and April, 1853; and it may be truly said by those who knew them all that the three bodies had been consigned to the earth in sure and certain hope of a joyful resurrection to eternal life.

SEPTEMBER 1, 1869.

THE
GOSPEL STANDARD.

SEPTEMBER, 1869.

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

THE ROSE OF SHARON AND THE LILY OF
THE VALLEYS.

A SERMON BY THE LATE MR. ABRAHAMS, FEB. 24TH, 1850 (EVENING).

"I am the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys. As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters."—Song II. 1, 2.

IN the opening of these words this morning I showed that the church of God is comforted, amidst her manifold trials, by her dear Lord often telling her what he is and what she is in him—an indissoluble union. As to the comfort flowing from it, it is the comfort grasped only by faith; for whatever comfort people derive from any other quarter, it is not faith, but presumption. Whatever your souls, by faith, are comforted in as from Christ, and by union with Christ, you may be sure that these are comforts from the God of all comfort. Whatever you console yourselves with from any other quarter, it is a delusion, and doing despite against the Lord himself; for it is by his Spirit he must be in us all.

I have showed, in the first place, something of the place where this wonderful Rose tree grew, and amongst many things I showed you there was one I hinted at, that it was at Sharon, that the Reubenites and Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh made war against the Hagarenes.* The Israelites cried unto the Lord, and he heard them, and they dispossessed the Hagarenes, and dwelt in their cities, thus typically representing the victories of God's people. It is here where the Mizpah, or watch-tower, was erected, and where Christ watches over us for good. It is here where the flock of Christ are fed to satisfaction. It is here where we see that our God has wrought great victories for us, and we can lie down as speaks the prophet Isaiah: "And Sharon shall be a fold for flocks, and the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in." The rose is, we see, a most wonderful figure. It and the lily of the valley, I have showed you, set forth the two natures of Christ, the one perfectly pure, holy,

* There appear to have been two Sharons, one a level, fertile tract on the borders of the Mediterranean Sea, where the far-famed roses grew, and the other beyond Jordan (1 Chron. v. 16), in the land of Gilead. We would not dispute Mr. Abrahams's scriptural knowledge, but it appears to us that he has confused the two Sharons.

and white as snow; the other being red; as the church sings: "My Beloved is white and ruddy." He gives an account of his church and people, in which you will observe, in the first place, the personal claim of Christ to his people: "My love;" secondly, what he compares her unto,—a "lily;" and thirdly, in position this lily is "among thorns."

Then comes another figure: "So is my love among the daughters." You will observe my beginning is that which makes the claim of the church of God. Unless it comes from that quarter to claim the relationship, "My love," there is nothing but presumption in it. It is one thing for men and women to claim the blessed Lord, and another thing for the Lord to claim us. My brethren after the flesh were always claiming him; they brought sacrifices unto him; but he tells them they drew nigh unto him with their lips, but their hearts were far from him. There is nothing that I know of that can happen to a congregation worse than for a goodly number of people to come together and listen to what is called the gospel, and yet try to bring Christ in to make up the weight; but in reality they have no gospel.

There is no comparison that can stand good without Christ; for a child of Adam is no lily among thorns in himself. He is a corrupted seed. Why? The Holy Ghost says that by nature we are children of wrath, even as others. No lily there; but whatever there is in any person that constitutes them something like a lily among thorns, it arises from the relationship which is in my text, namely, "My love." Now it would be absurd to say, when Solomon speaks of one who was particularly his love, that this daughter of Pharaoh made choice of Solomon, that she elected herself. Not so; for Solomon was such a great king, it would be turning things upside down to say so. Yet some have a notion that what Christ loves in the sons of men is because they first turn to him.

I make three observations on this relationship: 1, She is his love by donation; 2, by union; and, 3, by image. Who is she? The church of God. And in this church that he claims as "my love," I say she is Christ's love by donation, by relation, and by communication.

1. The church of God was claimed by God the Father in a way she was not by the Son: "Thine they were, and thou gavest them to me." It is absurd to suppose he means to say, "Notwithstanding they were thine." There is no difference between them at all here. There is, then, donation: "Thine they were, and thou gavest them to me." That they were God the Father, Son, and Spirit's by creation is granted; for there are not three Creators, but one. That they were subject to one the same as to the other is very certain; but the language refers to the covenant of grace: "Thine they were." God the Father had a peculiar claim to them by his choice of them out of the human race. Out of one lump of creatureship God determined to have

this company that no man can number, whom he claimed and gave as a gift to his Son.

This is what we mean by donation. These are God's elect unto whom Christ stood as a federal Head from everlasting, unto whom he stands engaged for time and eternity. The rest are left as they stood in the first Adam. They belong not to Christ as do the church; for though he says, "Thou hast given me power over all flesh that I should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given me," he makes a distinction there and then. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." He can do with all flesh as he pleases; he can make one Alexander the Great, and another the most wretched being on the face of the earth. But the church of God is another altogether. They are his beloved. He loved them because they were the Father's gift. "I have loved you," he says, "as the Father hath loved me." A peculiar love which he has, that this very church of God, this glorious choice of God, are his love and delight, because they are the gift of God the Father.

You say, "These are doctrines that some of the people do not understand." Then it is for me to preach that you may understand; for faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of the Lord.

2. The people of the Lord are also his peculiar love by that glorious relationship, which he made when he took upon him their nature and made manifest what he was to them from everlasting. This is why he redeemed the church and not reprobates; why he sanctified the church and not reprobates; because he stood in relationship to them as a Husband to the church. "Thy Maker is thine husband, the Lord of hosts is his name." Hence, then, when the dear Christ of God says the church of God is his love, there is no other creature that he had such love to. "What! Not the angels?" No; he loved the angels as holy beings, but he does not love angels as he does the church; for the church can say what angels cannot: "He is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh." You may have very dear friends, but they cannot be so near to you as the husband is to his wife; and that is the difference between the church of God and angels.

3. I hasten to the fact that the church is Christ's love by communion. What is that? Well; Christ's people are his love by a communion which he gives to none besides; and this is by the decree of God; for it is written: "We are predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's dear Son." Light, beauty, all loveliness in this image is given to them; for these are they that are born again of incorruptible seed, that liveth and abideth for ever.

Some people get into such a muddle, they say a man may be regenerated and then be lost; and they quote such a text as this: "We are saved by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost;" and doubtless says the doctor, "this

is by the water." Yet did you ever hear of such a thing, that the washing of regeneration is by water? And may be lost too. Well; if they think regeneration may be got by water, then it may be lost. But I think it is something that can neither be lost nor got by man; but if it be what it is declared to be throughout the word of God, that "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son," and we know it is, because he hath given to us of his Spirit, then it cannot be lost. And when that is done in the twinkling of an eye, there is implanted in the soul the image of Christ that neither sin, hell, nor the devil can destroy. "O then," say you, "what a glorious thing to know that we are 'born of God.'" That which is born of the Spirit is spirit, and that which is born of flesh is flesh; and these are contrary one to another. That which is born of the Spirit is holy; for it is the incorruptible seed, which liveth and abideth for ever. That which is born of flesh is corruption. There is that image of Christ in them that are born of the Spirit; and there is something so sweet in it that, when we are convinced of it, we cannot help loving them. I can assure you there is nothing that so cleaves to us of earthly love as this does; so that whatever sin, flesh, and the devil may try to make great splits, they never can be separated; for they are as lovely as David and Jonathan, and more so.

Well, I would ask you about these doctrines, that are called by some high doctrines, and they hate them; I ask you, "Is this the way that you are impressed in your conscience, that there is not a creature among the sons and daughters of Adam that can claim that relationship any other way than by these three things?" If so, I can assure you whatever your conflicts are, you are God's dear children, and God will surely preserve you, and notwithstanding whatever your conflicts are, you are included in that very sweet text: "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them to the end." He hates putting away; for though he has a method of chastising his dear children when they walk crookedly, he has no such way as giving them a bill of divorcement.

"The lily among thorns." The lily as it is compared to Christ. The greatest beauty of it is that it is so perfectly white, an emblem of purity and holiness. Thus when the church speaks of Christ as white and ruddy, she means to say, that though he is perfect God, he is also perfect man. Now, the Son of God calls his church also a lily. If he is a lily of the valley, I must needs be so too. That truth I learned so long ago is very sweet to me still. I believe the Son of God became the Son of man that I, a son of man, might become a son of God. I believe the Son of God, the Lily, became also the Rose of Sharon in human nature, that I in human nature might become a lily. I believe he became incarnate that I might be united to his glorious nature; for Peter says we are made partakers of the Divine nature. I know it does not mean

that I am made a God, or made Christ; but it means something very great, you may well suppose. That by these exceeding great and precious promises, we should be partakers of the divine nature, is something very sublime.

Now what is this lily like in the dear church of God? It is very simple, not only in doctrine but in practice. In the soul we truly and really are partaking of that nature of Christ the Son of God, that we are in that nature holy and without blame; we are in this nature whiter than any lilies can be. We are more glorious in that nature than the greatest of men, even the penman of my text, for the Lord Jesus says, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

Here is another thing we must be careful of, for if the lily in this text is to be understood as referring to the church as compared to a lily, you must not understand that Solomon was not like unto them; for that would be the Arminian story that he was not an elect vessel of mercy; but it was to show that what was inward was better than all his outward grandeur. When it pleases God to make a poor soul, either young in years or with a grey head,—for, bless the Lord, you may be snatched from the brink of the grave as the thief was and sent into glory as perfect as if you had lived as a child of God since the days of Methuselah,—when he makes them hear his quickening voice, then other things sink into nothing.

"The glory which thou hast given me I have given them." The glory of his Godhead is incommunicable. It was not given to the human nature of Christ, much less to his children. But there is a glory that is communicable, and it is out of his fulness have all we received and grace for grace. Another is: "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." Another is: "My Spirit shall rest upon him." The whole of God's grace for God's elect is deposited in its fulness of glory in the person of the Son of God; but unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ, "according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world."

This lily, dear child of God, is that new life which is called the "new man," and the "inner man," and the "hidden man." It represents something secret; yet notwithstanding no one hath ever been able to put his finger on the new man, and say, "You shall go no further," yet while this is true, it is as the blessed Lord himself described: "The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth. So is every one that is born of the Spirit." You cannot tell the mystery, but you can hear the sound. What a sweet mercy this is, and by that sound you may know what the internal work of the Spirit is. This is what constitutes the very essence of the lily; for that which is born

of God in the soul cannot commit sin, it cannot be defiled any more than Christ could be defiled. Moreover, this new nature is described in this way; that is, that which was begotten in love, *that* loves; and by this we know that we are born of God: "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God." Now, this is the first principle made manifest in any of you; and without it you have no evidence that you are God's people. When this new nature is given to a man, he has from that moment a hungering after God's love, and a feeling at the bottom that is a continual fighting against the world, the flesh, and the devil. This is the great struggle pointed out in my text: "A lily among thorns."

You know thorns are of a pricking nature, and if they could get at the face they would tear you altogether; but if the lily is above them all they cannot hurt it. It is like the devil trying to prick my flesh and cannot touch my new man. "Then," say you, "you should not trouble about it." When I am conscious that the evil I would not that I do, and the good I would I cannot do, I find a law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, I am a captive and pray to get out of it. These thorns may be in a Paul as they are in us. He says, "There was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me." I remember reading a discourse about this thorn in the flesh; how it pricked up faith and hope, &c., but I do not understand it, for the devil cannot mix up sin in the flesh with my new nature. If he could, I should not be a lily but something of a mongrel flower. A thorn, Paul says, was in his flesh. I defy the devil to find out the new man; and then the dear child of God being brought into temptation or trials, a temptation about giving up reading the Bible, a temptation to give up prayer, or give up going to chapel,—all this is pricking; but the new man is only touched by it through the union that is between him and Christ. He it is that mourns before God. He says, "No, no; to give up reading God's word is giving up the charter; to give up prayer is to give up breathing; to leave off going after spiritual food is to go into a decline and die by inches." This is the struggle,—the lily among thorns.

Let us hear a little about "the daughters." In the first place I think it is intended to separate the real child of God from a nominal Christian. In the second place, that these nominal daughters are so many thorns to tease God's people. In the third place, that she remains God's love though she is among all these concubines.

1. Now for the first: "So is my love among the daughters." Here is a distinction between Christ's love, the "only one," and the daughters. Now, by the daughters I suppose he meant daughters of Israel in the letter. There are many such daughters, I mean some of the most famous among us, the most pious of the pious, our class leaders, committees, and so on, always busy. It is to me something like a number of people

all very busy, driving away. "What is all this you are so busy about?" "O," say they, "we mean to have such a blow at the Government; we intend to have a Republic." This, I can assure you, is all I can see of the most busy of them, with all their working and storming. Among this people there is not a loyal man to the Christ of God. These daughters, I believe, are those thus compared to thorns; and they very frequently prick. I remember eighteen years ago, when I preached at Colchester, I met with some of these daughters; and I would not believe till I got among those people that there were such people as Antinomians, who say, that the grace of God might be more abundantly showed to them they would wallow in sin; but I met with them there. These are the daughters, these are the thorns. The thorns remain thorns, and the lily a lily.

Not only is there a distinction between the real possessor and mere professor, but there is also something very awful in the nature of the pricking. It is that they are to God's people what the Canaanites were to Israel, as pricks in their eyes and thorns in their side. That is to say, that in the way we mix up with these daughters we shall find them pricks in our eyes. Well, I preached from these words: "And fell among thieves." I pointed out, in several things, that they did not belong to either Jerusalem or Jericho, for he was between them; and I made this conclusion, that these people were not right out worldlings, nor yet the dear children of God. Thus I pointed out these professors, and the way they served the poor man. I don't look upon the man that went from Jerusalem as a poor man in the first work; for he was a member of the church, and went into the world of which Jericho was a type. He had not got into the world. A backslider seldom does. The half-way professors stripped him, robbed him of his goods, of the doctrine of the blessed union with Christ: "O! That is a very awful doctrine O! You belong to so and so. No wonder you are so presumptuous a person. He preaches that there are only a few loved with an everlasting love. He preaches that the blood of Christ saves from all sin, though you are full of sin, that the righteousness of Christ will clothe you, though you are unclothed. He preaches that there is such union between Christ and his people that nothing can separate them. Does he not?" "Yes," says the man. "O! These are dangerous doctrines. He preaches imputed righteousness, too, that there is not a jot or tittle of God's law but what is satisfied, so that you need not trouble yourself to do anything to make righteousness of." Well, then, they begin to strip the man from this and the other; and when the dear soul has lost all its comforts, it is left half dead. These pricking thorns hate God's dear family to such an extent that, as a very prime professing dame said the other day to a dear child of God in this place, after all was decided, "Are you a church woman?" "O no." "Where do you go?" "So and so." "There!" says the woman," "I would rather have a

Roman Catholic." Don't you think they are nice thorns? Dear child of God, they may try to wound and grieve you, but they shall never bring your soul down from Christ. Many a dear child of God is pricked most sharply by them. How many a dear child of God, by being in union with them, has had his mouth stopped in prayer, or in speaking good of Christ. O what a trouble when the man has to carry his own dead body and another one too.

I reverse it. From some of you, dear friends, though I have never spoken to you, yet you little know how some of you, from coming after the truth, from your very way and manner of coming, how it lays you upon my heart. Sometimes the poor soul gets connected with some of these thorns; and what a trouble it is. He hates your person and your religion. The poor hypocrite comes sneaking after the woman: "Do you like this?" "O yes." Well, by and by something comes, and, alas! alas! all their wiles come out. For one who fears God and is a lily, to be alongside such a one is a thorn indeed.

"As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters." If you would do good, evil is present with you. "I thought you held that nobody could do good?" All that the Holy Ghost works in us is good. Is it good to praise God? Yes. Is it good to pour out our souls to God? It is. What then? Why then, when you would do good, evil is present with you. Then you have these thorns. Cannot God make you all holy, so that you have no sin in your nature at all, and belong to the perfect band? I know a poor man who married one of these perfect women; but before six weeks were over, he found her a perfect devil. Let us remember, then, there are very dreadful workings within. Paul was taken up into the third heavens, and heard unspeakable things; but Paul must have not only in his own nature what was liable to bring forth thorns, but one in his nature that shall grieve and prick him; and the dear man cried to God, and the answer was, "My grace is sufficient for thee." "Most gladly, then," he says, "will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." The Canaanites and Jebusites were left in the land, that the children that were born there might not forget war, but be trained to fight. And now it is intended that God's dear family contend earnestly against the wiles of the devil. Mortify the deeds of the body. It is intended to show there is enmity against the flesh and the devil. A child of God is regenerated that he may be an instrument to destroy the work of the devil. We know that if we are crucified with Christ, henceforth we shall not serve sin, for he that is the servant of sin is a slave to sin and lust. But the children of God yield their members as instruments of righteousness. I should like to live without being annoyed by sin at all, and live near to God; but I must live as Paul did, and keep up the battle.

"So, then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, and

with the flesh the law of sin." In my nature. That is, fighting constantly against all the work of the devil; and you know the greatest enemies are those of our own house. We are to mortify our members, not to kneel as Papists do, upon peas; but, by the power of the Holy Ghost, mortify ourselves before God, and cry, "Lord, I am vile!" If I were to exalt myself, my own clothes would abhor me. Nothing but immutable grace will ever be sufficient for me; but if I am left by myself to keep it, I should lose it all and be damned in the end. Such is the conviction of a dear child of God. Then it is God's holy will that you should struggle on.

May God give us to see these things, that we are his dear lilies, and that though we are among thorns, we are not of the thorns, but only among them; and this being the case, the struggling and the crying to God are perfectly consistent with the life of God in your soul.

May God give his blessing. I add no more. Amen.

A CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN A DAUGHTER AND HER PARENTS.

The following letters will speak for themselves. The first was written by the daughter of Mr. Scandrett, for many years pastor of the Strict Baptist church at Godmanchester, and the two others are the answers to it from her parents:

My dear Father and Mother,—I take up my pen at this time to address you with feelings very different to what I have formerly done. Yes; I feel that I am a sinner, a great sinner, and always was, though I did not know it as I have lately seen myself to be. I have been led to see my lost and ruined state by nature, and feel my need of a Saviour. The Lord has been pleased to set my sins in order before me; and what a mercy if I am snatched as a brand from the burning. But my fears, though somewhat removed, are still very great, and I am yet afraid to say, "Rejoice with me, for I have found that which I have been seeking after;" that is, the pardon of my sin through the blood of Christ. I know there is no other way whereby I can be saved but by that Saviour who came into the world to save sinners. But ah! Did he die for me? That's the great question! O! Could I but have some token to know this, what should I fear? Still I have a little hope; and though it is but small, I could not give it up. No; I would not exchange my state for all the world. I have been convicted many times under Mr. Sewell's ministry, and I can say I believe he has been the means of opening my eyes to see my lost and sinful state. There was a young man from Braintree preached here about Christmas time, afternoon and evening. His text in the evening was, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" As soon as the words were read they were like a dagger to my heart. Never shall I forget how I felt. I thought no one ever

felt as I did. I wished I could have sunk into nothing, as I could see no way of escape. I well knew I had neglected every thing. I could hear very little of the sermon. My heart felt broken. But I did not continue in that state long. I read my Bible and found many precious promises that somewhat relieved me. I tried to compose myself in this way: "Well," I thought, "I have never committed this or that outward act as many have;" but I see very differently now. I find I have such a wicked heart, even my thoughts are sin; my heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it? I could not tell my dearest friends the wicked thoughts that cross my mind, which makes me sometimes ready to despair, thinking if I was right I should never have such thoughts. I have felt a little comfortable sometimes; but for so short a time that I am almost afraid to take encouragement. I never felt so happy as I did one evening a week or two back. I had been reading my Bible all the evening, and it seemed a sealed book to me, and I was praying to the Lord that he would open it to me and enlighten my mind; and I felt such a spirit of prayer that my heart melted within me. I felt such love to the Saviour that my whole heart and mind was in it; and I could praise him and could give everything up for him. I did feel happy indeed. I do not know how long this pleasing sensation lasted; but it seemed to me to be but for a few minutes. They were the happiest moments I ever had. But they were soon gone; I soon lost them; but still I love to think of them.

I have written two or three letters to you, but could not send them, I feel such changes. Sometimes I can say such great things, and then at another time I am afraid to say anything. I think sometimes, "It is of no use for me to write; for perhaps they will think there is a change in me, and I am afraid there certainly is not, nor ever will be;" so that I am ready to give up all for lost. Sometimes I think if I perish, it shall be crying for mercy. Last Sunday week my mind felt so uncomfortable I wanted some one to open my mind to. I thought it would be such a relief if I could tell any one how I felt. On the Monday morning I went to Mr. Sewell's, and told him how I felt as far as I was able. He encouraged me much, and seemed pleased, and said I had no cause to despair; which relieved me a little while.

Now I begin another week with better news. On Saturday morning I felt very low, when these words came into my mind: "Unto you is the word of this salvation sent." "Unto you." I thought, "To whom?" and I kept repeating it, and I said, "To whom is it sent?" "Why, to you who feel the need of it," was the answer; for it seemed as if some one was talking with me. "Well," I thought, "I know I feel the need." "Then it is sent to you." In an instant my mourning was turned into joy, and immediately this followed: "Jesus is the Friend of sinners." He died that sinners might live. "Well," I said,

“if he is my Friend, I want, I need no other. In him there is everything I want.” If I try, I cannot express to you my feelings. It seemed too much for me; the bliss appeared so great. What love, to lay down his life for sinners who could make him no return! All I could say was,

“‘Here, Lord, I give myself away;
’Tis all that I can do.’”

A poor return! My fears were then all removed. I felt not the least doubt that he died for me. I wept; but they were tears of joy.

I am sure you know better about these feelings than I can describe to you. You have been this way before me. I believe those words that I have mentioned are in the Bible, but I cannot find them. Yesterday afternoon Mr. S. preached from these words: “Jesus saith unto Thomas, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.” He is the Way, a true and living way. I seem to have just commenced my journey. I pray that he may keep me in the way, that I may not turn to the right hand or to the left, that my feet may not slip, that I may follow on until I arrive at last where he is. Yes; I need his keeping. If I am left, I am sure I shall err. But he will never forsake those that put their trust in him.

My dear father and mother, I do earnestly beg an interest in your prayers. Remember me. My desire is that your Father may be my Father, and your God my God. I have thought lately that perhaps your prayers have been answered for me. Another thing I have to beg of you is, your instruction. You, father, have been as a guide to many; you both, I have no doubt, have had many a slough to pass over, many a giant and lion to meet in the way.

Had the Lord dealt with me according to my deserts, I should not have been spared to write to you, as hell would have been my place. It is of his mercy I am not consumed. You will think me a strange being; but I have been so tried and tempted to-day not to send you this letter. Satan suggests to me it is all delusion; but I know I have told you just my feelings, and if I am deceived I hope the Lord will undeceive me. If I write for a week I cannot tell you my thoughts.

I hope you will write to me soon; perhaps it may be a means of settling my roving mind. So I will venture to send this, and hope when I write again my mind may be more settled.

Yours sincerely and affectionately,

Thaxted, Feb. 13th, 1833.

H. MOSS.

My dear Child,—We received your epistle with peculiar pleasure, and I hope with feelings of gratitude to the blessed God, whose finger of Divine power I can clearly trace throughout the whole of it.

O what an unspeakable mercy it is to be brought by the teaching of the Holy Ghost to realise our true sinnership, and

feelingly to know and honestly to confess before God our real deservings of endless wrath; for though we may not have been left in our nature-state to have run into many outward abominations which others have done, yet the Holy Ghost, when he comes to renew, will sooner or later most assuredly make all the Lord's people to know in a measure that the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, and that our whole nature is nothing but sin. "I know," said the apostle, "that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." Now, wherever these things are taught by the Spirit of God, and I am compelled to believe they are in you, mind this, they are in the truest sense a good work; and where God begins a good work, he will perfect it to the day of Christ. Now this day has dawned upon you. You say you are sure you never can be saved but by him. This is an eternal truth, and gives me much pleasure in reading it; for "there is none other Name given under heaven amongst men whereby we can be saved;" and blessed be his precious name, we need nor desire any other.

Thus you see, my dear, the Lord makes us feel our great sinfulness, our complete helplessness, our ill and hell-deservedness, that we might be saved by Christ alone; and thus it is that the Lord make us feel the power of guilt, that we may look to Christ for pardon; our own vileness, that we may be led to the fountain of his blood for cleansing; and be sure when the Holy Ghost fills you with self-abasement and self-abhorrence, under a sense of the filthiness of the rags of your own righteousness, it is to make you long for the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the righteousness of God to all them that believe, and who has himself declared that "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."

I am very glad you are led to read the precious word of God. May you pray to the Lord for the Spirit's teaching, to enable you to read it indeed as the word of God that can never fail. Its promises, when viewed by faith, will afford sweet consolation. May the Lord enable you to make it the man of your counsel at all times and in all cases.

You say you are sorely tempted by the enemy. This is nothing new.

"Satan the weakest saint will tempt,
Nor is the strongest free."

May the Lord give you to discern his assaults, and to see how your own heart, through unbelief and carnality, is ready to join in with him. Whatever leads you to think highly of yourself in any measure, or lightly of the blessed Lord Jesus Christ, is temptation.

You cannot be too thankful for the peace of God, or any sensible enjoyment of Christ's gracious presence manifested to you; but take great care not to make a Christ of your frames; but while sipping of the streams may you never forget the fountain. That is, when you find, as you certainly will, your joys

declining, your comforts all gone, your poor soul cleaving to the dust, and you can neither rise nor go to reach eternal things, then is the time you need faith. May the Holy Ghost, then, lead you to believe and rejoice in it, too, that the Lord Jesus Christ is just the same as when you sat under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to your taste.

The portion of Scripture that was brought to your mind, and which, through God's power, so relieved you, you may find in the Acts of the Apostles, xiii. 26.

But I must leave off. Let us hear from you soon. When I write again, perhaps I may write more. I cannot now. So fare thee well.

May the blessing of him that dwelt in the bush rest upon you.

Your affectionate Father,

Godmanchester, Feb. 26th, 1833.

WM. SCANDRETT.

My dear Child,—I received your letter and read its contents with surprise and with feelings of pleasure and astonishment. Indeed, I was quite overcome with so unexpected an account of the dealings and goodness of the Lord towards you, as it appears very clear to be the Spirit's work upon your heart.

O what a mercy that the Lord should in his great goodness bring you to a sense of your lost and ruined state by nature, and to feel that you were so completely helpless that you could do nothing to bring yourself out of it without his gracious interposition and the blood of Christ to cleanse you from guilt and defilement. You see the Lord is never at a loss to effect his work upon the hearts of his own blood-bought children, to bring them to a sense of the need they stand in of a Saviour, and to make them cry to him for mercy and pardon to be applied by the Holy Spirit to the heart and conscience.

It appears by your letter that the Lord was graciously pleased to fasten the word of conviction upon your heart by the application of those words: "How shall we escape?" This so humbled and brought you to his footstool to cry for mercy, to wish you could have sunk into nothing. My dear, I think I never saw the Lord's work clearer than in this instance, that he is following on his work in your heart, and has given you a sweet token of his love and meltings of soul from those words so powerfully applied: "To you is the word of this salvation sent." O what a mercy that you were enabled to receive it by faith and to rejoice in the Lord with exceeding joy; and though it was but for a short time, it appears, nevertheless, to be the Spirit's work upon your heart, the recollection of which is sweet and consoling to the mind, sometimes, in dark seasons, when the enemy and your own unbelieving heart is ready to call all into question. But fear not, "More are they which are for you than all those that can be against you." The Lord will never forsake the work of his own hands. If you are tempted at times to

think it is not the Lord's work, may you be helped to look to Jesus and rejoice in his dear name: "Trust in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." He is gracious and full of compassion, and is ever ready to hear the cry of his poor and needy ones.

I rejoice with you, my dear, that the goodness of God has led you to that repentance that needs not to be repented of. O may you be enabled to give him all the praise and the glory. The goodness of God is truly astonishing when we are led by the Spirit to see our ill and hell-deservedness and the goodness of God in pardoning such rebels, in bringing them to his footstool, to plead for mercy and then to calm the tempestuous ocean of the mind and to say, "*Peace be unto you.*"

I have many times felt an inclination to write to you on the importance of eternal things, but never could bring my mind to enter upon it; but now I see it is all well, since the Lord has been pleased to take you in hand; for nothing that I could have said would have been effectual without his blessing. I do always remember you in my poor petitions; but what a mercy that you are remembered by the Lord Jesus Christ, who prayed for you when here on earth, as you may find in John xvii., where he was praying to his Father on behalf of all his dear family. He says, "I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me;" and of all that are given unto him he will not lose one. It is a sweet portion. Read it over, and may it be blessed to your comfort and edification to see what love (was ever love like this?)—and O what a cheering thought that now he is entered into his glory he ever lives to make intercession for them, and says, "Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." His words are full of comfort and consolation to his dear family. May you, my dear, be enabled to derive all that comfort and support you stand in need of from them.

I wish I could see you. I should love to have a little conversation with you, to hear all particulars, as I know you feel much more than you can write; but whenever you are particularly tried or comforted make a memorandum of it, that so you may be enabled to trace the goodness of the Lord.

I can perceive you have had a great struggle in your mind in sending us an account of the Lord's dealings towards you, fearing lest you should be deceived; but be not troubled on that account. May the Lord strengthen and settle you in the truth, that you may at last come off a conqueror and more than a conqueror through him that hath loved you and given himself for you. I trust Mr. S. is a man that preaches the truth as it is in Jesus, and as such you hope he has been instrumental in the Lord's hands in convincing and in bringing you, through the Spirit's teaching, to the knowledge of the truth. I hope you may be still blessed under his ministry, that you may have to set to your seal that the Lord is true. May the Lord bless you

and lead you and keep you in the truth, that you may see more and more of the riches of his grace in Christ Jesus.

I write this, my dear, with peculiar pleasure, and hope you will write a few lines by S., and let us know how you have been exercised since your last.

I am happy to hear your dear husband is inquiring the way to Zion. May he be enabled to seek so as to find, to knock so as the door of mercy may be opened,—not in his own strength, but by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Wishing you much of the Lord's presence, to comfort you and support you under every trial or temptation you may have to meet with in the way, that you may go on your way rejoicing,

I remain, your affectionate Mother,
 Godmanchester, March 4th, 1833. H. SCANDRETT.

THE LAST RESOURCE, BUT THE ONLY AND THE BEST.

My dear Brother,—How often do I wish for your society, that I could pour into your ears my sorrows and joys, for I have them both in turn! I often feel, when trials come upon me, like Jonah. I fain would flee from the presence of the Lord, when he acts contrary to my flesh and sense. I would run to Egypt for help very often; but when I look this and that way, I see no way of escape. I often think of the word you told me, that the Holy Ghost had never indited my prayer, when I prayed for deliverance from the trial which has been so sore to me for so many years; but when I am hardly pressed in spirit, I am bound to cry to him for help. I have no arm of flesh to hang upon, or I should not go to Christ. He is the last resource; and what a mercy it is that he will permit such sinful, polluted wretches to come to him after all!

I often think I would not be a minister for God. I would not be God's mouth to the people for all the world, because they are not good for much to God's people without such severe affliction, and that I always shrink from, although every step I take I have to endure them; yet sometimes I see it is all right, and I wish to bear all for the Lord's sake; but I have very little patience. You know very well that a slaughtered flock wants a minister who has been slaughtered in his own soul, or how can he tell how to trace the footsteps? It is no use a minister standing up to cry, "Peace, peace," unless he can tell whence it is to come from, how it is brought in, and how it operates.

May God be gracious to you, and kill you to self and to the world. May you prove to be a watchman, set on the walls of Zion, and may you never be permitted to give an uncertain sound to God's dear children, that they may know when to prepare to face the great Apollyon. God hath left it on record that through much tribulation we shall enter the kingdom, and yet I, fool-like, am always looking for peace and a smooth path; yet the Lord knows I do not want my portion in this life.

Dear Brother, you know something of what a mass of contradiction I am. I wait, and yet I do not wait; but, dear brother, with all my filth and guilt I know it will be well at last.

Worcester, 1853.

A. P.

TRUST IN THE LORD AND DO GOOD.

My dear Christian Friend, whom I love in the truth and for the truth's sake,—I received your very kind letter, in the month of May, a month of many trials to me, temporally and spiritually. My feet and heart at one time had well nigh slipped; but here I am, upheld till now. I especially thank you for your kind invitation to hear Mr. P. I felt it no small disappointment that I was not able to come, because he has for years been commended to my conscience by the Spirit of God as a minister of God, in truth and sincerity, preaching the truth in love and faithfulness, separating between the precious and the vile, the living and the dead, the chaff and the wheat, the professor and the possessor of vital godliness.

O my dear friend, where shall you and I stand at that great day when God gathers together his people, and places them on his right hand, but says to the wicked, "Depart, ye cursed, I never knew you; my infinite foreknowledge never embraced you, neither did my love ever rest upon you?" Many times does my soul tremble lest I should one day hear these dreadful words. Many there be that say of my soul, There is no hope for him in God; and oftentimes I am compelled to say the same. But "Who can tell?" revives my soul with a little power, and supports me from finally sinking. Nevertheless, the wicked lie in wait at every corner, and shoot privily their poisoned arrows of destruction. I stumble, but God will not let me be swallowed up alive; therefore have I some feeble emotions of hope that God will not finally cut me off and destroy me with the wicked, though I most justly deserve his anger for ever. The more I know of God's righteous law, the more do I abhor myself in dust and ashes, and wonder that I am permitted to live from one hour to another.

I hope my dear friend is in possession of some clearer evidences of a personal interest in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ than the writer of this, because it is not having a name to live that will do before God. "A good man's steps are ordered by the Lord." May you have an evidence that you are a good man, by experiencing the hand of the Lord condescending to direct your steps to where he hath fixed the bounds of your habitation, that you may obtain things honest in the sight of all men. I am sure you must feel exercised in your mind very much about it. Change of situation to a good man is a matter of serious consideration. "But trust in the Lord and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed."

Kettering, July 9, 1849.

J. ROBINSON.

*"WHO IS ABLE TO STAND BEFORE THIS HOLY
LORD GOD?"*

(1 Sam. vi. 20.)

THE end of all things is at hand.
Let us inquire who then shall stand.
Eternity's a solemn theme;
It is no fancy, fit, or dream.

Its vast importance who can tell?
'Tis endless heaven or endless hell;
God's people all awakened are,
To feel these things with solemn care.

They know and feel that none will stand,
Free from all blame at God's right hand;
But those whom God in love doth bless
And clothe in Jesus' righteousness.

They know that all who go to heaven,
Must have on earth their sins forgiven;
For this great boon they sigh and pray,
With heart and soul from day to day.

They know within themselves, and feel
That true religion's something real,—
Something that comes from heaven above,
To the blest objects of God's love.

They know God hears and answers prayer,
They try on him to cast their care,
They ask and seek for Jesus' sake,
That they of mercy may partake.

At length he for their help appears,
Resolves their doubts, relieves their fears;
Faith in his blood gives conscience peace,
And Jesus makes the storm to cease.

Thus they enduring substance have,
By faith and hope beyond the grave;
They have the evidence within,
Of cancell'd guilt and pardon'd sin.

By faith in Christ they now possess
A perfect spotless righteousness,
For Jesus' life imputed is
To all the elected heirs of bliss.

They hold the mystery of faith,
And cleave to Jesus' life and death;
This faith it purifies the heart,
And takes away death's sting and smart.

These happy souls shall surely stand
Complete in Christ at God's right hand;
Shall see their Saviour as he is,
And reap in joy ecstatic bliss.

MEDITATIONS ON DIFFERENT PORTIONS OF THE WORD OF GOD.

MEDITATIONS ON THE FIRST CHAPTER OF THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER.

IN our last paper we paused at the words, "Which things the angels desire to look into." As there is much in this expression that demands and will repay reverent and thoughtful meditation, we resume at this point our exposition of 1 Pet. i.

In the Scripture we obtain glimpses and glances of that order of created intelligences known to us by the name of angels, that is, messengers. In both the Old and New Testaments this is their revealed name, as if God would, in his infinite wisdom, present them to us under that aspect as adapted to our capacity to understand and to our faith to receive and believe, without giving us any information of their nature, which, indeed, were it revealed in the word, we might not be able with our present limited faculties to comprehend. That they were created by our blessed Lord, as the Son of the Father in truth and love, is plainly revealed (Col. i. 16), and that they were created holy and pure is equally plain; for it is impossible that he who is infinite purity and holiness could create any unclean thing. That from this purity and holiness a multitude fell, and by this fall became what they now are, and ever will be, wicked devils, enemies of God and man, is also clearly revealed in the word of truth. We thus gather from the inspired Scriptures that there are good and bad angels, those who kept and those who kept not their first estate. (Jude 6.) The first are known as "the elect angels" (1 Tim. v. 21), to denote that they were chosen in the secret purposes of God to stand when others were allowed to fall; as "the holy angels" (Matt. xxv. 31; Acts x. 22; Rev. xiv. 10), to distinguish them from the fallen, unholy, and unclean angels; as "the angels of God" (Luke xii. 8; Heb. i. 6), to distinguish them from the angels of the devil. (Rev. xii. 7.) They are said also to be "an innumerable company" (Heb. xii. 22); for Daniel saw in vision "thousand thousands ministering unto the Ancient of days, and ten thousand times ten thousand standing before him" (Dan. vii. 10), and John declares, "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands." (Rev. v. 11.) They are also declared "to excel in strength" (Ps. ciii. 20), to be "mighty" (2 Thess. i. 7; Rev. xviii. 21), as indeed the works they have already done sufficiently show (2 Sam. xxiv. 16; 2 Kings xix. 35), and as will one day be more clearly seen when they shall come forth at the end of the world to sever the wicked from among the just. As regards their office now, they are "ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." (Heb. i. 14.) But as it is not our present object to dwell upon the character and ministry of

angels, we shall confine ourselves to what is here said of them by the apostle that they "desire to look into" the mysteries of salvation. The expression is 1, one of reverent inquiry; 2, of holy wonder and admiration.

Now what is it that draws forth this reverent inquiry and this holy wonder and admiration on the part of these angelic beings?

1. They desire to see in the mysteries of salvation the infinite *wisdom* of God. The apostle therefore speaks, "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." (Eph. iii. 10.) The elect angels had seen their non-elect brethren fall, and in their banishment from heaven and being "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day," witnessed a display of the tremendous justice and indignation of the Almighty. But as viewing the mysteries of redemption, they see a display of an attribute of God before unknown, or at least not manifested in act—*mercy*. How to reconcile this newly-discovered attribute of mercy with that strict justice of which they had seen such an awful example they knew not. But the explanation of this deep and blessed mystery is presented to their inquiring minds in the Person of Christ, and especially in his sufferings, death, and resurrection, in his atoning blood, justifying obedience, and dying love. In this, as in a glass, they are ever desiring to look, that they may, with the utmost stretch and penetration of their pure angelic minds, see and gather up more and more discoveries of the infinite wisdom of God, that they may for ever admire and adore it. To the carnal, earthly, debased, degraded mind of man the mystery of the Person of Christ, of the cross, of the sufferings, bloodshedding, and death of Jesus, whereby he put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, is foolishness. He sees no beauty, blessedness, or glory in the Person of the Son of God, nor any wisdom or grace in atoning blood and dying love. But not so with these bright and pure intelligences. They see far better than we can, as being of a higher order of understanding, the wisdom of God in creation and in providence, for in both these domains of divine wisdom much is plain and clear to them which is obscure to or unobserved by us. They have greater opportunities of observation as standing ever in the courts of heaven, and able to fly swiftly (Dan. ix. 21) from spot to spot, as well as possessed of an intelligence both high and exalted in itself, and undimmed, as ours, by sin. But all these outward witnesses, so to speak, of the wisdom and power of God which they see in the light of his countenance, as ever beholding his face (Matt. xviii. 10), are as nothing compared with what is revealed to them of the inward actings of God's mind, and the discovery to them of those peculiar attributes whereby he reveals himself to their adoring observation, not only as a God of infinite wisdom, but a God of mercy, grace, and love.

2. For they see in the Person and work of Christ not only the

depths of infinite wisdom in the contrivance of the whole plan of redemption, and of power in its execution and full accomplishment, but they see, as reflected in the Person and work of the God-man, such lengths, breadths, depths, and heights of *love* as fill their minds with holy wonder, admiration, and praise. For bear in mind what they are whom the angels see to be the objects of this love. Not pure holy beings, such as they themselves are, but vile, degraded, and ungodly sinners. They could well understand the free flowings forth of love to the pure and the holy, for of that they have a personal experience in their own case, and that God can punish and take vengeance upon transgressors they can also comprehend, for of this they saw an instance in the fallen angels; but that the love of God should be fixed on any of the guilty sons of men is beyond the grasp of their natural faculties. But it is presented to their inquiring minds in God's gift of his dear Son for poor guilty sinners, and in the coming of the Son of his love in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, both to put it away and to condemn it. (Heb. ix. 26; Rom. viii. 3.) And knowing who the Son of God is as "the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his Person," they see in his incarnation, humiliation, sufferings, bloodshedding, and death, such unspeakable treasures of mercy and grace as ever fill their minds with wonder and admiration.

3. They see also in the mysteries of redemption the way in which Satan, the arch-fiend, the leader of millions of angels into sin and rebellion, the successful tempter and destroyer of man, the proud, self-exalting god and prince of this world, rearing his throne and power in this lower creation as the open antagonist of God and man; they see this prince of the power of the air, we say, defeated, not by force of arms, and cast out of his usurped dominion by the mighty majesty of the Son of God and the brightness of his manifested glory, as they will one day see when he comes again the second time without sin unto salvation, but they see *him* who had the power of death, wielding it as a weapon of terror and alarm over the redeemed when in bondage, destroyed through death, and behold in the wondrous mystery of the dying of the Lord of life the prince and god of this world defeated by that very thing, *death*, of which he had been the introducer through sin into the world. They see with holy wonder and admiration how by the cross the suffering Son of God "spoiled principalities and powers," the thousands of fallen spirits who in league with and under the control of Satan their head set up their dominion in this lower world, and how he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it, or himself. (Col. ii. 15, margin.) What moves their adoring admiration is the way in which this victory over sin in its accursed author and introducer and his associate legions in wickedness was accomplished; that sin was not, as it were, swept out of the world by an act of sovereign power, and its

head cast into the lake of fire at once by the arm of the Almighty, but that sin should be atoned for and put away by the bloodshedding and death of the Son of God in our nature, death overcome by his dying the just for the unjust, and Satan judged, dethroned, cast out, and destroyed, as to his dominion, though not as to his being, by his obedience unto death; this act of obedient submission to the will of the Father by the Son of his love fills their minds with holy admiration and astonishment.

4. And as witnessing also the gradual unfolding of the purposes of his grace in the repentance unto life of each successive vessel of mercy, they ever find new matter of praise and joy; for there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

Now these and other mysteries of redeeming love the angels desire to look into, that they may learn from them fresh lessons of the grace and glory of God's incarnate Son and see more and more in him, as the image of God, to admire, adore, and love. What a pattern to them of obedience to the will of God and of diligent, active, unwearied love to the sons of men! What a continual presentation to their inquiring minds of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ! And should that be no object of inquiry and admiration to us which is such an object of inquiry and admiration to them? Are we not much more deeply because personally interested in these mysteries than they are? Redemption was not for angels but for us. They stand round about the throne in the outward circle; but we, if interested in redeeming love, stand, as represented by the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders, close to and before the throne, in the inner circle. They have no new song to sing as the redeemed have; no pardoned sin to bless God for, no deliverance from going down into the pit, no manifested mercy to make their souls rejoice. And yet so pure and holy is the flame of their love to God (Heb. i. 7), and such delight do they take in knowing and doing his will, of which they give the perfect exemplar, according to the well-known petition in the Lord's prayer (Matt. vi. 10), that they admire, love, and adore what they have no personal interest in; and so far from feeling pity for or sympathy with their fallen brethren, or any jealousy at the promotion of man into their place, and even over their own head in the Person of Christ, that they rejoice in the will of God simply because it is his will. What shame and confusion should cover our face that we should see so little beauty and glory in that redeeming blood and love which fill their pure minds with holy and unceasing admiration; and that they should be ever seeking and inquiring into this heavenly mystery, that they may discover in it ever new and opening treasures of the wisdom, grace, mercy, truth, and love of God, when we, who profess to be redeemed by precious blood, are, for the most part, so cold and indifferent in the contemplation and admiration of it.

But we must not linger on this deeply-interesting subject, but pass on to the next point which the apostle brings before us: "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. i. 13.) The apostle now comes to practical exhortation. Having laid down the grounds of our faith and hope, and encouraged us by the example of the angels to look more closely and inquire more deeply into the mysteries of redeeming love, he enforces upon us such a path of holy obedience as will be for our own establishment and comfort, and for the glory of God.

1. He bids us first to "*gird up the loins of our mind.*" The ancients wore loose garments; and these, though cool and well adapted to the climate, yet had various inconveniences which they sought to remedy by, as it were, tightening or girding them up with a strong band that went round the loins and was fastened in front. We need not refer to the various passages of the Old Testament where the expression occurs in its literal sense. Here, of course, it is used figuratively and spiritually. To gird up, then, the loins of the mind is to do spiritually in the matters of the soul what was done naturally by such a bodily act in the matters of the body. It implies, therefore,

i. *Readiness.* The first thing the wearer of loose garments would do to prepare himself for action would be to gird up his loins, so as to be ready to move at the word of command. "Gird thyself," said the angel to Peter, "and bind on thy sandals." (Acts xii. 8.) There is a readiness of mind to receive the word (Acts xvii. 11), a readiness to will (2 Cor. viii. 11), a readiness to revenge, not oneself, but all disobedience in oneself (2 Cor. x. 6), a readiness of spirit even when the flesh is weak (Mark xiv. 38), a readiness to every good work (Titus iii. 1), a ready mind to serve the church willingly, and not for filthy lucre. (1 Pet. v. 2.) This readiness of a willing spirit to run the way of God's commandments, when he enlarges the heart, seems denoted by the expression, "Gird up the loins of your mind."

ii. It also implies *strength* to do and suffer the will of God. "They that stumbled," says Hannah of old, alluding to her once tottering steps, "are girded with strength." (1 Sam. ii. 4.) "It is God," said David, "that girdeth me with strength." (Ps. xviii. 32.) We have much to do and much to suffer in the path of tribulation, and in this path we cannot properly or safely walk with loose disordered affections, unstable, unfortified minds, with a faith and hope not braced up and strengthened to fight the good fight, and lay hold of eternal life.

iii. It implies also that we should not *let our garments trail in the dirt*, so as to soil our profession, get them entangled in the thorns and briars of the cares of this life, or of strife and contention, and thus have them rent and torn; but to walk through this world as a cleanly woman picks her way through a miry

road, avoiding every puddle, and gathering her clothes carefully round her that they be soiled as little as possible by the mud.

If we let our thoughts and affections fall, as it were, where they will, they will soon fall into the dirt. Our thoughts, our words, our looks, our movements and actions, must be held in and held up from roving and roaming at their wild, ungoverned will, or we shall soon fall into some evil that may cover us with shame and disgrace. If we are to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand, we must stand "having our loins girt about with truth" (Eph. vi. 14); and this will keep our garments from being defiled with either error or evil.

2. "Be sober," adds the apostle, or, as the word might be translated, be "watchful." Sobriety in religion is a blessed gift and grace. In our most holy faith there is no room for lightness. The things which concern our peace are solemn, weighty matters, and if they lie with any degree of weight and power on our spirit, they will subdue that levity which is the very breath of the carnal mind. Some men are naturally light, and as a man's natural make and disposition will sometimes, in spite of his better feelings and judgment, discover itself, some good men and acceptable preachers have fallen into the snare of dropping light expressions in the pulpit. But it is much to be lamented that they have set such an example, for many have imitated their lightness who do not possess their grace, and have availed themselves of that very circumstance as a recommendation which in these good men was but an infirmity. How different was the testimony which Burnet gives of Leighton:

"I can say with truth, that in a free and frequent conversation with him for above two-and-twenty years, I never knew him speak an idle word, or one that had not a direct tendency to edification; and I never once saw him in any other temper but that which I wished to be in the last minutes of my life."

But sobriety implies not merely the absence of all unbecoming levity in speech and conduct, but the absence also of all wild, visionary imaginations in the things of God. It denotes, therefore, that "spirit of a sound mind" which the apostle says is the gift of God. (2 Tim. i. 7.) Few things are more opposed to that wisdom which is from above (James iii. 17), and to that anointing which teacheth all things, and is truth, and is no lie (1 Jno. ii. 27), or to the work of faith, the labour of love, and the patience of hope than those wild flights of imagination, and those visionary ideas and feelings which so many substitute for the solid realities of the life of God. These are some of the strongholds of which Paul speaks and which he had to pull down. "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." (2 Cor. x. 4, 5.) These vain "imaginations," these speculative ideas and enthusiastic

visionary ramblings, often the fruit of a disordered mind, or produced by Satan as an angel of light, which some seem to think so much of, Paul would pull down as strongholds of delusion. Hart seems at one time to have been nearly caught in this snare:

“But, after many a gloomy, doleful hour spent in solitude and sorrow, not without strong and frequent cries and tears to God, and beseeching him to reveal himself to me in a clearer manner, I thought he asked me, in the midst of one of my prayers, whether I rather chose the visionary revelations, of which I had formed some wild idea, or to be content with trusting to the low, despised mystery of a crucified man?”—*Hart's "Experience."*

He therefore says in one of his hymns:

“His light and airy dreams
I took for solid gold,
And thought his base, adulterate coin
The riches of thy blood.”

Hymn 775, v. 5, Gadsby's Selection.

Vital godliness, it is true, has its mysteries, its revelations, and manifestations, its spiritual and supernatural discoveries and operations; but all these come through the word of truth, which is simple, weighty, and solid, and as far removed from everything visionary or imaginative, wild or flighty, as light is from darkness; and therefore every act of faith, or of hope, or of love, will be as simple, solid, and weighty as the word of truth itself, through the medium of which, by the power of the Spirit, they are produced and called forth. If any doubt this, let them read in some solemn moment the last discourses of our blessed Lord with his disciples. How simple, how solid, how weighty are these discourses. Must not, then, the faith which receives, believes, and is mixed with these words of grace and truth, the hope which anchors in the promises there spoken, the love which embraces the gracious and glorious Person of him who spoke them, be simple and solid too? What room is there in such a faith, hope, and love for visionary ideas, wild speculations, and false spiritualizations of Scripture, any more than there is in the words of the Lord himself?

2. But “to be sober” means also to be wakeful and watchful, as we find the word used by the great apostle: “Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation.” (1 Thess. v. 6, 7, 8.) Here sobriety is opposed to sleepiness, and is connected with walking in the light and in the day, as sleepiness and its frequent cause, drunkenness, are connected with darkness and night. One of the greatest curses God can send on a people and its rulers, its prophets and seers, is a spirit of deep sleep, as the prophet speaks: “For the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and

hath closed your eyes; the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered." (Isa. xxix. 10.) But to be sober is to be awaked out of this sleep, and, as a consequence, to walk not only wakefully but watchfully. It implies, therefore, that careful, circumspect walking, that daily living, moving, speaking, and acting in the fear of God whereby alone we can be kept from the snares spread for our feet at every step of the way. How many have fallen into outward evil and open disgrace from want of walking watchfully and circumspectly and taking heed to their steps. Instead of watching the first movements of sin and against, as the Lord speaks, "the entering into temptation" (Luke xxii. 40), they rather dally with it until they are drawn away and enticed of their own lust, which as unchecked goes on to conceive and bring forth sin, which, when it is finished or carried out and accomplished in positive action, bringeth forth death. (James i. 14, 15.)

Here, however, we must pause in our exposition of the chapter before us.

Obituary.

ELIZABETH WILLIAMS.

"Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?"—ZECH. III. 2.

SOME account of the Lord's sovereign dealings with Elizabeth Williams, who died in faith, Jan. 21, 1868, after eight years' illness, aged 52 years.

Mr. Huntington, in a letter to a spiritual friend, who before he was born again of the Spirit had, by the Lord's mercy, been singularly preserved from outward evil, thus writes: "My friend, thou hast been saved from a more refined wickedness." Never were truer words, or more descriptive of Elizabeth Williams, than those of this immortal and faithful servant of Christ. Infirmities and afflictions of body and soul have delayed this humble account of one so dearly loved both in nature and grace. With her own words, "Let Jesus have all the glory," and a secret cry to God the Spirit that he would, with his remembering power, dictate every word, he desires to cast this humble mite into the treasury of God, hoping it may be an arrow carried by the mighty power of God the Spirit into the conscience of some sinner or sinners dead in open or a more refined wickedness, or what is a thousand times more delusive, wrapped in the double shroud of a godless profession.

"I have walked this earth full fifty years without the saving knowledge of myself or God." Such were the words of the subject of this Obituary to the writer of these lines. Yet those who intimately knew her have often said what an excellent wife and mother she was. Indeed, in these points, though only natural, she might have shamed some of the tinkling daughters of professing churches. Her natural character was singularly

honest and sincere, united with a special reserve, and yet, under all this amiability, existed the most desperate enmity even against the very profession of the doctrines of sovereign grace. I have seen her shed many tears when denouncing them in the most bitter language. How true might the words of the great Master have been applied to her: "Yet lackest thou one thing." But O the tremendous consequence of lacking this one thing which she so powerfully felt when she was once truly awakened—without it, a never-ending hell; with it, a never-ending heaven. It may appear strange that, while inwardly feeling the most desperate rebellion and enmity against the sovereign truth of God, and often displaying it outwardly, that she should so many times have gone to hear that Spirit-taught minister of God, the late Dr. Cole, and also Mr. Philpot, whose writings in after years, when her soul was quickened unto life, were, next to God's word, her daily companion; for, as she expressed it herself, he searched her through and through. O how true is it found in the experience of all God's people that the Lord is the sovereign disposer of spiritual life! Here was one who had heard many powerful sermons from three of God's true ministers—Mr. Cole, Mr. Philpot, and Mr. Wigmore. Her case, as well as the case of every living soul, gives the lie, and stamps death upon all that huge Babel of free-will which exists and reigns in every unquickened soul, and in none more delusively than in the presumptuous, free-will Calvinism of the day from a few natural convictions. Thousands get rid of their so-called burden without one intimation of mercy, or without waiting with unspeakable hungerings and thirstings for the manifestation of a precious Redeemer. God's inflexible, tremendously holy law never having been in any measure applied, thousands rush into a fleshly assurance, and take with unhallowed hands the precious doctrines of grace, knowing nothing of the power and sanctifying effects when revealed in the soul by the power of the Holy Ghost. Free-will in the heart, glued fast to Sinai, exists in many a flaming professor who has Balaam's mysteries in his head and on his tongue. It was truly marvellous, when my beloved one was awakened from her long sleep of death, how terribly she dreaded this fleshly confidence; and the Lord, as will be seen by the following pages, overruled it for her soul's good. But I shall at once come to that never-to-be-forgotten moment, a moment fixed in the everlasting love of God. Israel's deliverance from the land of Egypt, and that most wondrous deliverance from the avenging sword of the destroying angel, were most clearly fulfilled in her experience, standing out, as it were, in bold relief from the soul's intermediate agonies, and those innumerable changes which sometimes sink the soul, as it were, to the very borders of despair, beautifully expressed by Mr. Hart:

"Ever sinking, yet to swim."

Six years of constant illness bring us to that fixed time when

this jewel which had so long lain among the pots was to be rescued as a trophy for the Redeemer's crown.

I shall now give the account of this memorable moment in her own words: "I had the New Testament on my bed, as I often had; not from any real desire or love to read it, but merely to satisfy my natural conscience. I took it up, as we wickedly call it, 'by accident,' and I opened it on these words: 'We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' (2 Cor. v. 1.) Immediately followed these words a power which I can never fully express, and in the twinkling of an eye I saw, as it were, a long roll, and my secret sins, long buried from my very childhood till that moment, rushed into my soul, and I felt certain, if I died in that state, my house would be in the pit of endless woe." Now these were the words not spoken to me at the time, for so terrible were the agonies of her soul that all I could hear between her sighs and sad moaning were these words: "O father, I lost shall be. Yes, yes," over and over again, "I shall be in hell." So dreadful were her cries and tears that one of her dear children, a most loving boy to his mother throughout her illness, was greatly alarmed. Every now and then she would use the most debasing language of herself, telling me over and over again what a self-righteous deceived creature she had been. To all human appearance it appeared impossible in her extreme bodily weakness but that she must die under her soul agonies. Indeed, every one who saw her thought her last hour near. But he who had brought her to his judgment-bar had glorious purposes of mercy to be revealed in her soul ere she left this world. Two days and three nights did this fearful storm continue without the least abatement. O what an eternal difference between the curse of the law in its spirituality revealed in the conscience, demanding perfect obedience and merely looking at it as revealed in the Bible. On the third day, when I sat by her bed expecting every moment her decease, I heard her whisper softly, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." I said to her, "Mother, that's for you; the Lord has sent it to you." But in a moment she replied, "Not for me; not for me." I said, "Yes, dear mother, I believe they are for you." She then said, "O father, what an out-of-the-way sinner I have been." Never shall I forget the effect in my soul when I heard those words. It was like solemn music; for now it appeared to me that here was the first answer to those sighs, groans, and broken petitions which for more than twenty years amid my own soul troubles, wretched backslidings, fearful temptations, and sometimes a little consolation, with many years of loving correction, amid innumerable changes crowned with an unlooked for, superabounding blessing in Gower Street Chapel, at the very moment when I had the strongest temptation to give all up. Amid all these changes in my own

soul I felt continual promptings to prayer even in business hours. Many such a cry as this has gone up inwardly: "Lord, quicken her from death. O Lord, whatever thou deniest her, O let her be born again. O Lord, give her life in thy dear Son." Over and over again would Satan and wretched unbelief taunt me like this: "What's the use of praying? You can't prevail for yourself, and what's the use of asking for her?" But though there was not the least appearance of life for more than twenty years, a remark which Mr. Philpot once dropped in one of his sermons was made by the Lord, I may say times without number, when it seemed I must give it up, like a spur still to cry on, and I believe the Holy Ghost dropped it into Mr. P.'s heart, and as he dropped it from his lips into mine, and used it in many a hard battle as his sword to foil Satan. The text Mr. P. preached from was this: "Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify me." In the course of his sermon Mr. P. dropped this remark: "The Lord does not say *when*, nor does he say *how*; but he does say, 'I will deliver thee, so cry on.'" Now I can declare before the Lord this simple remark was made by the Spirit most powerfully to confirm this promise which Satan has hundreds of times tried to snatch from me; but, glory to the Lord, he could never quite do it; and now sweetly the Lord fulfilled his own promise and blessedly confirmed his dear servant's word, as I have no doubt he has in thousands of other cases, and here were the blessed fruits. I must rapidly pass over many minor circumstances of this eventful two years, hoping that the Lord the Spirit will revive powerfully what he at times was graciously pleased to show me of the saving work in her soul, and the effects of it in her short life and death. After this solemn application of God's holy law and a faint hope raised up, O how visible were the effects! Many a time before this wondrous moment have I heard her say (and it used to pierce me to the heart), "What have I done that I should be afflicted thus?" and many other sad words showing the dreadful rebellion of her carnal mind; but now it was a far different language. Once she said, "If there's a double hell I shall be sure to be there," and sometimes when her beloved little girl heard her mother on her sick bed crying and bemoaning her sad state, she would, poor child, try to comfort her mother by saying, "You are a good mother, you are a good mother." She would over and over again say to her, "O, my poor child, if you knew, if you knew what is here," pressing her hand to her heart. She had been exceedingly fond of what is called light reading; but from the very moment this great change took place never but once did I know her take such a book. Well might it be said of her, "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." And though she herself could never perceive this fully till the day of her espousals came, it was most clearly manifest to God's people. There was no longer the formal prayer, but, like one

drowning in a storm, it was, almost continually night and day, short but agonising cries. For as I was constantly with her, and myself having, through the Lord's wondrous grace past through these bitter waters of judgment, she could pour into my bosom some of her terrible feelings. Sometimes she would say, "O father, you don't know, you don't know, or you would never try to comfort me. Go away, go away, and don't speak to me again." Then she would call me back with the most passionate grief, and say to me, "Pray, pray, for it's no use for me to pray." It was marvellous the abiding sense she had of the unfathomable depravity of her nature. I have known her get up from her chair when quite alone with me and wring her hands together and cry out, "O father, I am dying, and no Saviour for me." There were four features, most plain evidences that she was born again, and yet till the Lord came and revealed himself in such a powerful way as her deliverer only about a month before her death, she could only grasp them like a drowning man. These four evidences were unknown to herself as being faith and its fruits, yet it was so, and a firm case. 1. She was as sure that living and dying without a revelation of a precious Saviour personally to her by the Holy Spirit she must for ever perish. 2. Then there was such a spirit of continual broken-heart breathings, sighs, groans, and weepings after a manifested Jesus. Then 3. The fear of God was most conspicuous in her deep abhorrence of all those things she once so much admired and loved. The Lord seemed to have given her a special insight into the vain confidence of this presumptuous day. There was such a holy jealousy lest she should take one step without the Lord's persuading power. And 4, God's ministers and people that she once proudly contemned, their persons and writings were loved with an intensity impossible to describe in words. I have known her under fainting feelings from sheer weakness have God's word and Mr. P.'s sermons on her bed, and search them with far deeper interest than a miser clasps his gold. She would read them, and then over and over again I have heard her say, "O father, it searches me through and through:" and then, because she had not yet received the great mercies and sweet revelations which Mr. P. sometimes described in his printed sermons, she would drop them almost in despair; but now and then, when reading those dark paths, those fearful scenes, and those fiery temptations described in them, she would say, "He seems as if he would ransack my very heart." I have sometimes tried to put in a word to comfort her, but she would say, "No, father, no; you are deceived in me." Then she would take up the sermons again and say, "I have never had this; I have never had this." From the very moment when the Lord so suddenly brought her to his judgment-bar, nothing did she seem so much to dread as her being deceived. That taking for granted, presuming free-will Calvinism of the day she dreaded beyond everything. O how many times I have heard

her say, "Life, life! O if I knew I had life." With her it was realities. How many a hard battle I have seen her have with Satan and her unbelieving heart for two precious promises by which the Lord at two separate times sweetly raised up a hope and a "who can tell?" I have heard her cry mightily to God not to allow them to be snatched away from her. These were the two precious promises: "I will not leave you comfortless;" "At even time it shall be light." She held these promises like a drowning man. She told me she never had had the least fear of death as to the consequences after death; but she said that within an hour after the Lord had so powerfully awakened her from her long sleep of self-righteousness, not only did the mortal agony of death come upon her, but what was a million times worse, the eternal consequences of death; and after she had received mercy, she told me that she kept looking to the clock, feeling at such an hour "I shall die and be lost." With very little intermission these fears more or less continued, till about one month before her death. Once this sweet word made a short calm in her soul: "God is faithful." At another time, when reading God's word, she said, "Ah, perhaps this is for me: 'And neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.'" Once when reading in the "Gospel Magazine" one of the editor's family readings headed with this Scripture: "All my desire is before thee, and my groaning is not hid from thee." The paper on this Scripture the Lord made a great blessing to her. She often said to me, "I feel I have never really prayed;" but after reading that article, she sat silent for a considerable time, and then said "Mr. Doudney makes me feel as if I had really prayed; I will read it to you again; it seems as if this was all written out of my heart." It greatly strengthened her, and for a little time her hope seemed brightened; but shortly after this a fearful storm came down upon her, and this temptation took very fast hold, that the Lord would make her an open spectacle, when she came to her last hour, as a hypocrite. Now it seemed as if all her little hopes were swept away. Well do I remember with what violence she caught hold of my arm, and while her tears flowed fast she kept saying, "What a terrible death will mine be; what will the children say!" Then she would burst out again into a violent fit of weeping. O what trying days were those to me, not only at this time, but the greater part of these mournful days, for the tremendous value of her soul was so powerfully felt by me; for I remembered the value of my own, and very fearful I was lest I should say anything to induce any persuasion but what God himself wrought; but all this was most painful to my natural affection. Just before this she had read a remark of Mrs. Doudney to her husband, when they were conversing together on death, and Mrs. D. replied to her husband in the following manner. I do not remember the exact words, but I know the substance of it was this: "When we come

to our last hour you may depend it will be very different from what we anticipate." She often named these words to me, and when this fearful temptation was upon her, I tried to give her a little hope by saying to her, no doubt Mrs. Doudney had many dark seasons and fears of death, but the Lord gave her a good end; and I also said, "Depend on it, dear mother, you will have that sweet promise richly fulfilled when you come there: 'Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy day thy strength shall be.'" But she answered, "I have no comfort." I said, "Have you forgotten, dear mother, those sweet promises which you told me of, and the light cast upon your path by Mr. P.'s sermons?" "Yes," she said, "but it's all gone, all gone, and I am dying." She generally ended her mourning times with those words, "I am dying!" and O what did these words convey! Well might the apostle say, "The work of faith, the patience of hope, and the labour of love;" for it was truly a fighting time in my own soul. The tempter set hard upon me, working on my wretched unbelief that the end would be as she feared. But the Lord gave me a sweet glance from those words: "Thou shalt see greater things than these."

But I must come to that glorious day, that day so often spoken of by the prophets, when the Lord shall suddenly come to his temple. O that wondrous day! May every living soul who reads these lines have a fresh anointing by the Lord, the Spirit of the glory of that day in their own souls, and a solemn remembrance, too, of that mournful day when the Lord said in substance, if not in words, "Lazarus, come forth." But before I proceed I must show the special blessing which many of God's great hearts are made to the fearing ones of God's family. Mr. Link, deacon at Gower Street, was made singularly useful to my beloved wife, as I have named before. She was naturally of a most reserved character, and after her new birth it was doubly so, for nothing she detested so much as hypocrisy. To show how retiring she was, never did I hear till the very day before her death (though I had long suspected it) how many times she had gone to a secret place to pour out her burdened soul to the Lord. All my children being out, she scarcely ever had any one with her but myself; and when Mr. Link first came she would rarely speak; but after he was gone, she would say, "Mr. Link comes down to my feelings. If I am lost, still I know he will be saved." Many times did Mr. Link visit her, and she gathered a little comfort from his godly prayers, and often said to me, "I wish Mr. Link would come again." The Lord made him a nursing-father to her, for being kept so very short of comfort, and having to pass the darkest paths alone, she cherished the least crumb, provided it was real. It may truly be said that up to this time, with little gleams of hope, her life was like the prophet's roll, "within and without lamentation and mourning and woe;" but though long delayed, his chariot wheels were fast approaching, silently but sensibly near at hand. As near as possible about

two months before her death, she had been sitting up, as was often the case with her, in her bed silently crying to the Lord. I had fallen asleep, when she suddenly awoke me with these joyful words, "O father, he is come, he is come!" repeating several times over, "His banner over me is love." "The time of the singing of birds is come." O what a change was here! I said, "Have you had those words, mother, come from the Lord?" She hesitated a few moments, and then said, "Yes, yes; they came with such power; Satan is a liar." And then she broke out in these words, "Yes, yes, he is come. He is come. He loves me. O precious Jesus!" Then she said, "The Breaker is gone before me." And she made me get out of bed and find that hymn in Gadsby's collection, which she read in a most joyful tone of voice, often saying to me, "Praise him, dear father, try to praise him." There was such a sweet calm in her voice, so different from its usually mournful tone that I thought at first it was a full deliverance, but I found that promise was still to be more richly fulfilled: "Thou shalt see greater things than these." A short time after this the fear of death returned; but not the dreadful fear of being lost that she formerly had. It was more the fear of the mortal agony of death, lest she should dishonour the Lord by any expression of rebellious murmuring. She appeared to be in prayer for some time, when all at once she said to me, "He was heard in that he feared." I said, "Mother, have you had that word given you?" She said, "Yes, yes; with power." Never shall I forget the solemn unction and power with which her answer filled my soul. I felt that she was one with Jesus, suffering with him. O what a holy solemnity there is thus to be admitted, as she was, into that most sacred place, Gethsemane. Shortly after she said, "'Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.'" She answered as if to herself, "Shall I dwell there? Yes, yes," she said, "for ever! for ever!" twice over. From this time the day-star had evidently risen in her heart, for the horror and fear of hell had departed; and O what a change, too, in her manner of receiving anything. That murmuring, rebellious spirit was almost entirely taken away and she seemed more like a little child. Well might Mr. Hart say,

"Law and terrors do but harden."

Yes, yes, mercy it is that melts the rocky heart. I said once or twice, "Mother, 'God is faithful;' do you remember that promise?" It is now being fulfilled through the Lord's great goodness to me. Although blind, he enabled me to wait on her night and day. I repeatedly asked her to have a nurse, but she constantly refused, saying, "I want no one but you; you understand me." And now what a change I found in waiting on her. The smallest thing I gave her, even a drop of water, before she took it she would praise God as if it were a costly gift, and often asked me to forgive her for the sharp words she had spoken in past days, sometimes bemoaning "the rebellious wretch," as

she expressed it, that she had been, and, as she said, even now sometimes inwardly felt. But the change was perceived by all who saw her; and it was during this time that she had such a deep sense of God's goodness in his providential dealings to her. She often said, "Eight years have I been ill, and if I had the grace and gift of Mr. Huntington, I could write another 'Bank of Faith.'" She greatly loved his memory. Though despised of men, he was beloved of his God. But the time was near at hand when even the day-star was to give place to the glorious Sun of righteousness, and the works of the devil to be destroyed by the manifestation of the great Redeemer. O memorable moment! As Israel kept the Passover and sprinkling of blood, so may the Lord the Spirit ever keep in my soul a sacred remembrance of this never-to-be-forgotten moment; and O that it were possible to bring together every Fearing-one, Little-faith, and Much-afraid, to hear what the Lord can do! Here is one of themselves, and the dear Redeemer came where she was. For many days before this glorious moment she was unusually silent, but I could often hear her wrestling with God alone; and he gave her a full answer. Indeed, I was sitting by her side quite alone, when she rose up with such wonderful energy, and exclaimed in the most joyful tone, "Father, he is come; he is come. The mountain of my sins are lost in the sea of Christ's blood." Then she said, "'If ye have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say to this mountain, Be ye cast into the sea.' I have faith to believe my sins are cast into the sea for ever—for ever!" she kept repeating. Although in the last stage of consumption, for a short time one would have thought her really well. The feeling that filled my heart can never be fully described. Now, indeed, love had burst into a flame, and a sweet feeling of adoring gratitude to that gracious Lord who had now answered those wrestlings which he had enabled me, in spite of all opposition, to put up for more than twenty years. Praise was now the theme of her heart, and a few hours after she said to me, "Had I ten thousand tongues, I never could express what the Lord Jesus has done for my soul." No doubt this was the anointing for her burial; for the final Victory was near at hand; death in her conscience was now for ever destroyed by the dear Redeemer; and as she had been so long kept under the fire and smoke of Sinai, and been kept so short of comfort, and the powers of darkness were allowed so fiercely to assault her, I have often since thought that the Lord saw she needed the aboundings of his love, and he richly gave it her. It was most wonderful the solid peace she now possessed. It appeared to me that just as a father takes his darling child into his arms, and soothes it with his caresses, so did the Lord take her up in his arms of everlasting love; and it was at this time she told me she wanted no book or minister to tell her that the doctrines of sovereign grace were true, for the Lord had taught her their power and blessed truth. It was a noble testimony from one

who had once been their bitter opponent. O that when I come to my last hour I may have the presence of the dear Lord! Then shall I have, in some measure, the same sweet peace. For the last three weeks of her life it was not a triumph, but the most perfect, childlike peace I ever witnessed in death. Blessedly, blessedly fulfilled was that promise, "I will not leave you comfortless." O no. Now was the time that she needed the shoes of iron and brass. God's everlasting choice of her was now fully made manifest. The fear of death, the terrors of hell, had all vanished at the breath of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming. On the Thursday before her death, as she died on the Tuesday, she called me to her bedside, and said, "Don't be alarmed at what I am going to tell you. I am dying much nearer than you suppose. Now, dear father, listen. After death, there is often much confusion. You are blind, and the children will not be able to see to things. Open that drawer; I will tell you what to take out. Let the nurse have them." I name this to show the perfect composure with which she viewed death. Until the Lord manifested mercy to her, she never would even hear of it. But O how different now! On the Friday she said: "'Tis very near. I am sure of it from the precious promises I have just had. Yes, yes," she said, "'There shall be no more pain.' He has given me the sweet words, 'The year of my Redeemed is come.' 'I will give thee to eat of the hidden manna.'" How suitable were the precious promises at such a moment! Saturday morning she said to me, "I have had these words continually sounding nearly all night, 'Brethren, pray for us.'" She had twice said to me during this month, "Gower Street is a blessed place. The Lord's real people are there. Mr. Cole used to say, 'It is a Church within a church;' and so it is," she said. To these she ever felt a sweet union. She then said to me, "Cannot you send to Mr. Link? and, if the minister feels disposed, perhaps he will remember me before the Lord." I did send to Mr. Link, and I heard that Dr. Marston offered up a prayer for her with much unction and feeling.

But the solemn hour was now near at hand when this trophy of grace was to leave behind her a most blessed testimony to the love and faithfulness of a Triune Jehovah. Monday morning she was most blessedly supported to meet a most trying day, and this word came to her, as she said, with great power, "Thy King cometh." And truly his chariot of love was fast approaching. Her eldest son from Sheffield came quite unexpectedly. Here was another instance of the Lord's kindness both to him and his mother; for as he was hesitating about coming, a person came up to him and asked him to read a telegram, which ran thus: "Your mother is dying. Come at once." It had such an effect upon her son, that he came immediately. I had forgotten to name that continually, when myself and children knelt round her bed during the last

three weeks, she wished constantly to have read the two following hymns:

“What is love?”

and,

“What object’s this that meets my sight?”

and I have heard her in the night dwelling upon them with sacred pleasure. At four o’clock on Monday, two sisters came also quite unexpectedly, and now it was that the Lord gave her such grace and strength to deliver a testimony rarely witnessed even at the deathbed of a real Christian. No sooner had her sisters entered her rooms than she merely held out her hand, and, to their astonishment, in a powerful tone of voice, asked them to attend to her. She then said, “I lived fifty years without any saving knowledge of God or myself.” She then told them of the solemn manner in which the Lord had awakened her on her sick bed; and O how powerfully she spoke of judgment and death! She went on to tell them of her soul’s agonies, temptations, fears of death, and forebodings of judgment, pointed to the secret place, and said to them, “There I used to go, unknown to any one, and cry to the Lord to have mercy on me.” Then she told them of the little hope which the Lord gave her, and never shall I forget when she came to that part where the mountain of her sins were lost in the sea of Christ’s most precious blood. Never shall I forget the praise which burst from her grateful heart. As she paused for a moment, I said to her, “Mother, in a few hours you will place a bright crown on his glorious head.” She answered directly twice, in the most animated manner, “That I will; that I will.” And her sisters told me afterwards that she waved her hand, as if in triumph. She had spoken to her sisters without interruption for full twenty minutes. She waited two or three minutes, and then in a most solemn voice, she said, “Ye must be born again.” The Lord only knows what, in days to come, may be the effects of their sister’s dying testimony. Mr. Link came in immediately after. He saw plainly that her end was very near. He was always a welcome messenger to her. She shook him cordially by the hand, and said at once, “There shall be no more pain.” He said, “You will soon be there;” and she calmly said, “Yes.” I asked her if Mr. Link should try to offer prayer, and she told him to come near her, and he offered a very fervent, childlike prayer, breathing forth many godly petitions for her. As he was about to leave her, she said to him, “A cup of cold water given for the Lord’s sake shall not lose its reward; and you, Mr. Link, shall not lose yours”—no doubt alluding to his many deeds of love in which he had been made so useful to her; and sure I am he will be blessed, not *for*, but *in* those deeds of love.

About seven o’clock her children were all round her bed, and she spoke in the most faithful and loving manner to her two eldest sons. After all had left her, except myself, she said once,

“Praise him;” and lay till about one o’clock, it appeared to me, in prayer. About that hour she appeared rather restless. In a moment, these words fell with much power into my soul: “He is a Rock; his work is perfect.” She pressed my arm with the greatest energy, and said, in an exulting tone, “I have found him so.” One of her beloved sons, who had been like a nurse to her in her illness, was by her side, when she gently opened her eyes, gazed on him for a moment, and the days of her mourning were for ever ended. As I stood by her a moment after death, these words fell with solemn sweetness on my spirit: “Open ye the gates that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in;” and then followed, “shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.” The feeling that filled my soul was this: If all the ransomed in heaven, and all the redeemed in earth were to unite in one song, O how poor it seemed to me would be the praise to my beloved one when she opened her eyes in heaven, and gazed on his glorious face.

Almost immediately after the Lord granted her that signal deliverance by the Holy Ghost powerfully applying those precious words: “If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say to this mountain, Be ye cast into the sea,” she said, “Father, Psalm xxiii. is mine. The Lord has made me read it as my own.” She seemed to have every word not only by heart, but in her heart. I heard her pondering and musing over it to herself, and many times did I catch those words: “I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.” “Yes, yes, for ever, for ever,” she would repeat to herself, evidently anticipating the glorious reality in store for her. She often said, “No poor lunatic was half so mad as she had been.” And I am quite sure that he who writes this was the maddest of all; for mine was a case I have often thought like the child that was coming to the Lord, the devil throwing him down. Not one of his disciples could heal him; but what they could not do their Master could and did. O that my heart, lip, and life may be his, and his alone, till my dying hour.

May the Lord powerfully strengthen you in soul and body. He has given you a deep place in many a saved sinner’s heart.

J. W.

AN act of the choicest love. God at the creation beheld man a goodly frame of his own rearing, adorned with his own image, beautified with his graces, embellished with holiness and righteousness, and furnished with a power to stand; and afterwards beheld him ungratefully rebelling against his Sovereign, invading his rights, and contemning his goodness, forfeiting his own privileges, courting his ruin, and sinking into misery. So blinded is his mind as not to be able to find out a way for his own recovery; so perverse is his will that, instead of craving pardon of his Judge, he flies from him, and when his flight would not advantage him, he stands upon his own defence, and extenuates his crime; thus adding one provocation to another, as if he had an ambition to harden the heart of God against him, and render himself irrecoverably miserable.—*Charnock*.

OCTOBER 1, 1869.

THE
GOSPEL STANDARD.

OCTOBER, 1869.

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

NOTES OF A SERMON PREACHED BY THE
LATE DAVID FENNER, AUG. 8TH, 1867.

“Him whom my soul loveth.”—SONG III. 4.

THE reason why I have quoted my text in this short way is, that the same words are expressed in this chapter several times over, and to the same purpose, which is, a longing for more enjoyment of her Beloved in that soul who has once enjoyed him; and this longing is expressed three or four times in the same words. In the first place, “By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth.” Here the state of the church of Christ, or of individual members of the church of Christ, is described by a bed: “By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth.”

This bed does not mean the same as that mentioned in a following verse, which was a bed of Christ's making: “Behold his bed, which is Solomon's,” which means his resting-place, his church and people; for he says, “This is my rest. Here will I dwell; for I have desired it.” But in the other passage I have quoted, it was not his bed: “By night on *my* bed I sought him.” Here is meant the bed the children of God are on; and every child of God feels it is a bed of his own making, therefore said to be “his bed:” “By night on *my* bed.” This means sloth and dilatoriness of action in a way that is not good; but although that is the sad state and condition that is meant, yet even there there was not an entire declension of love to Christ in the heart, or the church would not have said, “By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth.”

In the chapter before this, we read of Christ's love to his church in raising her up from a dead, dull, wintry state of soul; and the words may apply also to the deliverance of a soul from a state of law-work, when the Sun of righteousness arises with healing in his wings, or beams, and by this arising causes all the graces of the Spirit to flow forth, and brings the soul to enjoy a state of summer. It may also represent the state of a child of God when the Lord has withdrawn his enlightening, comforting, and refreshing presence, for he may then sink into

a dark, dull, and stormy condition. But the Lord speaks to him again in his good time; and this brings his soul up from its wintry state to summer again; and so he can enjoy the presence of the Lord in his soul, and can then say, "My beloved is mine, and I am his."

But how quickly a change took place; for almost the next words are, "Turn, my Beloved, and be thou like a roe, or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether;" or, as it is in the margin, "mountains of division." So you see how soon these hills of division had risen up between Christ and the soul, and caused her to feel the absence of her Beloved. You may see from this that I have just touched upon that the children of God may have a feasting time, and after that a fasting time, and may be much cast down by their dull, cold, shut-up, and wintry state of soul.

"By night on my bed." In the first place that I have quoted, the state and case of the children of God is expressed by a dull night, a dark night, a cold night, a night of confusion. Where is the child of God then? Why, on his bed. And why *his* bed? His, as made by his carnal security, and resting in what he has already received from the Lord, instead of pressing on for further discoveries. But this will not do; for the Lord, by all his manifestations of love and favour to his people, means to draw them, not to rest in their frames and feelings, but to cleave to him in them, by them, and through them, for more of his love and favour. But is it not the case that the children of God rest in their frames and feelings? Yea, may I not say they wed them? And this is just the same as if a great king was to send an ambassador to another king, that he might bring his daughter home for his son to marry; but when the daughter sees the ambassador, she falls in love with him, and weds him instead of the king's son. Would not this displease the king? Indeed it would. So that, by all the favours that God bestows on his people, his design is to bring them closer to himself, to draw them in heart and affection to himself, to be enlivened to him, and to serve him in the way that is acceptable to him. But by embracing the frames that we enjoy, we may do with them as *Æsop* did with his child, namely, hug them to death. O, if you rightly understood this matter, how different it would be when you have sensible enjoyment!

Well, at first, the church found the wrong turn; for, although she had begun to sink into coldness and lethargy, she was still on her bed; but, blessed be God, she could not sink entirely, or she could not then have said, "I sought him whom my soul loveth." No, this cannot be the case with a child of God; for the blessed Spirit will work and stir such a soul when his good time is come again, and give the right touch and turn, so as to command the affection of the soul as heretofore. And this is the case with the church here; for she could say, "Though now absent, I feel I love him."

“By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth.” Here, then, though on her bed, there was a concern. There was a movement in the right turn, and to the right object: “I sought him whom my soul loveth;” but it was not such a turn as to find him. “I sought him, but I found him not.” What then? The mind and will become further touched by the exercise of soul in not finding him. What then? A willing movement: “I will rise now, and go about the city (the city of God), in the streets and broad ways (where the children of God may be met with). I will seek him whom my soul loveth. I sought him, but I found him not.” There was a missing him again. But when in *the city* (by this may be meant the ways of the Lord), “the watchmen (that is, the ministers of the gospel) that go about the city found me.” Their ministry came home to the state and case of the soul, and it came in a searching manner, to stir the soul further. What, then, was the movement? Why, towards the watchmen. “To whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?” It seems that the watchmen, at the time, made no answer, but yet their ministry was sufficient to find the person. “The watchmen that went about the city found me, to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?” Yet no answer. And this is just as it should be; so that their ministry might lead her to the Lord, and so to pass from all other, and know none but the Lord; and therefore it is added, “It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth.” This is the fourth time these words occur.

Now, learn from this that the children of God may be in various cases of soul, yet there is with them but the one desire, and that desire is for Christ to return. If he has been enjoyed, if he has spoken by his Spirit to the soul, it is he and he only that the soul desires. “I sought him whom my soul loveth.” I sought him on my bed, but I did not find him there; I sought him in the public means, but I did not find him there. But I did find something there, for the ministry searched me unto the right turn, to pass from all other to Christ alone. And this was the turn that took place when the watchmen found her. “It was but a little that I passed from them,” and so passed from every other object, to him whom my soul loveth; and then, being brought to this singleness of object, she was brought to the right track. “I found him whom my soul loveth. I held him, and would not let him go until I had brought him into my mother’s house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me.” And to those that are thus led, there is no cause to harbour fears. If it is Jesus, and Jesus only, he is the right object, and will be found in the Lord’s good time.

Well. Is there not much in the text? “*Him* whom my soul loveth.” *Him*. If he be in the soul, all is right and well. “I sought *him* whom my soul loveth.” What better exercise of soul can there be? When Christ is absent from sensible feeling

to the soul that loves him, that love then moves in hankering after him. "Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?" And then, "I sought him whom my soul loveth." "Fear not ye," said the angel to the women at the sepulchre, "for I know that ye seek Jesus." If it is Jesus whom the soul loveth, and if that soul is led to pass from all other, it will not be long before he is found again in that soul, and enjoyed there.

Now, know that love to Christ does not begin with us; it begins with Christ's love towards us. If you look in the chapter before the one in which the text is, you will see the manner in which Christ expresses his love to his people: "My Beloved spake and said unto me, Rise up, my love." And when he says, "My love," he communicates his love in his speaking; for his love comes in and through his word, in the life and spirit of it. And when he says, "My love, thou art my love, the object of my love, the element of my love, I love thee fervently, I love thee everlastingly," then it is, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth I desire beside thee."

But there is something more. He says, "Rise up, my love, my fair one." In another place it is said, "Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee." It means freedom from all sin and from all evil of every kind, and the communication of that which is opposite, which makes the person in the view of God's all-seeing eye as all fair in Christ and comely through his comeliness he has put upon us; fair as covered with the robe of his righteousness, and fair as presented spotless and faultless before the throne of God. And when Christ speaks thus to his people, is it not enough to fill their hearts with love to him? "We love him because he first loved us." It is his love that kindles ours. And how does his love kindle love in us? Why, when we pray to him as God and he answers our prayers; and so we come truly to know him as our loving God and Saviour. When he comes and does this, it will be, "I love the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of my supplications"—because he has attended to my cry. As sure as he does this, we can say, "Him whom my soul loveth." When he communicates the pardon of sin to our hearts, then we love him." "Where much is forgiven, the same loveth much," and the pardon of sin is the proof of his love to us.

Again. When the atonement comes home to our hearts, this will kindle love in us, as it did in the two disciples going to Emmaus. "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?" For did they not say, "We thought it had been he which should have redeemed Israel?" So that the fire was kindled by the manifestation of his redemption from sin and all evil, and redemption to God and all good. And there is another thing that kindles love to God, and that is, when we receive the evidence of our adoption brought home to us by the blessed Spirit, who "bears witness with our spirits that we are the children of

God." Christ said to the Jews, "If God were your father, ye would love me; for I proceeded forth and came from God."

Now we ought to consider whom it is that the Lord does love, for he does not speak falsely. Well, he loves the poor in spirit. "To this man will I look," with a look of love, mercy, and favour, "even to him that is poor and contrite in spirit and that trembles at my word." In that he trembles at God's word, he does not now enjoy the love of Christ; but he is interested in the love of Christ, and shall enjoy it in the Lord's good time. Ye that are seeking the Lord, "fear not, for I know that ye seek Jesus." They that seek shall find; and certainly if you find Jesus you will find his love; and if you find his love you will find you are interested in his love. In seeking Jesus there is a desire for his love, and Hart truly says:

"The soul that, with sincere desires,
Seeks after Jesu's love,
That soul the Holy Ghost inspires
With breathings from above."

There is the love of desire, and when Jesus comes into the soul it will be filled with the love of complacency and delight in him.

Again. Do you feel in your heart and conscience an awe of sinning against God, and, under that feeling, beg of him to keep you from all sin, to enable you in his fear to live unto him? Are you thus exercised in the fear of the Lord? Why, the Lord says he loveth them that fear him. You are interested in his love, and that will kindle the fire in your hearts, sooner or later.

Well, how is it with you? Have you any righteousness of your own to present to God? No, all filthy rags. Well, do you wish for such righteousness as is set before you in the gospel, which is the righteousness of Christ? And are you hungering and thirsting for it? "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Yea, more, the Lord loveth them that follow after righteousness. The whole Godhead, Three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—loves such as are after the righteousness of Christ to be filled with it.

Again. Do you love the gospel? What do you come to hear for? Some of you may say, "I hope to find a benefit to my soul." And is there not also a feeling of desire for the benefits contained in the gospel, which is Christ and his fulness? Christ says, "He that hath my word and keepeth it, he it is that loveth me," and then he says, "And I will love him,"—I will love him home to my heart, and I will "manifest myself to him." I will shed my love abroad in his heart, and give him to know that his love to me is real and sincere.

Again. And he loves them that long to honour and glorify him. Do you wish Christ to come into your soul, that your soul may be so blessed by it as to live to him, grow in grace and in the knowledge of him? Now they that can say, "Hina

whom my soul loveth," can also say, "That which my soul hateth." "Ye that love the Lord hate evil," hate sin. Does your sinful life stare you in the face and seem to cover all? As one says, "The iniquity of my heels compasseth me about." Do you feel it working within you? And when encompassed with the guilt of it, do you feel to hate it and wish for deliverance from it, as Paul did? "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Ah, and you will hate the devil also. O there is too much dallying with him among professors; but where there is real love to Christ, the baits that the devil brings, and the allurements that he attracts by, will disgust the soul, as they are against and opposite to God and godliness. Therefore David says, "I hate every false way."

Again. They will hate such as hate the Lord. Not their persons. No. "Love them that hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." Yet hate them as loving sin, as following sin, and the best love we can show them is to take them privately to a throne of grace and beg of God to turn them to himself.

Such as can say, "Him whom my soul loveth" will love his righteous cause, and favour it. They will love his people as they are his people; they will love his servants, esteeming them highly in love for their work's sake; they will love his righteous will; and will they not love to sit at his feet, as Mary did? And so, will they not desire to sit under his blessed gospel? Will they not desire to rise with Christ in more freedom, more heavenly-mindedness? Will they not desire to lean upon him as their all in all, and view themselves as never right until they are dead as in themselves, and Christ is their life and their all?

Well. I must say one thing more, and that is, "all things,"—this, that, and the other, "all things work together for good to them that love God." So that if we can say, "Him whom my soul loveth," we need not be alarmed with this, we need not be cast down with the other. This present trial, this present cross, this present affliction is among the all things that are working for my good. God is often pleased to wrap up his greatest blessings in the heaviest afflictions. Don't think that my heavy afflictions have done me no good. O they have, they have! O that God may open your hearts to understand this, and O that your mental longings may be for Christ and him crucified; for I desire to know nothing else among you, and to preach nothing else to you. And O that you may have your souls filled with Christ. "All things work together for good to them that love God," to them that love the Lord. O poor creatures, you may be crossed in all that you pursue,

"And scourged with affliction's rod,"

and you may think this makes against you, and this trial will overcome you and you will sink under this cloud or that affliction. But, no; you will not. It is among the all things, and

it shall work for your good. We know this by experience; we know this by the experience of other children of God; we know it by the word of God, which declares it. "All things work together for good to them that love God." Some of you may go from this place thinking because of the trials that work against you, you will fall short of Christ. No, you will not. Hankering after him, desiring to enjoy him, or having once enjoyed him, you can never sink, for he will come again, and then the sweet happiness will be enjoyed.

May the Lord cause it in the experience of you that have enjoyed him, and of those that are seeking his love; and may others be wrought upon to desire it.

The Lord grant a blessing; and I add no more.

[When we consider that the above sweet experimental sermon was preached by Mr. Fenner only about a year before his death, and when he was so crippled with age and infirmities, it is a wonderful testimony to the power of grace, and to Christ's strength made perfect in weakness.—Ed.]

GRACE TRIUMPHANT.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "GOSPEL STANDARD."

My dear Sir and Brother in Christ,—I am thankful to see by this month's number of the "Gospel Standard," that you are somewhat better in health. I trust it may be the will of God to spare you yet for many years, even though it be a wilderness in which you and I, together with all the Lord's quickened ones, are called to pass through. I often think of you as I last saw you, confined to your room, and scarcely able to breathe the pure air of heaven. Your gifts and your habit of life to me bespeak much of divine sovereignty and the great diversity of that position in which it pleases the Lord to place his children. You are a man of deep thinking powers, close reading, and patient research, whilst I, on the contrary, am restless in the extreme; a couple of hours' reading or writing tries me greatly. Times without number have I envied you and my late brother-in-law (G. D. Doudney, of Plymouth), your powers of thought and application. Again, he as well as yourself would scarcely care to leave his study, I had nearly said for days together,* whereas I—especially since my last illness—require almost to live in the fresh air. Since being bled some eighteen months ago, I am so

* It is not choice, but necessity, which keeps me so much indoors; for few, I believe, enjoy the pure air of heaven more than I do, or find it more indispensable to health; but a peculiar tenderness of the mucous membrane of the chest, the result of old illnesses, and now of many years' standing, makes me so susceptible of cold that those cool, bracing breezes which give health and strength to most often bring only illness to me. It is, I may say, my daily cross; but its most trying feature is that it so lays me aside from the work of the ministry, and, when I make engagements to preach, often prevents me fulfilling them, to my own disappointment, and I believe I may add, of many others also.—J. C. P.

subject to faintness in a room or in a close atmosphere, that I am obliged to betake myself to the open air. I am now writing this pencil line to you in my little summer-house, where I of late have passed much of my time. O what a blessed thing it will be, dear brother, for us by and by to reach the land "of which the inhabitants shall not say, I am sick, and the people who dwell therein are forgiven their iniquity." It will be such a glorious thing, moreover, to be out of gunshot of the devil. He has made sad havoc of my poor soul for many months past. People may say, "O, it is physical." Granted; but my reply is, "We can no more manage the physical than we can the mental." Many times have I heard dear old Mr. Lock (Mr. Huntington's successor) say, "You will say, 'But what do *you* know about trouble?' Why, my friends," he would add, "if God intends a grasshopper to be my burden, that grasshopper shall be more than I can manage." And this was evident, for such was his nervousness, that he would start in the pulpit at the least noise. A poor old woman happened to drop her stick one evening as she sat in the aisle. The dear old servant of God gave a start, then paused, then for a minute or two went on with his sermon; then paused again, and said, "Did not that old woman make a noise with her stick?" I mention this to show how the Lord's ministers may be tried. Yet there sat for years together, immediately before the pulpit and directly facing the preacher, three men who went there on purpose to criticise and ridicule that dear man of God. I have sat from time to time, perfectly amazed at his calmness and docility, as these three men sat side by side sneering and scoffing. Who, dear Sir, could conceive of anything more trying to a preacher? Yet this was the state of things for years. On one occasion my dear brother-in-law (before referred to) and I ventured to remonstrate with one of these men, but I fear to little purpose. The dear old servant of God expressed his gratitude for our humble endeavours. It was not long after that one, the best looking and halest of the three, was smitten with some sort of palsy there and then in the chapel, as if a signal token of the Lord's righteous disapproval of the course they had so long pursued.

Then there was that blessed servant of God, dear Henry Fowler, who became latterly so low and nervous that he once told me, when I happened to meet him on board a Ramsgate steamer, "that sometimes he could scarcely speak to the members of his own family, and that he was obliged then to go from time to time on the water, and the rougher it was the better it suited him." Now (strange to say), although I have crossed the Irish Channel sixty times, and generally in rough weather, I had the greatest horror of the sea until my late illness, since which I am never so well as when by or on the water. Speaking of dear Henry Fowler, I shall never forget a remark of his one Tuesday evening at that sacred spot, Gower Street. I had gone there that night upon the very verge of despair with just

the faint hope that there might be a crumb even for such a poor starving one as I. With respect to his darkness and depression, Mr. Fowler remarked, "I sometimes say, 'What, Lord, must I have this trial or that temptation again and again? Haven't I learnt my lesson yet?' But," he added, "if it is for the good of any of thy dear children, be it so." As much as to say, "I am content to suffer if it be that suffering is in the leastwise to contribute to the well-being of the people." O how timely was that word to my soul. How I saw that the repetition of the lesson, "line upon line, line upon line, precept upon precept, precept upon precept," was by no means confined to oneself, and that if such an eminent servant of God as Mr. Fowler was thus called to suffer, how well might a young obscure disciple (if indeed he were a disciple) expect such teaching and such discipline!

But the reason of my taking up my pen at this time, dear Sir, is to tell you how much the Obituary of Elizabeth Williams, published in this month's "Gospel Standard," has been blessed to my soul. I will not disguise the fact that for eighteen months past I have had the fear of the article of death so much upon me that I have from time to time turned eagerly to your Obituaries, as well as to other records, with the hope that something in the case of others might meet my own. Strange as it may appear, I, who for upwards of forty years was delivered the most part from the fear of death, have of late been so much under its influence that I dare not attempt to tell one tithe of what I have gone through. For years and years I have felt and argued that "dying strength was not to be looked for nor needed until a dying hour, and in that dying hour assuredly there would be, as verily as God is true, dying strength." Upon that my soul could for most part rest. But in the early part of my late illness the enemy was permitted to "come in like a flood," and when I thought I was dying, he so assaulted my soul, and the Lord saw fit so to keep himself out of sight, that the remembrance of that "horror of great darkness" has never wholly left me; and yet numberless times, especially in the waking hours of the night season, I have gone over the ground again and again with the Lord, begging and entreating him to "show me wherefore he contended with me." But in this respect I have felt no rebuke—no intimation that I had said or done aught to offend him, apart from that utter nothingness and absolute worthlessness which one feels and mourns over day by day. Yet the shrinking from the article of death has continued, and thus far has been attended with a depression perfectly indescribable. The account, however, written by that bereaved husband is most heart-cheering; and, seeing that his departed one was encouraged, not merely by your ministrations, but even by some remarks that the Lord had enabled me two years since to make, I thought it so remarkable that her words should in turn be made to speak to my heart in a time of sorrow.

to those tried and exercised children of God "who, through fear of death, are all their lifetime subject to bondage," and who, however clear and blessed their experience in times past, cannot rest upon the mere doctrine or hope that "dying faith will be given in a dying hour," but want to hear the voice of their Beloved *now*, and to have his manifested presence and power in every season of temptation and trial.—Ed.]

THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS HATH MADE ME FREE FROM THE LAW OF SIN AND DEATH.

Dear Friend,—May love, mercy, peace, and truth be with you, and the God of truth and faithfulness bless you; so that you may be led to rejoice in that blessed truth that maketh free; for "if the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed." And Paul said the law of the Spirit in Christ Jesus had made him free from the law of sin and death. How precious these words were to me a few months ago. The riches, honours, and pleasures of a thousand worlds sink into nothing when contrasted with their preciousness. May it be your happiness, by power divine, and heartfelt and blessed experience, to know that you are made free from the law of sin and death. Sure I am that will put more joy and gladness into your soul than all the world beside.

I hope that, through mercy, this will find yourself, wife, and family in tolerable health. What a blessing is health! What a cause for thankfulness! No one knows the blessing of health so well as those that are deprived of it. But are there no blessings in affliction? Indeed there are, very great blessings. I know full well that the greatest blessings come through the hottest furnace and greatest trials. David said, "Thou laidst affliction upon our loins; thou hast caused men to ride over our heads. We went through fire and through water; but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place." So you see it is through fire and water to come into that blessed place. "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee." That is God's promise. What a mercy to prove the Lord faithful to his own word of promise. It brings comfort and consolation to the soul.

You know there is nothing like proving a thing to know it, and the truth of it also. Yes, dear friend, times have I been brought to my wits' end during my long, trying, and painful affliction by the fiery contest of the great enemy of souls and my wicked heart. I am sure, had not an almighty arm held me up, and held me in, I must have sunk; but he held me up and brought me forth, put a song of praise into my mouth, even praise unto our God for his great love and mercy towards me, a poor, worthless worm. Yes; I am still

"A poor sinner, and nothing at all;
Yet Jesus is my All in all;"

my salvation, and all my desire, all my hope, all my trust, all my boast, and all my righteousness; my All in time, my All to

eternity. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits." This was the very feeling of my soul this morning. I can look out of my bedroom window, and see some blessed waymarks and Bethel spots as Mr. P. speaks of in his sermon.

The 20th of August last was a day of memorial with me when I could in truth and blessed experience enter into Ps. xxiii. 5: "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil. My cup runneth over." And truly my cup did run over with a feeling sense of the Lord's goodness toward me, as a God of grace as well as a God of providence. The words of the poet came to my mind at the time:

"To praying souls he always grants
More than they can express."

Truly I felt the force of them. Yes, dear friend, from that time until now the Lord makes his goodness to pass before us in the way; so that we have not lacked anything since our parish pay was taken off. Your words are really experienced by us, that the Lord intends to keep us instead of the parish, to the praise of his great name. "Bless the Lord, O my soul," has been the language of my heart times since, for his goodness toward us. Our oppressors meant it for evil, but the Lord meant it should work together for our good and profit. It was a heavy trial to us for flesh and blood to contend with; yet it was made profitable. "The wrath of man shall praise thee." Blessed truth! We have no earthly prop now to rest on but the strong arm of the Lord. May he ever give us strength to cast all our care upon him, and that with a single eye to his glory. Hitherto the Lord hath helped us. Blessed be his name! His mercy endureth for ever.

"Thus far my God hath led me on,
And made his truth and mercy known."

I am now in the 22nd year under the rod of affliction and the rod of the covenant, and can look at the very spot where this portion came powerfully to my mind: "I will cause thee to pass under the rod, and bring thee into the bond of the covenant." Yes, friend, it is a bond that sin, death, hell, nor my own wicked heart ever can break. Endless praises to a Three-One God.

But I must conclude, for I shall weary you and myself as well, sweet as it is to write upon the goodness of the Lord.

I have felt rather better the last few days, or I could not have written to you; but changes soon take place with me. May the good will of him that dwelt in the bush dwell with you and in you by blessed and heartfelt experience, bless you in your going out, bless you in your coming in; bless you in your basket, bless you in your store; bless you with a true, humble heart at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in your right mind, which is a blessed place, a place that my soul desires to be in daily, there to sit and wash his dear feet with my tears, and know no will but his, longing to be with him to see him as he is—him whom

my very soul loveth. But I desire to wait my appointed time with patience. I find by daily and painful experience that this is not my rest.

The Lord in mercy bless, comfort, and support you under all your trials, troubles, and afflictions that you may have to pass through.

This is the fifth day since I began this poor scribble, and trying indeed have I found it, yet found it good; for the goodness of the Lord is such a wide and blessed field. How great is his goodness! how great is his beauty! "Corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids."

Your long-afflicted Friend in the Hope of the Gospel, and a Debtor to Mercy alone,

Nov. 8, 1861.

J. W.

A LETTER BY THE LATE DR. HAWKER.

Dear Sir,—I greet you in his most holy name, who is the Lord our righteousness. Grace, mercy, and peace be with you.

I received your letter a few days before I left home, but, from the great pressure of business which bore upon me at that time, I had not opportunity to make answer to it before my departure. I therefore put it in my pocket, intending to embrace the first convenient moment on my journey to town (whither, through the Lord's mercy, I am going), to enter more particularly into the interesting subject for which you have done me the kindness to write, and hoping, as I now do, that the Lord who teacheth his people to profit (Isa. xlviii. 16, 17) will direct my pen and your heart, that his wisdom and love may be manifested in this correspondence.

And first, dear Sir, I pray you to gather into one point of view the several leading particulars which now exercise and have so long exercised your mind on the same great point, namely, your eternal salvation. You have every scriptural testimony to hope that the work is of God, from the uniform standard your apprehensions bear with the feelings of the Lord's people in all ages. Self-loathing and self-abhorrence, a consciousness of your own unworthiness, and as to your view, it should appear as if an increasing state of imperfection. These are what holy men of old all felt and all groaned under, and by which God the Holy Ghost, in his Divine teaching, is breaking up the fallow ground of your heart, in order to prepare for the sowing to yourself in Christ's righteousness. (Hosea x. 12; see also John xvi. 8-15; Zech. x. 12; Ezek. xxxvi. 22-32.) Secondly: By this process of Divine teaching, under the continual unctions and baptisms of God the Holy Ghost, the Lord the Spirit is preparing your spirit for such blessed views and apprehensions of the person and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, as when once the Son of God is received into the soul in all his fulness, suitableness, and all-sufficiency, it will open and keep open a life of faith in living wholly out of yourself, and living

wholly upon him, as will bear you up and bear you on through all the conflicts of sin and Satan, the fear of death, hell, and the grave, until faith is lost in sight, and grace is consummated in glory. Nothing tends to the accomplishment of this blessed end equal to self-emptying, self-reproachings, and self-loathings.

Observe how very sweetly and graciously the Lord himself preacheth the doctrine in that blessed chapter, the 16th of Ezekiel, where, from beginning to end, we have the Lord opening the soul to an apprehension of the sin of our nature from deeper and deeper views of our utterly helpless and lost condition by the fall, and our complete and full recovery by sovereign grace. See particularly the 14th, 48th, and 60th verses, and then observe how the Lord closeth in the whole in the 63rd, the last verse, with the cause of his thus humbling his people. Thirdly. Look to the Scripture records of the saints of God, both in the Old Testament and the New, and observe how the Lord's own doctrine is exemplified and illustrated in the lives of the Lord's own people, Noah, Abraham, David, Peter, Paul, and, in short, all the faithful gone before. And observe the Lord's testimony of them, Exod. xxxiii. 12-19; Isa. li. 1-8; 2 Sam. xxiii. 5; Ezra ix. 3rd to the end; and do not overlook, in the lives of those saints of God, how self-loathing is accompanied with faith in the Lord and his righteousness, and remark at the same time what authority the Lord gives for this Divine confidence. (Hosea xiii. 9, and xiv. throughout. See also Isa. xlv. 24, 25; liv. 17; 1 Cor. i. 30, 31; Rev. vii. 14; Lev. xxvi. throughout, particularly to your case, when you say your heaven is as iron, &c. See 40-45 of that blessed chapter.)

I hope, if the Lord so appoint, to return to Plymouth in about a month or six weeks, when I hope to hear from you again. In the meantime, I commend you to the Lord and to the word of his grace. All and every one of your complaints are such as the Lord's people, more or less, know, of which they daily complain—and mark what I am going to say—of which they not only complain when they are first brought under the rod of the covenant, but all the way through. Like Paul, they daily "groan, being burdened." (Rom. vii. throughout.) And God the Holy Ghost makes this holy discipline very profitable to the whole family of the Lord Jesus Christ. First, it always tends to keep them humble, and to lay them low at the foot of the cross; next, it keeps open a spring of true repentance and holiness of soul towards God. (Jer. xxxi. 8, 9.) Thirdly, it damps all pharisaical pride and self-righteousness (Job xv. 14-16); and above all it endears the Lord Jesus Christ; since we thus daily learn, from what passeth in our own hearts, that we need him every moment, and to the last moment of our lives, without him we were nothing. (Ps. xxxvi. 1.) Paul found this after he had been caught up to heaven; and do read what the man of God said upon the occasion, and the Lord Jesus's answer to him. (2 Cor. xii. 1-10.)

Farewell, dear Sir. "May the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that you have suffered awhile, make you perfect (Col. i. 28; 1 Pet. v. 10), stablish, strengthen, settle you. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

Yours in the Lord,

Bath, May 21st, 1821.

ROBERT HAWKER.

PS.—You say that you have read some of my tracts. Have you read my tract called the "Unceasing Warfare?" If you write again, pray do not pay the postage.

[The above letter was written to the late John Wade, of Uppingham, in answer to one which he wrote to Dr. Hawker under deep distress of soul. A tract of Dr. Hawker's, which he saw in a shop window at Leicester and bought, was the first means of showing him the way of salvation by sovereign grace.—Ed.]

"GRACE, GRACE UNTO IT!"

I'LL sing the song of grace!
 (No song so sweet to me!)
 The lowest hell had been my place,
 But grace has set me free.
 Lord, teach me of thy grace
 To think, and write, and tell;
 Long as on earth I have a place,
 Though 'tis unsearchable.
 Make me to grow in grace,
 Dear Fountain of all good;
 O! Let me in each trying case
 Cleave to thy love and blood.
 Give me to know the grace
 Of Jesus Christ, my Lord;
 And search for him in every place
 Of thy most precious word.
 And when I die let grace
 My dying anthem be;
 So let me leave this sinful place,
 And my Redeemer see.

A. H.

Poor believers are but princes in disguise here in this world. Princes they are; Christ hath made them all so; but while here below they are in a foreign land, under a veil.—*Bunyan*.

So long as we are alive in the flesh, we know not that we are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked; but when the commandment comes, sin revives, which before lay torpid, and discovered not its enmity against God, our soul's peace and eternal happiness, nor was known in its exceeding sinfulness, filth, and deceit; and then we die to our hopes in self, the law, and any human help; and, wet with the showers of the mountains, are constrained to embrace the rock for want of a shelter, and cleave, as we are enabled, with all our misery and want, poverty, guilt, and shame, to Him who can have compassion on the ignorant and on them who are out of the way.—*Isbell*.

MEDITATIONS ON DIFFERENT PORTIONS OF THE WORD OF GOD.

MEDITATIONS ON THE FIRST CHAPTER OF THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER.

HOPE is a blessed grace of the Spirit, and stands in firm and lasting union with faith and love. Its main blessedness consists in the support which it gives to the soul in seasons of trouble, and specially in enabling it to look beyond the present trial and affliction, whatever it may be, and to anticipate a deliverance from it, and a future time of rest and peace. It is, therefore, compared in Scripture to "an anchor" (Heb. vi. 19), which holds the ship up in the storm, and preserves it instrumentally from falling upon the rocks on which it might otherwise be dashed to pieces, enabling also and encouraging the mariners quietly and confidently to wait in expectation of a change of weather, and of obtaining a prosperous voyage to their desired haven. It is also compared to "a helmet" (1 Thess. v. 8), which guards the head, that vital part, from killing strokes in the day of battle, and as a necessary piece of defensive armour, brings the warrior safe off the field. (Eph. vi. 17). We are, therefore, said to be "saved" by it (Rom. viii. 24); that is, not saved by it as regards *eternal* salvation, which is only through the blood and righteousness of the Son of God, but saved by it as regards *present* salvation, inasmuch as it preserves us from being carried away by despair, the assaults of Satan, and the overwhelming power of temptation in the same way as the ship is saved by its anchor in the storm from falling on the rocks, and the soldier by his helmet in the battle from death-dealing blows.

We find, therefore, the apostle in the chapter before us, the exposition of which we now resume at this point, exhorting the saints of God "to hope to the end." "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. i. 13.)

He knew well what difficulties they would have to encounter, and that their faith would be tried as with fire. He, therefore, would encourage them, whatever storms of temptation they might have to endure, never to give up their hope; for if that were abandoned, it would be like the sailor throwing overboard his anchor in the face of a storm, and the soldier casting aside his helmet just before he went into battle.

But there are two things which he specially says of this hope: 1. He bids them hope "*to the end*;" and 2, to wait "for the grace that was to be brought unto them at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Both these expressions will demand some little explanation.

1. "*Hope to the end.*" This is what hope chiefly regards—the end; for that is "*better than the beginning,*" the crowning

consummation of all that faith believes, hope expects, and love enjoys. But through what dark and gloomy seasons has hope often to look before this end comes, being sometimes sunk so low as almost to despair even of life! How it has in these low spots to muster all its evidences, look back to this and that Ebenezer, this and that hill Mizar, this and that deliverance, manifestation, and blessing; how it has to hang upon the word of promise, cry out for help, and that mightily, as if at its last breath, and hope against hope in the very face of unbelief, infidelity, and despair. An end must come to all our struggles, trials, exercises, afflictions, and conflicts. We shall not be always struggling and fighting with a body of sin and death. We shall not be always exposed to snares and temptations spread in our path by sin and Satan, so as hardly to escape falling by them as if by the very skin of our teeth. Every day reminds us with warning voice that an end must come. But now comes the question, and often a very anxious question it is, What will that end be? Here hope comes in to sustain and support the soul, enabling it to look forward, that it may prove to be a hope that maketh not ashamed, a good hope through grace, and not the hope of the hypocrite that shall perish. It is also rendered in the margin "perfectly," by which we may understand that it should be a hope of such a complete and enduring nature that the end may prove it was a grace of the Holy Spirit, and as such, stamped with his own perfecting power.

2. The apostle therefore adds, "for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

There is a little difficulty here which we shall, however, do our best to explain. The interpretation of the words chiefly depends on the meaning which we attach to the expression, "the revelation of Jesus Christ." Does it mean his *future* revelation from heaven when "he shall come a second time without sin unto salvation," "to be glorified in his saints and to be admired in all them that believe?" (Heb. ix. 28; 2 Thess. i. 10.) Or does it mean his *present* revelation in the manifestations of himself to the soul? (Jno. xiv. 21; Gal. i. 16.) According to our view, it is more in harmony with the general drift and bearing of the Scripture, and especially of the Epistles of Peter, to explain it of the former; but we see no reason why we should not extend its meaning so as to include the latter also.

We shall examine both of these interpretations, commencing with the former.

Nothing is more evident from the Scriptures of the New Testament than that the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is there set forth not only as a revelation of him from heaven, but is continually held up as a special object of faith and hope to the saints of God. For proof of this see 1 Thess. i. 10, ii. 19, iii. 13, iv. 16-18, v. 23; 2 Thess. i. 7-10; 1 Cor. i. 7 (margin);

Phil. iii. 20; Col. iii. 4; 1 Tim. vi. 14, 15; 2 Tim. iv. 8; Titus ii. 13. In all these passages the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is not only clearly set forth, but is dwelt upon as a special topic of hope and comfort for the afflicted saints. In a similar way, in the epistle now before us, Peter dwells often upon the same blessed truth. Observe, for instance, the following testimonies: "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. i. 7.) The word rendered "appearing" here is the same as is translated (v. 13) "revelation." So again, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." (1 Pet. iv. 12, 13.) Is not the revelation of Christ in future glory here held forth as a topic of support and of joy?

So also in his second epistle he devotes the whole of the last chapter to the same subject, reproving the infidel scorn of the scoffers and encouraging the family of God to look forward to "the day of the Lord" in faith and hope.

With all these testimonies in its favour we cannot well hesitate to interpret the revelation of Jesus Christ in the passage now before us of his future revelation from heaven in glory.

But there are two objections to this interpretation which, as faithful expositors of Scripture, we feel bound to mention. One is a doctrinal, the other a critical or grammatical objection.

The doctrinal objection to the interpretation which explains "the revelation of Jesus Christ" as his future revelation at the last day in glory is the expression, "*grace* to be brought unto you," for it is argued that "it will not be *grace* then which is brought, but *glory*." This, however, we do not consider an objection of any great force, as the word "*grace*" means literally "*favour*," and is frequently so rendered in our translation, as Luke i. 30, ii. 52; Acts ii. 47, vii. 10, 46. We may therefore render the expression, "the *favour* which is to be brought unto you." And what *favour* is to be compared to the manifestation of God's eternal *favour* to his chosen and redeemed saints which will be openly manifested at the last great day, when Jesus shall be revealed from heaven and shall come in all his glory? Will not this be the crowning *favour* of all *favours*, when the Lord shall say to his redeemed, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world?" Besides which, as *grace* is the beginning of *glory*, so *glory* is but the consummation and crown of *grace*. We see, therefore, no real difficulty in the word "*grace*" as applied to the last and greatest and crowning manifestation of it at the Lord's coming—certainly no difficulty so great as to make us reject that interpretation.

But, as a further confirmation of this view, besides the testimonies from Scripture, which we have already brought forward, observe how the general drift and tenour of the New Testament favour this interpretation. Hope especially looks to the end, as the Apostle bids us do; but this end is not a present blessing by the way, but the grand consummation of every desire in a full participation of the glory of Christ. We therefore read, "In hope of eternal life" (Tit. i. 2); and again, "Looking for that blessed hope, and glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour (or, as it might be rendered, "our great God and Saviour") Jesus Christ." (Tit. ii. 13.) "And rejoice in hope of the glory of God." (Rom. v. 2.) To the same point tends also the whole argument of the Apostle (Rom. viii. 18-25), where "the earnest expectation of the creature" is represented as "waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God," and "waiting for the redemption of the body," which will only be accomplished when it shall rise in glory at the second coming of Christ. Aided, then, by the light of all these testimonies, we cannot well hesitate in believing that the revelation of Jesus Christ in the glory of his second appearing is the primary meaning of the passage, and most in harmony with the general drift of the Scriptures, the analogy of faith, and Peter's own express declarations.

The other objection urged against this view is a critical and grammatical one, viz., that the word "which is to be brought" is wrongly translated, and that it should have been rendered, "which is being brought," it being in the present, not the future tense. This is quite true. But the objectors are probably not aware that the present participle in Greek is frequently used in a future sense, as in the passage: "And the Lord added to the church daily *such as should be saved*," which in the original is a present passive participle as here, yet is rightly translated in the future tense, meaning, "those who are to be saved."* So "Art thou he that *should come*?" (Matt. xi. 3), which in the original is in the present tense (as also John vi. 14; xi. 27; Rev. i. 4, 8), but is rightly rendered in the future.† This objection, therefore, is of little moment, nor should we have even named it, had it not been sometimes brought forward to show that the passage, as it stands in our English bible, is an erroneous translation, which it certainly is not.

2. But we freely allow that it will admit of another interpretation, as referring to the *present* revelation of Christ to the soul; for in the same way as present grace is the pledge and earnest of

* When it means those who are saved as a past act of God's eternal grace, it is in the perfect tense, as Eph. ii. 5, 8.

† In a similar way, "That we should be saved" (Acts xxvii. 20) is in the original in the present, not the future, infinitive. And, indeed, in all languages the present is continually used for the future, as: "I go to London to-morrow;" "He comes home next Wednesday." We are sorry to have to dwell upon such points; but we can meet criticism only by criticism.

a participation of future glory, so a present revelation of Christ is a pledge and earnest of an interest in that future revelation of him, when he shall come in the clouds of heaven. In this point of view we shall now, therefore, consider it.

Those who feelingly know the plague of their heart will confess that their daily experience is often one of great darkness of soul, and a sensible want of that grace which we well know can alone make us fruitful in every good word and work. But what is to work that blessed change in us? How are we to be brought out of this miserable state of barrenness and death? Grace, and grace alone, can do it. But how is this grace to come? Now, as we well know from past experience that a sweet revelation of Christ to the heart brings grace with it, and that so sunk are we in carnality and death that nothing short of his own manifestations can move and melt a hard heart, give faith to an unbelieving heart, quicken and revive a dead heart, water and make fruitful a dry and thirsty heart, and that when Christ comes, every grace of the Spirit comes with him, it makes the poor, needy, naked, barren soul long for his appearing. Everything else has been tried and found wanting. Praying, and preaching, and reading, and meditating may have brought at times a little change, a little relief, a little reviving in the hard bondage, which, so far as they go, are highly prized; but the soul feels that it must be a sweet and blessed revelation of Christ himself, which alone can make the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose. It sensibly feels that he alone can, by his presence and power, make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. We often think that we must repent, we must believe, we must be spiritually minded, we must love, we must spend our days in prayer and meditation, hang over our bibles night and day, never give way to slothfulness, hardness, carelessness, and indifference, but be in the sensible fear of the Lord, so as never to lose his presence and power. And then, we think, if we are all this, and if we do all this, we shall have clear evidences of our interest in the blood of the Lamb, and have a right religion. Let us not say a word to encourage carelessness, or damp diligence; but is it not often too true that with all this looking to self we are too apt to forget that it is only the Lord's presence and power in the gracious revelations of himself which can produce that repentance, that faith, that love, that spirituality of mind, and, in a word, all that blessed state of soul in which we feel so sensibly deficient? Now Peter, according to the interpretation of the words that we are now adopting, bids us hope to the end for the grace which is to be brought us at the revelation of Jesus Christ, that we are not to look at, and into our miserable selves to produce that grace there of which we feel so sadly deficient, but to hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought us, not produced by us, nor maintained by us, but to be brought by the Lord himself in his own blessed revelations of his

Person, his blood, his righteousness, his dying love, his faithfulness, his tenderness, pitiful compassion, and unfailing mercy and goodness. Now it certainly is most blessedly true that as we hope for this grace, and that to the end (or completely, as the word might be rendered), this very hoping for grace to be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ, this longing and looking out for it, this waiting for and expecting it, will sustain and support the soul as an anchor in a storm, and protect our head as a helmet from the killing strokes of despair. It was in this way that David encouraged his soul to hope and wait for the Lord's appearing: "I wait for the Lord; my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning; I say, more than they that watch for the morning." (Ps. cxxx. 5, 6.) And again: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God." (Ps. xlii. 11.)

But why should we hope for it? What ground of encouragement have we to expect it will ever come? Because we have had it, in some measure at least, before, and found that when Christ was revealed to our heart he brought grace with him—grace to repent of our sins with godly sorrow, evangelical, not legal repentance, grace to believe in the Son of God with a living faith, grace to love him with a pure heart fervently, grace to walk in his fear, and live to his praise. "Therefore," says the Apostle, "hope, keep on hoping, and that to the end, that he who revealed himself once will reveal himself again, for his reward will ever be with him, as his work was before him."

But we must pass on to the practical exhortations which immediately follow: "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance; but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." (1 Pet. i. 14-16.)

Grace lays us under the greatest of all obligations to its free and bountiful Giver, and especially to render a believing obedience to his revealed will and word. It is his free, sovereign, and distinguishing grace alone which makes and manifests us to be his children, and therefore it demands of us, as a feeble and most insufficient tribute of grateful praise, that we should walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, and glorify him in our body and spirit which are his. He that has never known and felt this knows nothing of the riches of God's grace in the manifestation of mercy and love to his soul. Such a one knows, that do what he can, he can never do enough to show forth the praises of him who hath called him out of darkness into his marvellous light; and his grief and burden ever are that, through the power of indwelling sin, he cannot do the things that he would, but is always falling short, always sinning against bleeding, dying love. To such a one, therefore, the precepts of the

gospel are as dear as the promises, and he sees that they are set in the word of truth as "a lamp to his feet and a light to his path," a guiding rule by which, if he could but direct his steps, he would glorify God, walk in peace and love with his people, preserve a good conscience, and adorn the doctrine which he professes in all things. Obedience, therefore, to him is a sweet word, and is viewed by him as a precious portion of that free and everlasting gospel which, in restoring fallen man to God's favour, restores him also to an obedience acceptable in his sight.

The expression "as obedient children" will, however, require a little explanation. It is literally "children of obedience," it being a Hebrew idiom to express a certain quality or condition. Thus we read in the Old Testament of "children of transgression," that is, transgressors (Isa. lvii. 4); "children of iniquity" (Hos. x. 9), that is, so given up to iniquity, as if iniquity itself were their father; and in the New Testament of "children of disobedience" (Eph. ii. 2; v. 6; Col. iii. 6); "children of wrath" (Eph. ii. 3); "children of light" (Eph. v. 8); "cursed children," literally, "children of the curse" (2 Pet. ii. 14), all which expressions imply a kind of heirship in the things of which they are said to be children, and that they are ruled and governed by them as a child by his father. By "obedient children," therefore, we may understand such obedient believers in and followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, as if obedience herself were their parent and were so training them up in all her blessed ways that as her loving and dutiful children they would not soon or easily depart from her careful nurture and gracious instructions.

The foundation of this obedience is laid in love. It is not a legal duty, or forced, unwilling, compulsory service, but a willing, grateful, unreserved obedience of the heart, under the constraining influence of the love of Christ (Jno. xiv. 15; 2 Cor. v. 14); a knowledge of redemption by his atoning blood (1 Cor. vi. 20; Heb. ix. 14); and a deliverance by grace from the curse and bondage of the law, the service of Satan, and the dominion of sin. (Gal. iii. 13; 1 Jno. iii. 8; Rom. vi. 14.) The law works wrath, bondage, and death, stirs up and puts life into sin (Rom. iv. 15; vii. 7, 8; 2 Cor. iii. 7; Gal. iv. 24); but gives no deliverance from it, either as regards its guilt or its dominion. It curses and condemns for disobedience, but there it leaves the guilty sinner, and can neither justify nor sanctify him. But now here comes in the precious gospel of the Son of God, which, proclaiming pardon and peace through the blood of the Lamb and as made the power of God unto salvation, giving what it proclaims, lays the soul under the sweetest constraints and most grateful obligations to obey his precepts, keep his word, seek his glory, and live to his praise. This is the only obedience acceptable to God as the fruit of his Spirit and the operations of his grace.

But as the proof and effect of this obedience there will be a thorough change both of heart and life. The apostle, therefore,

adds, "Not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance."

Sins of ignorance widely differ from sins against light and knowledge. Paul, speaking of his experience of pardoning mercy, says, "Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." (1 Tim. i. 13.) Had he committed the same sins of blasphemy and persecution against light and knowledge they would have been, we dare not say wholly unpardonable, but generally speaking they are only committed by those who are given up to fill the measure of their iniquities and are the last sins of apostates. The apostle, therefore, bids us "not to fashion ourselves according to the former lusts in our ignorance." The word "fashioning" yourselves is the same as rendered (Rom. xii. 2) "conformed," and means literally taking the shape of, or adapting oneself to the outward visible form of anything, as if it were a model in likeness of which we are to be framed and moulded. He warns us, therefore, against yielding ourselves to the power and practice of any of those lusts which had dominion over us in the days of our ignorance, such as the base and sensual lusts of the flesh, or the more refined lusts of money, power, pleasure, fashion, pride, worldliness, and fleshly ease—those, as it were, genteeler sins in which a man may live and walk and yet preserve his character and good name.

Let the children of disobedience follow after and be conformed to all these worldly lusts; but let the children of obedience shun and abhor them as hateful to God, deceitful and dangerous to themselves, and contrary to a holy, godly profession.

But for the present we must lay down our pen.

Obituary.

ISABELLA PRENTICE.

ISABELLA PRENTICE, died at Oakham, Tuesday, April 20th, 1869, aged 45 years.

I knew the subject of the present Obituary very well, as she was not only a member of my church at Stamford, but, previously to her marriage, lived in my service as cook for about six years; and therefore from my personal knowledge of her, and having heard from her own lips much of her own experience, I can so far testify to the truth of the account which she has given of it by her own pen in the following pages.

Like most of us, she had her infirmities; but taking her on the whole, and having, of course, had much opportunity for observation, I must say that I have rarely known a person who daily lived more under the power and influence of divine realities, or who had a clearer discovery or deeper view of the evils of her heart, and of the dreadful nature of sin generally, though for the most part kept tender and consistent in the fear of the

Lord. Nor have I often known any one who saw and felt more distinctly and clearly the difference between nature and grace, or who knew more of the assaults of Satan and the power of inward temptation, and that none but the Lord was able to support under it or deliver out of it. Religion was with her not a thing to be taken up or laid down at man's choice and will, but a solemn matter of life and death in which her soul often hung trembling as in a balance between heaven and hell. Under powerful temptations, especially to unbelief, the power of which, considering her clear and blessed experience of pardoning mercy, she felt almost more than any whom I ever knew, she sometimes sank so low as almost to despair even of life, and then again was blessedly raised up and enabled to rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

The way in which she was first brought to know me—through a sermon of mine which fell into her hands when she was living in service at Newhaven, near Edinburgh, suffering under most distressing temptations—was often viewed by her as a special interposition; and that she should be brought in the providence of God to live under my roof was not only one of the most remarkable circumstances which I have ever known in my life as regards myself, but, if I may so speak, was always looked upon by her as a matter of peculiar favour and thankfulness. But as all this will be seen more clearly from her own statement, and will come with more grace from her than from me, I shall not forestall it by any further observations of my own, but leave it to be detailed by her own pen. The following account of her history and experience is drawn up partly from a record of her own experience by her own pen, supplemented by reminiscences of my own from personal conversation at various times with her, partly from letters written by her at different periods to various friends, and partly by her bereaved and mourning husband.—J. C. P.

“I was born in the year 1824 at the small village of Rochester, Northumberland. My father, whose name was Elliott, lived near the Carter Fell,* and was in partnership with Mr. Robinson, the Provost of Jedburgh, and Mr. Grainger, steward of the Marquis of Lothian, in carrying on some lime works on that hill. As they employed a great many men, and these were continually on the premises, my mother felt desirous of being confined away from home at a place where she might be quiet. This was the reason of my being born at Rochester. But in due time she returned to her own home, near the Carter Fell, where I spent the days of my childhood and girlhood, without being sent to school or obtaining any education. During this time, therefore, I was left to ramble by myself on the moors, and

* The Carter Fell is a high hill, part of the range of the Cheviot Hills, on the border between England and Scotland. “Fell” means in Scotch a high hill or range of hills, fit only for pasturage and never ploughed.

at times had many solemn thoughts that I should like to be good and go to heaven when I died, as I had heard that some children had gone to heaven. I felt, however, that there would have to be a great difference in me before I went there; but what was to work it, and how it was to be brought about I did not know. I had a desire to be good; but always felt a creeping bad opinion of myself, that I was not like other folks, but that there was something bad in me beyond everybody else.

“My parents continued to live at the lime-works for about 12 years, but as Mr. Grainger, a few years previously, had given up his share in them, and a year or two afterwards Mr. Robinson, the Provost of Jedburgh, had absconded to America, taking with him all the money he could lay hands on, all the debts fell upon my father, and he was disabled from carrying on the works any longer. During these twelve years, my parents kept putting off from time to time sending us to school, looking forward to a more convenient season, which, however, never came; for when we had an opportunity of going, we were so big that our pride could not bow to stand beside a child, and they gave way to us. But it was always a great grief to my mother for us to go into the world without an education, which we had to do. The first letter I sent to my mother I printed by copying letters from the Bible, which took me a fortnight before I finished it. But I sealed it up, and got some one to address it; for I could not bear the thought that any one should know I could neither read nor write properly.

“At this time, I had reached my nineteenth year, living in service at Edinburgh, where I had obtained a situation. My mind still being impressed about religion, though I knew not what it was, I embraced every opportunity of hearing the word preached, and, having liberty mostly to get out on the Sunday evenings, attended various churches and chapels. But being ignorant of the way of salvation, and not knowing where to go, I used to follow the crowd. I remained in service in Edinburgh six months, but feeling my health much impaired, I obtained a situation in Newhaven; and here it was that the Lord seemed to begin to work with some power upon my heart and conscience.

“At this time my mother was very poorly. My anxiety about her was great, and especially for her soul. I felt very anxious about her spiritual state, and often prayed for her, sometimes with sweet feelings, and a great desire for her to be right before she died. I was also led to pray for myself, and at times felt that spiritual things were the only things to be cared for. The weight of these things kept increasing, pressing upon me, at times, night and day, with a feeling, ‘O to be right; to be fit to die;’ when a strange, gloomy foreboding began to set in upon my mind, as if something dreadful was going to take place, and I could take comfort in nothing. At this time I once went down upon my knees to say the Lord’s prayer. I got out ‘Our Father.’ O I thought if I could say,

'My Father,' how happy I should be. I got no further with the prayer. I could not tell what to make of myself, nor what to do; for I felt I was not like other folk, for when I wanted to be good I was always saying something light or doing something I felt condemned for. As to ever attaining to be a Christian I felt very much discouraged, as I saw there was no stability in me, for I felt that to be a Christian I must be able to stand against every thought, word, and action that brought any guilt on my mind; but *that* I could not do. I thought that it was just like my nature to be so, not like other folks. One day I went to chapel to hear if the minister prayed for everybody in it, which he did, and I came away a little comforted. I was so priest-ridden that if I happened to meet a minister, if my clothes accidentally touched his, feeling that he knew so much and was so good, being a minister, it would gladden me. Or even if I could but put my foot into his footprints I felt that I had got towards something that was good. I once went to the chapel with the feeling thinking I would attend to every word the minister said, and try to carry it out in practice; which I tried, but did not succeed, for I seemed to want energy. Next Sunday I went again, and thought I would try once more; but the minister brought so many things forward which were necessary to be a Christian that I felt I could not manage it. At this time the minister, whose name was Marshall, of Leith, said, 'At one time I dearly loved the United Secession Church; her doctrines were pure, &c., but now she is going headlong to the devil.' He further said, 'I throw myself out of her,' and called his church 'a pure Calvinist secession.*' During this time my mother kept getting worse and worse. She was taken to Haddington, thinking a change of air would be beneficial. One night I commenced to write a letter to her, but I had an impression she would never see it, and on the following Monday my father came with the sad news that she was dead. She died the 18th day of May, 1846, which was a very great trouble to me. I thought, 'Is my poor mother gone to hell?' All creation seemed altered.

"On my way to her funeral many were my cries and tears. I felt an earnest longing to be ready to die, and had a great desire to sit down to the Sacrament, for I thought they were the only happy people that did so. But I felt I should like first to have my heart right; it seemed so changeable I could not manage it. Sometimes I felt humble, prayerful, and weeping; at other times hard, unfeeling, and proud. On this journey, which was a distance of 16 miles, I for the first time looked to heaven for

* Most likely he meant that he joined "the Free Church," as it was soon after the time (1843) the disruption took place. But though the best of the Scotch ministers no doubt joined the Free Church, it was not on the point of doctrine that the secession took place, but on the right of patronage and the power of the Civil Courts in spiritual matters.

help, and my desire was that God would humble my proud heart; which prayer, I believe, he heard and answered. My prayers previous to this time had been more duty, and my desires, I could not say whence they came; but this was a time of necessity; I wanted help, and that a change might take place in me. I had often thought that if anything would do it, it would be my mother's death, and that nothing would have such a power over me as that. Her corpse was a trying sight for me, being the first dead body I had ever seen. My anxiety still went on as to what had become of her soul. A few days after, these words were impressed on my mind: 'She has fallen into the arms of a merciful Saviour.' I lost sight of her, and became very anxious about my own state for eternity. Everything now looked gloomy, dark, and dreadful. These feelings and apprehensions kept increasing, and had I had an opportunity at this time, I believe I should have gone headlong into sin to ease my mind. The last Sunday in May, 1846, when I arose in the morning, a dreadful blasphemous thought set in upon me to say to God; and it kept going on until about eleven o'clock, when I felt it like a sword through my soul, while I kept answering, 'No! No! No! I will not, I will not; not for ten thousand worlds!' Sometimes the enemy tried to make me think I had half done it, when I have turned in haste, and stamped with my foot, 'No, Satan, to you and all the enemies of God be it said.' This temptation continued sharp for several days, and often haunted me afterwards. I went to chapel in the morning of the above-named day, but could scarcely sit in the seat from the shock that the darts gave. I thought that of all the creatures that crawled upon the face of the earth, I was the most wretched. To think that I had such thoughts in my mind! No one was ever like me! I think the minister's text was: 'If God be for us, who can be against us?' But I could listen to nothing. I had never felt a necessity of having close communion with, or help from the Lord only once before. I used to have a great desire to get into a place where no mortal eye could see, and no mortal ear could hear me; for I felt as if I wanted to shout out to get God's ear, to have a word with him. I often used to go into a closet, and when I got there, nothing but groans—no vent for them. The first cry that seemed to leave my breast and to have an entrance was, 'God be merciful to me, a sinner.' I kept getting worse and worse, and began to feel there was nothing in my heart but sin; it kept springing up like water out of the ground—no end to it. Then the law was thrown open to me; I felt it to be God's eternal law. I felt as if the very heavens spoke vengeance against me, that God would burst through upon my guilty head. I began to try to believe; but I felt it as impossible for me to believe as to take my arm and turn round the world. There seemed to be such a 'will not' that I could not.

"I kept going on still getting worse and worse, so that one day

when looking at the fire I thought if I were put in it, it would be a faint resemblance of what I felt in my soul. At this time I could attend to nothing (I was in service at Newhaven; the family were all very kind; their forbearance when I look at it now was wonderful, as they never once found fault with me), for my distress was so great that I did not do half a day's work in a week. Sometimes I dared not go to bed for fear that if I slept I should be lost in the night-time. About this time my father came to see me. He said he liked to see young people concerned about the thing that was good; 'but,' said he, 'I am sorry to see such a young creature as you in such a state; you ought not to read Boston's "Fourfold State." He is very severe. People were different in his day from what they are now; they know better now than they did then, and are not so unruly. Look at Peter, David, Mary Magdalene, and Manasseh. They were all saved; and what have you to fear?' I well remember that these words arose in answer from the depths of my heart: 'Well, father, it is one thing to say there is a Saviour, and another thing to say I have one.' Sometimes I felt like one thrown into the sea who had never learned to swim, but who just at times got his head above water and had time to breathe. About this time I got the loan of a sermon by one J. C. Philpot from a woman who shortly before had come from Dundee (at this time it was almost in every one's mouth in the place that I was going 'daft' (mad) about religion). This woman said that this sermon, 'Winter afore Harvest,' had been blessed to several. I began to read it, and I thought, 'O, here is one that has been in the very place that I am in, especially where he says, "O, wretch, madman that I am! I have ruined my soul! O, eternity, eternity!" It was just my very breathing. One day when I was reading where he says, 'I believe the Lord usually gives a glimpse of his countenance,' it was as if a sweet and blessed light, like a ray from heaven, shone upon the very page, and shone from it direct into my heart. O the change that was made! It was like the coming in of another world. The sweetness, the quietness, the peace are better felt than described. I constantly carried the sermon in my breast, used to take it out and take a peep at it, and mostly got something out of it that was some comfort.* One day, some time after having a sweet feeling in my soul from reading it, I thought when I got to heaven I should know the writer, for I felt to love him, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I then thought he was dead and had been so for a long time, not having the least idea who he was or that he was then alive.

"But with all this occasional relief I still kept, for the most part, in my deep trouble, and was sometimes brought to that point that I thought every moment would be my last. One day I was so put to it that I kept repeating these words, 'While

* I have seen the sermon, and it was almost worn out by being always carried in her bosom and so continually taken out and read.

the lamp holds out to burn,' 'While the lamp holds out to burn.' Whatever words came into my mouth that were right, all the time of my temptations, I kept wording out to drown what was going on in my heart, lest a word should escape my tongue which would sink me for ever. But on that day, which I have just mentioned, I felt I must commit my soul into the hands of God the Father, as I thought he was greater than the Son, and it would be safest for me to do so. But in an instant God manifested himself to me as a consuming fire; and to speak literally, it was just as if half the globe were on fire. Then a Man appeared between us in the character of a Mediator, and the fire went down immediately. I saw then that God the Father could be approached only through this Mediator. I was generally, however, at this time in deep soul trouble, so that what with the wickedness and blasphemy rising up within and Satan's temptations I could only compare my state to machinery that was in full go and a piece of iron was thrown in amongst the wheels, breaking the wheels, and yet the machine kept going in full force. I felt it, indeed, to be a 'great tribulation.' I have never felt anything since that I could call tribulation.

"One day, about this time, I was in very great trouble the whole day, so that I was completely worn out. I threw myself down on a hearth-rug, when a swarm of infernal spirits seemed to take possession of my breast, as if they were sucking and drawing the life-blood out of my soul. I had no thought to call on the Lord for help, nor any desire that I know of; for I was spiritually ignorant at this time as to what prayer was. Had any one asked me how I felt, and I was almost at my last breath, my answer would have been, 'The devils are drinking up the life-blood of my soul, and I shall soon be in hell.' But all in an instant they took flight, and I felt God's everlasting arms were underneath me. I saw that in these arms there was no falling out; they reached from top to bottom. I rolled myself off the rug towards the window, and lay for some time. The rest and peace which I felt I cannot describe, for I was wearied out both in soul and body.

"At another time, when in very great trouble, I ran to the woman I got Mr. Philpot's sermon from for her to go with me to see the minister that I sat under; but that evening he was not at home; and as I was coming back through the village, there was a show of two giantesses. There was music, crowds of people, and a great noise; but these words passing in my mind drowned all: 'Come to judgment! Come to judgment!' I got into the house, and threw myself down on a sofa, with these words: 'I am done; I am done. If thou pleasest to send me to hell, I must go,' when all in an instant a sweet peace and joy came into my soul.

"At another time I went to my minister. He said he must begin to get angry with me; I think it was, because I was so unteachable. He wrote out a few texts for me to read, two of

them I remember were out of the 6th and 10th of Hebrews: 'For it is impossible,' &c., and 'Of how much sorer punishment,' &c. I felt the texts might be against me, for I was afraid my anxiety might leave me before I was in a right state for eternity.

"One day, when my mind was a little composed, I saw a Man, as I thought, sitting in the avenue of a plantation, as if in a chair, in a mournful, disconsolate, meditative state. It was twilight. I saw that that Man had to come and die for me before I ever had a being; and I got a further sight, yea, before the world was.

"Once I had to go up to Leith on an errand. Between New-haven and Leith there was a footpath, and on this path was a place not above a yard wide, with a precipice into the sea, which I had a great dread to pass. Sometimes I have stood trembling before I attempted it, lest a power should come upon me and I should throw myself into the sea; and when I have managed to cross it, how thankful I have felt that I had not drowned myself; that I was not lost yet! Once I had to go up into Edinburgh. The woman who lent me the sermon (Mr. Philpot's) went with me. I was in great tribulation of soul. On our way we fell in with the minister's (Mr. Fairburn's) servant-maid. She began to question me; was cross with me. 'What was the matter with me? What did I want to see Mr. Fairburn about?' I could not give any good account of myself, and said but little; so we parted, and when I got upon Leith Bridge, I asked the woman if she would go up into the city for me. I would stay on the bridge until she came back. When she was gone, I happened to look up to the sky, when Jesus bowed the heavens and came down into my heart. The change which took place in my breast no one can understand but those who have felt the same. O the sweetness, the peace, the holy joy which filled my breast on my way home! I felt to carry Jesus in my bosom. I walked softly home, lest I should take an awkward step with my feet, and I might lose him. He continued with me for about an hour after I got home. Then I was in as great trouble as ever. It was all my unbelief. O if I could but believe! Sometimes I would gather all my evidences together to try to withstand my unbelief; and when I have got them mustered up together, I have said, 'Lord, into thy hands I commit my soul and body for time and eternity; bind me to thyself as with bars of iron.' I have thought, if it comes to be a trial, Satan cannot demand me now, for I have committed myself into the hands of Jesus. But I have looked into my heart, and all was gone again. Then I was in great trouble again for some days with temptations, my wicked heart, and unbelief.

"One day, in great trouble, I went into a dark closet and fell on my knees. What I was going to ask I do not remember, but all in an instant the heavens opened a place about the size of the sun, and through it a glorious stream of light came down into my soul. It filled every corner of my heart to overflowing,

which moved my tongue to utter, 'Abba, Father. Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth I desire besides thee.' Then he said, almost as with an audible voice, 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love.' By this time I was off my knees. I got out of the closet on to the kitchen floor, felt full, blessing and praising his name, my body all in movement, and my tongue uttering, 'Bless, bless, bless!' I felt my tongue too weak. It seemed to die in such glorious work of blessing and praising. Then I called upon everything that had being, and upon the hills and mountains to bless and praise his glorious name. I thought, had I a well-tuned harp, I could have danced for joy.

"After this I lost the sense of being upon earth and of bodily existence. God the Father seemed to stand at one side of a place which I cannot describe, and I stood at the other. He said, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee through the blood of my Son, past, present, and to come.' I seemed to have no bodily weight. I seemed to sit and move in glory. I turned my eyes in one direction and saw a Sun in heaven; the waves of his glory went forth from him one after another, continually enlarging, when these words came up as from a bottomless eternity: 'The eternal Son of God.'* I looked in another direction and saw the fulness of the apostle's words: 'Who shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?' I saw that the vehemency of eternal love must have its objects, that neither death nor life, &c., that nothing could separate. I turned again another way and these words were spoken: 'Wherever there is the least desire towards me, that desire shall be granted.' After this I seemed to be let down again under the vault of heaven. When here I looked through and saw the blazing, moving, rolling glory of heaven. At the same time I saw that any individual who was put into heaven, unless he was made meet for it, would be consumed in a moment in the blazes of glory. Here I began to feel that I had a bodily existence. I felt afraid that I might go back again into the world, and I desired to depart, when instantly I felt in the Father's bosom. He said, 'It is no matter what thy sins are, I am satisfied with thee through my Son. Believe in him.' Here I saw that it was a full and finished salvation, with which he was well pleased; that sin was, so to speak, of no consequence. He was so satisfied with

* What a remarkable testimony is this to the eternal Sonship of Christ. Here is a poor unlettered girl who had never heard a gospel sermon in her life, utterly ignorant of controversy or even the very letter of doctrine, but taught by a divine revelation that Jesus is the eternal Son of God. What originality, force, clearness, and power are stamped upon her very language as she describes what she saw and heard. I have often thought since I first heard it from her own lips that it was one of the most special and glorious revelations, and most nearly approaching Mr. Huntington's and Mr. Hart's of all that I had ever heard or read.—J. C. P.

his dear Son that he would take no notice of it. He rested in his Son, and I was to rest where he rested. I saw that I had nothing to do only to rest where he rested. I saw his whole heart was towards me. His gentleness and tenderness, I felt nothing on earth to be compared to it. I felt as if he made me his equal. The holy, humble familiarity which I had in his bosom there is not a literal figure that I can touch to explain it. Then he said, 'Not yet; a little while' (which was in answer to my desire to depart). 'What thou doest, do to my glory.*' He then took me and handed me over, as it were, to his Son. I felt to cling to his bosom, and it seemed as if it required him to put forth a little strength to get rid of me. It was like a mother handing a child over to its father. After this an intimation was given me that my days of darkness should be many. When the vision was withdrawn and the sweet and blessed feelings produced by it had in some degree passed away, I began to look into my heart; sin began to work up and darkness to come on. I felt that sin was the cause of the darkness. The light kept dwindling away; sin was the cause of it until I was thrown back into pitch darkness. I can compare this manifestation to nothing but a person born blind, and all of an instant his eyes opened and set down under the meridian sun. I felt that the Spirit which enabled me to say, 'Abba, Father,' was the Spirit of light and love, and his operations and effects were like fire, a sin-consuming power. I further saw that God loved me even as he loved his own Son, for he loved me in Him."

(To be continued.)

My text falls in the last epistle, sent to the church of Laodicea, the worst and most degenerate of all the rest. The best had their defects and infirmities, but this laboured under the most dangerous disease of all. The fairest face of the seven had some spots, but a dangerous disease seems to have invaded the very heart of this. Not that all were equally guilty, but the greatest part (from which the whole is denominated) were lukewarm professors, who had a name to live, but were dead; who being never thoroughly engaged in religion, easily embraced that principle of the Gnostics which made it a matter of indifference to own or deny Christ in times of persecution, the most saving doctrine that some professors are acquainted with. This lukewarm temper Christ hated; he was sick of them, and loathed their indifference. "I wish" (saith he, ver. 16) "thou wert either cold or hot." An expression of the same amount with that in 1 Kings xviii. 21, "How long halt you between two opinions?" and is manifestly translated from the qualities of water, which is neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm, a middle temper betwixt both, and more nauseous to the stomach than either of the former.—*Flavel*.

* I have heard Isabella say that these last words, though she ever sought to make them the guide and rule of her life, were indirectly the cause of her greatest trouble, for she felt that do what she could, she could not do it entirely for God's glory. Self would intrude, and this made her daily sigh and groan, and her life to be a life of continual warfare and tribulation.—J. C. P.

NOVEMBER 1, 1869.

THE
GOSPEL STANDARD.

NOVEMBER, 1869.

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

NOTES OF A SERMON

PREACHED BY MR. BIRCH, AT THE DANE CHAPEL, CRANBROOK,
AUGUST, 1851.

"Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions; for my name is in him. But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries."—EXOD. XXIII. 20-22.

THE testimony of Jesus is the substance of the word of God. The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. (Rev. xix. 10.) A plurality of persons in the Godhead made known from the beginning. (See Gen. i. 2, 26.) All things were created by the Son. Immediately upon the fall, a Saviour was revealed. He was to take away the sin of the world! He could not be a mere man; but he must be a man. Eve held this fast, and said, "I have gotten a man," that very Jehovah. (See Isa. xlvi. 16; Zech. ii. 8, 9.) He was sent of the Father. (Jno. viii. 29.) Sacrifices pointed to a substitute.

The first time we read of this Angel of the Covenant is in Gen. xvi. 13. Hagar calls the angel Jehovah. God showed here how careful he was respecting the future incarnation of the Son of God. The promised seed was not to come by Hagar, but by Sarah. On this important occasion the Lord first interfered. The Lord appeared to Abraham as a man. (xviii.) He is called Jehovah. The Lord said to Abraham, "Shall I hide from Abraham?" He appeared to Abraham for the express purpose of declaring to him that Sarah, from whom the promised seed was to come, should, contrary to nature, have a son. Why all this circumstantial account given in the word of God, but to show how weighty a matter was the appearing of the Lord in the flesh, and that he, the Lord, was the Angel of the Covenant, now appearing to Abraham, to assure him of this blessed promise to be made good in due time? Abraham's peace and happiness lay in believing this report. He, as well as others, received cordially the promise, and saw it as if it was actually accomplished. Although the time was deferred, afar off, he was persuaded fully of the truth of it, and heartily embraced it.

The next remarkable appearance of this Angel was when the only-begotten Son of God was to be typified by Isaac, who was ordered to be offered up as a sacrifice. The Lord interfered, and is called the Angel of the Lord, and the place is called Jehovah-Jireh,—“The Lord will be seen.” And though called an angel, he swears by himself, which Paul affirms is true, not of an angel, but of God, and he is called Jehovah, making this conspicuous manifestation of himself on this singular and truly remarkable occasion; none more so.

This Angel made himself familiarly known to the patriarch Abraham, and afterwards more openly discovered himself to Jacob, to whom he expressly affirms that the Angel of God who spake unto him in a dream was the very same that appeared to him at Bethel. (Gen. xxviii. 13.) After this, he appeared to him as a man (xxxii. 24), and tells Jacob that, as a prince, he had power with God, and blesses him; which none can do but God. Jacob declares that he had seen God face to face, and calls the name of the place Peniel. This is most beautifully set forth by Hosea, who says that by his strength he had power with God; that he had power over the Angel and prevailed; and adds that he was the Lord God of hosts: “The Lord is his memorial.” (Hos. xii. 4.)

Jacob calls this Angel his Redeemer, one near of kin to him; and truly the Son of God is most near of kin to us. Jacob is the first person in Scripture who called the Lord God a Redeemer; and a beautiful name it is. The book of Ruth explains the word. The near kinsman was to purchase the land of the dead man and to take his widow to wife. This near kinsman, the Lord Jesus, has purchased his people and taken the widow. All this was shown to Jacob to familiarise the appearance of the promised seed. The church of God, I mean the spiritual seed of Abraham, fed upon the word delivered to them, and by the Holy Spirit were always sufficiently enlightened to see him who is only known by the word and by the instruction of the Holy Spirit.

We read of no particular revelation of this Angel personally to any one from this time to the death of Joseph, and till after that time, which was 248 years, that is from the time that Jacob was about to enter on the promised land to the time that his posterity was about to take possession of it. Then again, did this Angel, whom Moses knew by the tradition of his fathers had appeared to them, appeared to him in the bush, as much as to say, “Here am I, the God of Jacob, I will now again manifest myself to the chosen seed as their Redeemer. And keep this in mind, Moses. I dwell in the bush that burned with fire; I dwell with my people in Egypt who are in an iron furnace (Deut. iv. 20); and I, who am the self-existent Jehovah, a consuming fire, will one day dwell in human nature and yet that nature shall be unconsumed.” He now appears in a most illustrious manner to Moses. He is expressly called the Angel

of the Lord, and as expressly calls himself, "I am that I am." This is the name which is incommunicable; and this settles it beyond all doubt that he was to be future Man and Mediator, the most high God. "That men may know that thou, whose name alone is Jehovah, art the most high over all the earth." (Ps. lxxxiii. 18.)

Who are they that men have hated and persecuted from the beginning? They who have showed beforehand the coming of the Just One, believed on him and loved him. It is Christ, the promised seed, who has been hated, persecuted, and reproached from the beginning. Take away his testimony, and there will be no reproach. Why? Because Satan knows full well that God, absolutely considered, would never bruise his head or destroy his power. This was owned by Moses and now revealed to him by the paschal lamb. As soon as ever the children of Israel began to pass out of Egypt, this faithful and true witness appeared as their commander: "Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people." (Is. lv. 4). Here he appeared as the Angel of the Covenant, faithful to his blessed charge which he received of the Father. He was in the cloud, and guided them through the Red Sea. (Exod. xiv. 24, 25.) He was with them in the wilderness, in a cloud by day, and in a light of fire by night. (Ps. lxxviii. 14.) When the cloud moved, they moved. Mind, the cloud in which the Angel dwelt was always in the *tabernacle*, to show that God was in Christ the true tabernacle, and is to be found nowhere else. Moses wrote of him. The whole-hearted among the Jews took up with an absolute god called Moloch, or Baal. They were weary of the tabernacle service, which testified of what they never felt their need: "But thou hast been weary of me, O Israel." (Is. xliii. 22.) You are not weary; you are not sick; soul trouble is not your lot, nor poverty of spirit, which proceeds from life imparted. During 40 years the Lord witnesses they offered no sacrifices to him. (Amos v. 25.) Moses showed that one divine Person in the Trinity is to be believed as he that would one day appear in the flesh and make reconciliation for iniquity: "A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you." (Deut. xviii. 15; John i. 45; Acts iii. 22; vii. 37.) He was present in the cloud, and it was his voice on Mount Sinai. And he is the Person spoken of in the text. Hannah calls him the King, or the Lord's King and Messiah. David calls him a King and his Lord. Isaiah saw his glory and prophesied that all the elect should see his beauty, which they do in the vision of faith. The Father bids his disciples to hear him. (Luke ix.) Devils know him and tremble at him. He told the disciples to believe in him as much as in the Father; and, if so, can we wonder at the words in the text as applied to the Son of God? If any one say they are to be applied to a created angel, I answer, "Then God is directing

unto plain downright idolatry. Our thoughts are, if you understand them so, to be taken up with a mere literal angel. We are to wait on him, for that is the meaning of the word 'Beware.' We are to obey him, or hear him, which was Abraham's commendation: 'Because that Abraham obeyed my voice' (Gen. xxvi. 5), or heard. We are not to provoke him. We are told that he has power to pardon sin. We are told that the Lord's name is in him, that God will take part with all such and will defend them. (See v. 22.) What could be said more of the Lord Jesus? 'That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.' (John v. 23.) Can all this be true of a created angel? I am sure it cannot. He to whom such obedience is due cannot but be God over all, and for ever blessed." "But," say you, "why all this caution?" I answer, "There is need enough in our day; for few are chaste to the Lord Jesus, none but they who are lean at heart. The Galatians were not lean at heart, they were not poor in spirit; therefore they turned aside. He is the self-existent Jehovah in my nature. 'See that ye *refuse* not him that speaketh' is the counsel of Paul to the posterity of those very Jews."

It is said in the text that he can forgive sins; but who can forgive sins but God only? (Mark ii. 7; Luke v. 21.) Prayer is to be made to him.

"Beware of him," or wait upon him; honour him by prayer, by supplication, by believing in him as the end of the law, the lawgiver and the law fulfiller. "Beware of him;" wait upon him, for so it is translated: "So the poor of the flock that waited upon me that day knew that it was the word of the Lord, or the word of Jehovah." (Zech. xi. 11.)

The Godhead of Christ is the foundation of our faith. There is no salvation in the son of man, abstractedly considered: "Put not your trust in princes nor in the son of man, in whom is no help." Our faith is to be in him who is man as well as God, and God as well as man, two distinct natures in one divine Person.

"Beware of him, and obey his voice." Is the soul of a quickened sinner obedient to this word? Yes; he labours hard to enter into this rest, by believing on him; and ever after he labours to abide in him; and Satan labours as hard to turn him aside, blind his eyes, harden his heart; aye, often he has lost his prey. Satan will not desist endeavouring to seduce us from that *new thing*, from "Emanuel, God with us," and to beguile us; but let us cry out of violence. (Hab. i. 2.) In him we are complete, and he that abides in him brings forth much fruit. There is nothing but deficiency, barrenness, and misery out of him. He is the first husband and he will be chief. (Hos. ii. 7.) He is the way; walk ye in it. You received him first as God over all. He is able to save to the uttermost. "Beware of him." But they rebelled and vexed his Holy Spirit by not receiving his testimony; and so do thousands now; and he fights

against them. He ministers the Spirit, and the Holy Spirit in return glorifies the Lord Jesus. Therefore the counsel is good: "Beware of him," &c. We are continually straying and he is continually showing us that the cause of all our leanness is not cleaving to him. Barnabas exhorted them at Antioch with full purpose of heart to cleave unto the Lord. Abraham knew the voice of the Son of God who called to him out of heaven. Jacob heard his voice when he blessed him. Moses knew him; and so did David, calling him Lord. Solomon in his song says, "Cause me to hear thy voice;" and he tells you that the spouse said, "It is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh."

To obey his voice is to look to him for salvation, for righteousness, for strength. While you listen to him, and not to a stranger, all will go well, and the Holy Spirit will bear witness to your sonship. If we obey him, we shall be at war with his enemies; he conquered them for us, and he imputes the victory to us. The work of faith is here called hearing, called the obedience of faith: "And a great multitude of the priests were obedient to the faith." God has condemned sin in the flesh of Christ, and in yielding obedience to him we are justified from all charge. Sin shall not reign if you are enabled to look to him. He is the strength of your heart. Call upon, look to, cleave to the Lord Jesus.

"For he will not pardon your transgressions." This transgression is unbelief, the worst of sins, and that which binds every other sin on the back of the sinner. Unbelief is a sin outdoing the old in malignity. They who turn their back upon Christ will one day find themselves without a shelter. They who add anything or detract anything from his work are liars, and shall be banished from the presence of the Lord. Final unbelief is a damning sin: "They could not enter in because of unbelief." If so, it was not pardoned. He died for transgressions under the Old Testament, or first covenant. (Heb. ix. 15.) Unbelief bears rule in the most of men and plagues the best. They who die in final unbelief must perish.

"For my name is in him." The reason assigned is, for he is the great lawgiver, and his law is faith, and you sin against the self-existent Jehovah in your nature, who is set before you as Jehovah your Righteousness. You cannot dishonour the Father more than by not honouring the Son: "He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him." (John v. 23.) "My name is in him." He has all the essential properties of my nature. He is one with me in essence. He is my only-begotten Son; I am his Father.

"But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice and do all that I speak." Here the obedience of faith is highly commended. Well may it be called "precious faith,"—precious indeed! and most "holy faith." The obedience of faith includes all the obedience of the moral law; for Christ has fulfilled that wholly and entirely in thought, word, and deed, and he has suffered

the penalty due to the transgression of it; and you, by believing, make it yours. "If you make the Son of my love your only stay, hope, confidence, and delight, then you delight in that which I delight in. You shall be to me Hephzibah.

"I will be an enemy to thy enemies." Your enemies are counted his. Not any of those who live and die in unbelief shall ever be able to say that any one thing they ever did was done to Christ. He says, "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it not to me." But he that out of love to Christ ministers even the least to the saints, God will not be unmindful of him. The Lord takes the part of all those who love him in sincerity.

A LETTER BY THE LATE JOHN KEYT.

Dear Fellow-Traveler through this waste, howling Wilderness,—It is recorded in the heavenly journals that "they that feared the Lord spake often one to another." As I do but seldom enjoy this privilege with you, permit me to send this paper messenger to inquire concerning your welfare. Are you drinking the waters of Marah to increase your appetite? Or are you encamped under the palm-trees at Elim, enjoying the cooling shade, and drawing refreshing waters out of the wells of salvation? Or, in other words, do you find that as tribulations abound, your consolations do much more abound? In this chequered state of probation, I find many bitters intermingled with the sweets; but, having learned that the sweets are only the earnest of a better and more enduring substance, and that there will soon be an end to all these bitter portions, I find, at times, a rich consolation, and a looking-out for the land that is afar off, believing that yet a little while, and he that will come shall come, and introduce his poor, weary children into the eternal fruition of that place he is gone to prepare; that rest which remaineth for all the chosen of God. Our faith, hope, and love now centre in him who bare our sins and carried our sorrows. From his fulness these precious graces flowed into our hearts at first; and when the blessed Spirit operates upon our souls, these choice streams return in their actings up to the source from whence they came. The hidden man of the heart lives, moves, and hath his being in the Lord Jesus Christ; and when there is an experience of rich communications from the Fountain-Head, the cup often runs over, in a measure, to the refreshing of our companions in the heavenly race, and thereby fellowship is produced one with another. Such seasons with me are but seldom enjoyed now; but I can well remember with Job the times when my blessed Rock poured me out abundance of oil, and I know there is still the same fulness of the Spirit in our great High Priest; but you know "there is a season and a time to every purpose under the heaven; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing." When he goes away or hides

his blessed face, darkness and the wild beasts of the forest are sure to surround us; but when the Sun riseth, the darkness disperses, and the forest herd gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens. Then, when the cheering sunbeams begin to spread abroad, the heavenly workfolks come forth to their labour until the evening comes on again. O Lord, how manifold are thy works, and how wonderful thy dealings towards the children of thy people!

“In the world ye shall have tribulation,” says our divine prophet; “but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you;” and we can set to our seal that these things are true, because we continue to go in and out, and find pasture. I often look back to the period when (though not acquainted with each other) we were seeking the living among the dead; when, poor and needy, we sought the water of life, but could find none in all the regions of the lettermen. Of all these we may say with Jeremiah: “Thy prophets have seen vain and foolish things for thee, and they have not discovered thine iniquity, to turn away thy captivity; but have seen for thee false burdens and causes of banishment.” Nevertheless, we can say with David: “Thou tellest all my wanderings;” and in rich mercy we find he hath now brought us to the place where his honour dwelleth, even to Mount Zion, which he loved.

How the Lord was pleased to lead you about I cannot tell; but I have often reviewed the way in which I have been brought out, with wonder, with humility of soul, and, at times, with unutterable joy; especially when I consider the riches of his goodness, in taking such a base-born brute, and slave of the devil, and putting me amongst his children! Surely it was his own right hand, and his holy arm that hath gotten him the victory over such a rebel as I was: and to him shall be all the glory and all the praise for evermore. Amen.

When I was first led to hear our blessed Huntington, he treated of things too wonderful for me; but it pleased the Holy Spirit to anoint my eyes, and by little and little I was enabled to discern the difference between Sinai and Zion, and while running to and fro, knowledge was increased, and the nakedness of the desert was made manifest. The last time I was at the house of bondage I saw things in the Lord's light, and when the congregation was breaking up I stood musing upon the matter in the pew, and these words were spoken to my heart: “Lest thou shouldst ponder the path of life, her ways are moveable, that thou canst not know them.” On returning home, I was so exercised that I could not eat my dinner; but retired to my chamber, where I walked backward and forward in deep distress, not knowing what to do; when all at once I stood still, and burst into tears, and these words flowed out of my heart and mouth: “Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon; for

why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?" Immediately this answer came powerfully to my soul, "You must go to Providence Chapel." In obedience to that word I went, found out the place, and got into the free seats. I never opened my lips to any one, but kept looking out to find what all this could mean. When Mr. Huntington gave out the text, it came not in word only, but with power. The words were these: "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered; for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call." Never did the thirsty earth drink up the rain so sweetly as my parched heart drank up these blessed words: "Mount Zion, deliverance, as the Lord hath said," vibrated over and over again upon my mind. "Deliverance," said I. "Why, that's the thing I want." But what is Mount Zion? Directly it was spoken to my heart: "This is Mount Zion;" and this my soul now knoweth right well."

The next time I went, Mr. H. preached from these words: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," &c.; and truly every feeling of my soul, and everything I was labouring under, was exactly described, and I came away in the comforts of hope. Some time after this, he preached from these words: "Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the Lord. Shall I cause to bring forth and shut the womb? saith thy God." At this time I was in soul-travail, and every feeling, every pang, my sickness, my fears were all clearly pointed out and described.

Not long afterwards my deliverance came. It was, I well remember, on a Sunday morning. I went up like one in despair, concluding that after all I must perish for evermore. When I entered Bloomsbury Square a violent temptation beset me, by the force of which I was stopped in the midst of the road. It was suggested to my mind that I was beyond the reach of mercy, and that it was presumption in me to expect it; that if I went to the chapel every one would read condemnation in my very countenance, and that the best thing for me would be to go home and hide myself. Under this violent assault I was ready to sink to the earth, not knowing what to do, whether to go back or to go forward. At last I concluded that as I was got so far, I would go to the chapel *once more*, as it was impossible to be more miserable than I then was. At length I reached the place, and sat down on the form that used to stand at the vestry door. There I hid my face in my handkerchief, like the poor publican, being afraid to look up. The first hymn was sung, but not by me. When the people stood up, I leaned upon the end of the seat. There was a moment's silence, when Mr. H. said, "Let us pray." Every word ran through my soul, just as if he had spoken to me only. As he went on in prayer, it was to me like going up Jacob's ladder. Every sentence that came from his

lips drew my spirit up heavenward, such suitable promises, one after another, dropping their sweetness into my heart, till he came to utter these words: "Thou hast promised to be merciful to our unrighteousnesses, and that our sins and iniquities thou wilt remember no more. This thou hast said shall be my covenant with them." With these words there came into my soul pardon, peace, comfort, and unutterable joy. I sank down upon the seat overwhelmed with the riches of redeeming love. Then I could join with David in the first three verses of Psalm xl., and read Isa. xii. in the experience of my own soul.

This, my dear friend, was the way in which I was brought into the honourable but despised fraternity at Providence, where the Lord my Shepherd still continues to feed and nourish my poor soul to this day. Many have been and now are the tribulations that attend me; but, by the help of my God, I still hold on my way, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life, earnestly desiring to finish my course with joy, and to be found of him in peace at his coming. The blessings I have been brought to experience have often been tried and called in question by the devil, when I have been walking in darkness, labouring under affliction of body, or exercised with trials in providence; but to this day I have been enabled to hold fast the things which God hath wrought in my soul, and can, at times, join with the sweet singer of Israel: "The Lord liveth, and, blessed be my Rock, and let the God of my salvation be exalted." Indeed, my friend, I find now the sweetness of that liberty wherewith Christ hath made me free. In his strength I hope ever to stand fast, and being in tender mercy brought to Mount Zion, I do not find the least desire to go back, either to the drudgery of Satan or the bondage of the Law, and no one may deliver me into their hands, according to the statute in this case made and provided (Deut. xxiii. 15, 16): "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee. He shall dwell with thee, even among you, in that place which he shall choose in one of thy gates where it liketh him best. Thou shalt not oppress him."

Excuse this fragment. If it should come in season, or if any refreshing should attend the perusal of it, you know that must be of God; and if it leads you to his blessed feet, then remember the poor scribbler, who is, in sincerity and truth,

Your affectionate, though unworthy Brother,

No date given.

J. KEYT.

[This is only one testimony out of many hundreds of the power and blessing which attended the ministry of the immortal Coalheaver.—ED.]

"ACCORDING to this," perhaps some of you will say, "you make a man a mere machine." Not so. Man is worse than a machine; for a machine will be quiet if you let it alone; but man will be continually moving,—doing evil, only evil, and that continually.—*W. Gadsby.*

A WORD OF COUNSEL TO A WEANING CHILD.

My dear Friend,—I received your kind letter. I did not think you uncandid. My inquiry was to learn something of the Lord's dealings with you for the last few years; because with dear Hart I am sure

“True religion's more than notion,
Something must be known and felt;”

and that daily too. And I have been thinking this week what a solemn thing it is to be brought into those circumstances that will finish up our long profession of knowing and loving the truth as it is in Jesus. While we are walking here, we look at some few Christians of whom we entertain a very high opinion in reference to vital, experimental religion; and, as we have opportunity, we feel disposed to open our mind to them, and we wish to know their opinion of us and our experience, whether they think we have the right mark. If they speak approvingly, we feel encouraged; if otherwise, we are cast down. If they give us what we conceive good advice, we are thankful for it, and try to follow it, and we hope by doing so to grow more in grace and divine experience. But it may be, with all our sincerity and anxiety in consulting the excellent of the earth, we have been looking too much to the sinner saved, and not enough to the Saviour of sinners. Too much to the gracious work of the Holy Spirit in others, and not enough to the Holy Spirit as Jehovah the Quickener, Teacher, Comforter, Revealer of Jesus, and Sealer of the testimony of God in the conscience. The Lord says, sternly, “I will not give my glory to another.” May we not sometimes rob God the Spirit of his glory, and therefore grieve him in some things wherein we are very sincere, and hope we are right? God seeth not as man seeth. We often err in God's sight in our most earnest inquiries after the way to Zion, and I think, from this cause, very often we walk in darkness and bondage. “My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the Fountain of living waters, and hewn out to themselves broken cisterns that can hold no water.” Mark! The first evil is forsaking the Lord; the second is trying to make a substitute. Aaron, the Lord's servant, through the clamour of the Israelites, the cunning of Satan, and his wicked heart, fell into these evils. Hence the molten calf. May we not forsake the Lord in heart and spirit, and yet for a time not be aware of it? And all the while, perhaps, our fellow-creatures are trying to comfort us, and prophesying good concerning us. Yet the Lord will not smile upon us. Our dear friends quote God's word, and tell us how they have been led on, and delivered from just such a state as we are in. We hear and believe it, but remain in the same frame; or if we feel a little while they are relating their experience, it is soon gone, and we return to our own sad place.

The most precious of God's ministers and people are nothing but instruments, useless indeed, only as the Lord puts divine power into them; and though poor, vain man would be wise. Alas! what is man? "To which of the saints wilt thou turn?" Where can we find infallibility and perfection, but in the Lord alone? "Look unto me and be ye saved; for I am God, and there is none beside me." "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." Berridge speaks of some that "squint, and peep another way." But how solemn, truly solemn the thought! We have been professing to know something of the truth for more than twenty years. Death will very soon call us away, and we have to finish up our long profession upon a death-bed. How will it be with us in the swellings of Jordan? How is it with us to-day? Have we the witness of the Spirit within us that God is our salvation? If so, we may blessedly say, "I will trust and not be afraid;" and with this blessed testimony can say with David, "My soul is as a weaned child." Mark the word *weaned*. A weaning child is a living one, but while weaning is restless and weak. A weaned child is drawn from the breast, and is established, strengthened, settled. In my opinion (but I feel so broken in judgment that my opinion is but that of a poor, sinful worm), you are a living child of the living God; but at present, in your experience, you are "a weaning child." I believe the Lord will, in his own time, lead you on to become "a weaned child," and then you will know experimentally the holy and glorious liberty of the sons of God. When I was a child ("a weaning child"), "I spake as a child; I thought as a child; I understood as a child. But when I became a man, I put away childish things."

The Lord's teaching is various, and very mysterious, but true and sure. Some of the Lord's people, like Messrs. Fearing and Ready-to-Halt Bunyan speaks of, are all their lives subject to bondage. With trying fears and distressing doubts and darkness, they go on for years without that sealing of the Spirit, the earnest of their inheritance they daily pray and long for.

But there is this one blessed and sure mark of the Spirit's teaching, viz., "the fear of the Lord." This is very evident to me in your exercises, you say you feel poor, and needy, and helpless. The Lord is the God of the poor and needy, and he says, "I will hear them; I will not forsake them." You say, "I want an application of the blood of Jesus." The blood of Christ was freely shed for all that are brought to feel they really need it.

"The man who feels the heaviest load
Will prize forgiveness most."

You say the worm at the root of all is your coming short in the preceptive part. This, your great discouragement, is a direct mark in your favour, because it shows the fear of the Lord, and a sacred regard for God's word and ways.

"When they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them

both." The invitation is to him that hath no money. Could we do all we would do, then we should be able to do without the righteousness and blood of Jesus. We would live without sin; we would have the cursed principle of sin rooted out, and would never sin against the Lord in thought, word, or deed. We would give every precept of the gospel a perfect obedience; but if we did all this, the book of Psalms, and the other experimental parts of the Lord's word would be without any interest to us. Indeed, we should despise the precious Bible, and want a new one, if we could do all we would do. We could then honestly live without confession of sin, repentance, and self-loathing. The gospel is a glorious exhibition of everlasting love and mercy to the chief of sinners. If we could do what we would perfectly, the gospel would not suit us; we should be too good to receive it or need it. Heaven is that rest prepared for weary sinners who daily mourn for sin and after Jesus. "The days of thy mourning shall be ended" would bring no good news to us if we could do what we would. Jesus has promised to visit his dear saints while in this wilderness of sorrow: "I will see you again, and your sorrow shall be turned into joy." Should we pray for and prize the visits of a precious Christ if we could be happy and comfortable without him?

"What comfort could a Saviour bring
To those that never felt their woe?"

But I must remember I am writing to "a weaning child." "Strong meat belongs to them who are of full age."

The conclusion of it, dear friend, is this: We fell in Adam, and are totally ruined and depraved in nature, heart, life, and lip. Taught by the blessed Spirit to know and feel our sad state, we do groan in this tabernacle, being burdened, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?" But the weaned child can say feelingly, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord," &c.

Yours sincerely,

Jan. 14, 1854.

R. DE F.

TEMPTATION AND TRIAL; OR, "OUT OF THE DEPTHS HAVE I CRIED UNTO THEE, O LORD."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "GOSPEL STANDARD."

[As a rule, we do not insert "explanations" from our Correspondents of remarks which we have felt called upon to make upon them in our pages. In fact, were we to do so, our valuable room would be taken up with mere personal matters; and as an "explanation" from them might often want a "counter-explanation" from us, it would open an interminable field for dispute and controversy. But every rule has its exceptions; and therefore, as our friend and brother-editor thinks that some remarks that we made upon his kind communication to us in our last No. might be misunderstood, we insert, at his special request, without any comment of our own, the following letter of explanation:—ED.]

My dear Sir and Brother in Christ,—I thank you for your so kindly inserting my letter and for the brotherly remarks you have appended

thereto; but, as I venture to think the latter are somewhat liable to be misunderstood by at least a portion of your readers, may I ask you to allow a word of explanation to appear at your earliest convenience?

You speak, dear brother, of my having been "brought down" from a certain spot. Now this might well lead your readers to imagine that I had been wont to occupy a high and exalted position somewhat, if not far, removed from the regions of trial and temptation. It is this I want to set right. In most part, as intimated in my letter, since the Lord was pleased to speak pardon and peace to my soul, at Southampton, in or about the year 1826, I have, with respect to the subject of death, been enabled to rest assured that as the Lord had promised daily strength for daily needs, so when the time came for me to depart out of this world, there should be verily strength to meet the last enemy, that dying strength would most certainly be given in a dying hour; that the grace given according to all the necessitous circumstances of life should prove to be but the earnest of grace and strength given in the hour and article of death. But I would not have you or your readers imagine that this was a mere flighty feeling or a giddy confidence, in which some may indulge, and quote as the ground for that flightiness or the justification of that vain confidence such a precious portion as, "Take no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." I believe this most gracious declaration is taken great advantage of by our common enemy, and that, through his craft and subtily, it has been grossly abused and made to minister to a carnal security, leading his hapless votaries to trust to what has proved in their case to be a mere *ignis fatuus*, which has at length left them the fatal victims to a deplorable and destructive delusion.

But, my dear Sir, permit me to say, that, in my own case, although I may not have had as a rule and in constant exercise, dark fears and gloomy forebodings about the article of death—*although no stranger to these occasionally*—yet I have, in the course of my feeble ministry and most imperfect editorship, been called to encounter no small amount of trial and temptation. My humble labours have, I assure you, sprung "out of the depths." My connexion with the "Gospel Magazine" commenced when I was immersed in a large and anxious business in the very heart of the city of London. No sooner had I entered upon my editorial career than trials set in upon me with almost overwhelming force. Sickness and death in my family; child after child sickened and died, and then the wife of my bosom (the loved one of my very earliest years) was taken from me. Within a few months my family grave was opened four times, receiving as a precious deposit the remains of three dear children and their loved mother. I became "like a wild bull in a net." I was ready to curse the day that I ever heard of the "Gospel Magazine." I have walked the streets of your great city, and, in the veriest indignation, mentally told the Most High "He might damn me if he liked; that his was anything but Fatherly conduct, first to give, and then to take away; it was more manlike than Godlike." I am sure I have often wondered that he did not take me at my word; and so he would had he been *man* rather than God. At other times he has melted me with his goodness, "bringing down my heart with labour," and giving me to exclaim with blessed Job, "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? . . . The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." But I dare not dwell upon these things, my dear Sir, as I should swell my letter to a length which would, of necessity, preclude your giving it admission.

I will merely add, that after a succession of trial, losses, and crosses, when at length thrust into the ministry, from that day to this, both editorially and ministerially, my labours have been in the fires and out of the depths. Mr. Huntington somewhere says, "Preach your frame; it is sure to meet the case of others." Now upon this principle I have been uniformly led. In seeking to write or preach, my first question is, "What do I want myself?" That gives me the keynote. A poor helpless bankrupt sinner, wanting wisdom, grace, and strength, day by day, and moment by moment. This is where I live, and where I have lived, and how I have sought to labour for little short of thirty years past; and it was but this very day, when feeling an amount of bodily infirmity and sinking of heart perfectly indescribable, I mentally took up the language of the late never-to-be-forgotten Watts Wilkinson. Upon his deathbed that dear man of God exclaimed, "I can never get beyond the cry of the poor publican, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!'"

These few remarks, my dear Sir, will, I trust, suffice to prove, that, although as a rule and for an uninterrupted continuance, I have not had the fear of the article of death preying upon me as I have had of late, yet for many many years I have had other trials and other temptations which have tended to keep me down and to lay me low at the footstool of mercy as a poor sinful polluted worm, rejoicing in the hope of the fulness and freeness of a salvation which is "without money and without price."

The Lord abundantly bless you, my dear Sir, editorially and ministerially, and may we at last, through rich and free and sovereign grace, meet around the throne to sing unitedly and uninterruptedly and eternally his praise, and, with the one redeemed family gathered out of every nation, tongue, and people, shout triumphantly and everlastingly, "Victory, Victory, through the blood of the Lamb!" So prays

Your Brother and Companion in Tribulation,
 Bedminster, October 6, 1869. DAVID A. DOUDNEY.

A VOICE FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE.

I ALWAYS insert with great reluctance anything which may wear the appearance of self-exaltation, as feeling myself so utterly unworthy of the least favourable notice of God's eye or hand, or of any acceptance amongst those who fear his name; but as the author of the Obituary in our September No. has so urged upon me to introduce what he considers to have been an omission in that paper, I feel that I cannot refuse insertion to the following lines from his pen.—J. C. P.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE GOSPEL STANDARD.

Sir,—My loss of sight will account to you for two omissions which until I heard the printed account read of the Obituary of Elizabeth Williams I thought I had sent you; and as one of the omissions was a special message to yourself, I feel it as a dying legacy, and should indeed be grieved if it was not given. As I was obliged to have the MS. written at intervals by a youth, you will readily perceive how it occurred; and as I know you wish every Obituary to be strictly faithful, may I ask you as a personal favour to insert them in your next number? The printed account I have had read carefully over to me, and it is scrupulously faithful with these two exceptions.

Yours very sincerely,

J. W.

In the account, when God's holy law was so suddenly revealed on her sick-bed, there should have followed thus: "Immediately followed these words, 'Let there be light, and there was light,' with a power which I can never fully express."

The other omission was this. After the first manifestation, when she so suddenly exclaimed, "He is come, he is come," she often referred to Mr. Philpot's sermons; and in addition to her former words she said one Saturday, "If ever a man put his hand into anyone's heart Mr. P. did into mine; for when those dreadful things rose up which I could not name even to you, the Lord kept me from sinking into real despair through reading the same things in his sermons." I said, "Yes, dear mother, I remember well a powerful impression I had when once hearing him under deep soul trouble, when I felt that he cut me right off; but as I turned from Zoar Chapel this word powerfully arrested me, 'To one the discerning of spirits,' and it was so powerful that it has abode with me through all my changes." She replied, "Ah, that's it," and then said, "I shall never see Mr. P. here; but you must let him know in some way when I am gone, that next to God's word his sermons have been made my greatest blessing; and if it were possible, I would have a cab and tell him so myself. Thousands like me will have cause to bless him."

"THEY SHALL MOUNT UP WITH WINGS AS EAGLES."

SHALL I sigh for a home in this wilderness drear,
When the Monarch of Zion had none? (Matt. viii. 20.)
Let me rather appear as a sojourner here
Till my wearisome journey is done.

Shall I sigh for relations with whom to combine
And scatter affection around,
When thou, my dear Lord, wast forsaken by thine,
Who still unbelieving were found? (John vii. 5.)

They saw not the glory, obscured by the veil
Which the Son of the Highest conceal'd,
But impiously dared his high mission assail,
Until 'twas more clearly reveal'd.

Shall I seek a warm nest and lie still upon earth
While the eagle is destined to soar (Deut. xxxii. 11)
From the rock-shelter'd eyry, the place of its birth,
All the regions of air to explore?

O let me by faith rise above this low clod
To the Object of all my desire,
As the sun to the eagle, so be thou my God,
The centre to which I aspire.

C. SPIRE.

CAN a father stand by his dying child, see his faintings, hear his melting groans and pity-begging looks, and not help him, especially having restoratives by him, that can do it? Surely "as a father pities his own children, so will thy God pity thee," "He will spare thee as a father spareth his own son that serves him." Hark, how his bowels yearn! "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself. Is not Ephraim my dear son? Is he not a pleasant child? For since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still, I will surely have mercy on him."—*E'level.*

MEDITATIONS ON DIFFERENT PORTIONS OF THE WORD OF GOD.

MEDITATIONS ON THE FIRST CHAPTER OF THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER.

It is a very significant circumstance, and no less sad than significant, that the very words "holy" and "holiness" seem almost lost out of the churches of truth. If the correctness of this assertion be doubted, let us appeal to our readers' own experience, and ask them how often in the course of the year do they hear the words in the mouth of the ministers of truth under whom they usually sit. Or if such a word as "holiness" is ever sounded in their ears, is it not more as a term of reproach and an arrow aimed against what is termed "progressive sanctification" than brought before them and insisted on as a part of the gospel of the grace of God, and in harmony with the Scriptures of truth and the work of grace upon the heart?

The cause, however, of this omission, if what we have stated is correct, is not far to seek. One extreme often leads to another; and thus, as in other cases, because ignorant men have erred in one direction, the advocates of truth have been tempted to err in another, and to overlook or ignore the express language of Scripture, lest it should seem to countenance views to which they are opposed. And what has been the necessary consequence? That it has come to pass, lest they should be thought to favour a fleshly holiness, men of truth have almost dropped the word itself altogether. But because men ignorant of the depths of the fall, and of the distinction of the two natures in those born of God, advocate what every child of God knows, from his own experience, to be false as to the gradual sanctification of what in itself is and ever will be deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, is it right, is it consistent with faithful stewardship of the mysteries of God (1 Cor. iv. 1, 2), and the solemn trusteeship of the Gospel (1 Thess. ii. 4), that not only the Scriptural language, "holy" and "holiness," should be tacitly dropped, but what is worse, the thing itself should be neglected and passed by? These may appear to be grave charges; but they are not advanced without some observation and consideration, and their truth or falsehood we shall leave to the judgment of our discerning and experienced readers.

But if our judgment in this matter be correct, and founded on indisputable facts, we need not be surprised that as the neglect of any important part of God's truth must always bear evil fruit, such has been the practical consequence of this omission; and thus, as regards hearers as well as preachers, it has much come to pass that all such exhortations to holiness in heart, lip, and life, as we meet with in the chapter before us, at the point where we now resume our exposition, were they now found in the mouth of ministers, would be viewed by many of

their people as legal and bondage, and inconsistent with the purity of gospel truth in its doctrine, if they dare not altogether say with its experience and power. But if we are brought in any way to this pass, that plain and positive Scripture precepts and exhortations are to be set aside, or thrust out of both pulpit and pew, because they do not suit our views and feelings, may we not justly suspect that there is something wrong somewhere? And should we not search and examine to see whether such an omission may not be founded on some misconception of the truth, even in those cases where there would not be a willing or wilful neglect of the revealed will and word of God? According to our view, the exhortations in the Scripture to holiness are in perfect harmony with the doctrines of grace and the teaching of the blessed Spirit in the soul; indeed, so much so, that they grow upon the Gospel tree as necessarily as good grapes upon the vine of the Lord's righthand planting. In these exhortations, rightly understood, spiritually received and interpreted, there is nothing legal, nothing that genders to bondage, nothing inconsistent with the liberty of the gospel, the freedom of truth, and the blessedness of the love which casteth out fear which hath torment; for they are all fully impregnated with the dew, the unction, and the power of the Spirit of life, and are full of sweetness and blessedness to those who can receive them in the power of that grace out of which they spring, and of which they form the crowning fruits.

But we resume at this point our exposition of the chapter before us. "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance; but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." (1 Pet. i. 14-16.) Let us then see what is the meaning and force of these words.

They remind us, first, of our high calling, and address themselves to us as those upon whom God has had special mercy, and whom, therefore, he has laid under every gracious constraint and spiritual obligation to walk worthy of it. And does not this fully harmonise with other similar passages, such, for instance, as, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called?" (Eph. iv. 1.) By our very calling we are called out of the world that we should be no longer conformed to it, out of sin that we should no longer serve it, out of self that we should no longer please and indulge it, out of darkness that we should no longer walk in it, out of evil in every shape and form that we should be no longer under its power and influence. And if any say, "Our nature is so corrupt, our heart so vile, our lusts and passions so strong, sin so alluring, and flesh so weak that we cannot come out of those things in which we once lived," all that can be said to such persons is, "What then has God done for you by his Holy Spirit, and what evidence do you give that you are partakers

of that grace that bringeth salvation and which teacheth us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world? Did not the Lord give himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works?" (Tit. ii. 11-14.) There is a holiness of which the Scripture speaks and of which it declares that "without it no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. xii. 14); and though this does not consist in the sanctification of the flesh, or any spiritual improvement begun or progressing of our corrupt nature, yet there is such a thing as being made a partaker of the divine nature, and thus escaping the corruption that is in the world through lust. (2 Pet. i. 4.) The Lord Jesus Christ is of God made unto us sanctification as well as righteousness and redemption (1 Cor. i. 30); and those who are called by his grace are not only washed and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, but are sanctified by the Spirit of our God. (1 Cor. vi. 11.)

This holiness, then, consists mainly of two points: 1, being made a partaker of the Spirit of holiness whereby, as born of God, we are made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light (Col. i. 12); set our affection on things above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God (Col. iii. 1, 2); have our conversation in heaven (Phil. iii. 20); put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him which created him (Col. iii. 10); live a life of faith in the Son of God (Gal. ii. 29), and beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. (2 Cor. iii. 18.) To be thus spiritually-minded, to be thus brought near unto God through his dear Son to walk before him in the light of his countenance, and to know something of spiritual communion with the Lord of life and glory as sitting on his mercy-seat in the fulness of his risen power, and in the heights, depths, lengths, and breadths of his dying love—this to taste, to handle, to experience, and to enjoy is to be made a partaker of true holiness and to be sanctified by the Spirit of God as an indwelling teacher, guide, advocate, and comforter. And if we know nothing of these things, at least in some small measure, or are not looking after and longing for them to be brought into our heart by a divine power, we give but little evidence that the grace of God has reached our heart and renewed us in the spirit of our mind.

2. The second branch of holiness is a life, conduct, and conversation agreeable to the precepts of the gospel; and the one springs out of the other. "Make the tree good," said our blessed Lord, "and his fruit good, for the tree is known by his fruit." Gospel fruit must grow upon a gospel tree, and thus the fruits of a holy and godly life must spring out of those divine operations of the Holy Ghost upon the heart of which we have just spoken. Thus to speak, live, and act is to be "holy in all man-

ner of conversation," that is, in our daily walk; and is a fulfilling of the precept which God gave of old to his typical people Israel (Lev. xi. 45), and here quoted to show that it is spiritually fulfilled in that peculiar people whom he calls by his distinguishing grace under the gospel.

But though Peter, as speaking for God, thus lays down in his inspired word what should be a precept to last through all time, yet, under the guidance of that holy and divine Teacher who guided his pen and knowing experimentally the weakness of the creature and the power of prayer, he adds: "And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear." (1 Pet. i. 17.)

Prayer is the breath of the new-born soul, and the blessed Spirit who kindles it in the heart, and from time to time draws it forth into living exercise, teaches the child of God whose body he makes his temple, and in whom he dwells, as a Spirit of grace and supplications, to pour out his heart before God. Thus he calls on the Father, approaching him through his dear Son; and presenting, as enabled, his supplications before the throne of grace, seeks after those blessings of which he is made to feel his deep and daily need. This gracious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and Father also of all who believe in his name, even though they cannot always or often see and claim that sweet and blessed relationship, is here said "to judge without respect of persons, according to every man's work."

"Without respect of persons" has a somewhat wide bearing, and one especially suitable to the exhortation with which it stands in connection. It does not, then, merely signify that God is no respecter of persons as regards rich or poor, educated or uneducated, and such other distinctions as now separate man from man in mere social relationships; but it has a bearing also on what is more peculiarly personal and experimental.

Thus when we look sometimes at gospel precepts, and such a one especially as that which here calls upon us to be holy as God is holy, our very heart sinks at what is thus brought before us; and taking a view of what we are as fallen sinners, and being made deeply conscious of our own helplessness and inability, and that everything in us by nature is contrary to God and godliness, it seems to us impossible that we can ever be what we read a saint should be, or ever do what we believe a saint should do. By thus looking into our own hearts, and measuring our strength by our own ability, we view the precepts of the gospel with an approving eye as right in themselves, but with a desponding look as regards our own performance of them. We may also be under the power of strong and peculiar temptations, be placed in circumstances in which obedience to the gospel seems almost an impossibility, or so sensibly feel the presence and pressure of a body of sin and death as to think that of all persons who ever had a hope in God's mercy we are

by nature the vilest, and in power to do that which is good the very weakest. Now this is having respect of persons, and especially of that person whom we know best, with whose every feeling, thought, movement, propensity, inclination, words, and actions, we are most intimately conversant, and with whom all we are and have is bound up for time and eternity—we need not say *one's ownself*. But the Father judgeth according to every man's work without respect of persons. He does not altogether view us as we view ourselves. Our good deeds are no recommendation to his grace, and our bad deeds, if mourned over, confessed, and forsaken, shall be no hindrances to it. Are we sinful, yea, of sinners chief? God judgeth us according to our work. By this expression we may understand two things: 1, the work of God upon the soul, and 2, those works of righteousness which flow out of it and are brought forth by the special operation of his grace.

1. In looking, then, upon us and judging us without respect of persons as we stand in his sight, God views his own work of grace in the heart, and fixes, so to speak, his eyes upon that. Now this work of his own grace in the heart does not appear in his eyes as it often does in ours. From us the work itself is often hidden. It seems so buried and, as it were, lost out of sight amidst our corruptions, sin has so darkened our mind, and unbelief so obscured our judgment, that we often cannot see not only what God has wrought in us by his Spirit and grace, but that he has wrought in us anything at all. We may illustrate this by the judgment which we ourselves sometimes form upon those children of God with whom we are brought into some degree of union and communion. Of these some, if not many, are continually doubting whether they are possessed of grace. But we can see through their doubts and fears, and through their darkness and unbelief, clear and plain marks of the work of God upon their soul. This commends them to our conscience, unites them to us in the bands of love and affection, and we receive them as children of God from seeing that grace in them which they cannot see themselves. How much more, then, can he before whose eyes all things are naked and open see in his children that grace which he himself has wrought in their heart! And by this grace he judges them "without respect of persons"—without any respect to what they are in their own feelings or their own judgment, but as they stand in his sight, not only as "accepted in the Beloved," but as also brought to believe in his dear Son to the salvation and sanctification of their soul.

2. But we may explain the words as applicable also to those works which are the fruit of his grace. All that we do is marred with sin. Our motive may be good, our eye single, our desire sincere; but as the word or action passes from us it becomes marred and defiled by the sin that dwelleth in us. And the clearer our discernment is of the nature of grace and of our own sin-

fulness the more we shall see that nothing really good was ever performed by us. But the great Judge of all, who can read in us what we cannot read in ourselves, looks at those words and actions which spring out of his grace with an approving eye, and separates them from all that sinfulness and selfishness which in our view mar and pollute them. Thus we see that in the judgment at the great day, when the Lord sets his sheep on his right hand and the goats on the left, he mentions as evidences of his grace to those whom he bids come and inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world, "For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me." (Matt. xxv. 35, 36.) But the righteous who saw in what they had done for him little else but sin and defilement could hardly call to mind that they had ever done anything to show their faith in him or love toward him. "Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?" (Matt. xxv. 37-39.) But the Lord assured them that inasmuch as they had done it unto one of the least of his brethren they had done it unto him. So he said upon another occasion: "And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward." (Matt. x. 42.) In giving the cup of cold water in the name of a disciple they could not see that it was a work of faith and love, and as such was approved of by the Lord. But he who could read his own grace in their heart and could separate the faith and affection which dwelt there from all its surrounding pollutions judged them according to that work.

But how is this connected with that holiness to which the apostle exhorts us? In this way—that we are not to be cast down and discouraged, still less give up heart and hope, because we find in ourselves everything which is sinful and unholy. We are rather to call upon the Father out of the depths of our own sinfulness, our shortcomings, our many and frequent backslidings, our darkness and unbelief, our sin and guilt, our shame and confusion of face, our helplessness and inability, our many discouragements, sinkings, and castings down—out of all these things we are to sigh and cry, look and long, supplicate and pray, fight and wrestle, strive and struggle, as seeking help from the Father, who will deal with us as dear children, and who, without respect of persons, whatever we may think of ourselves, or others think of us, judgeth us according to his own work, and not according to our own doubts and fears. Thus we see the basis on which these exhortations to holiness

rest, and that we are not left to work in ourselves that holiness without which no man can see the Lord; but that the Father himself will have respect to his own grace, and, having begun, will carry on and complete the work of faith with power.

But the apostle adds: "Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear." Our life here is but a vapour. We are but pilgrims and strangers on this earthly ball, mere sojourners, without fixed or settled habitation, and passing through this world as not our home or resting-place. The apostle, therefore, bid us pass this time, whether long or short, of our earthly sojourn under the influence and in the exercise of godly fear. We are surrounded with enemies, all seeking, as it were, our life, and therefore we are called upon to move with great caution, knowing how soon we may slip and fall, and thus wound our own consciences, grieve our friends, gratify our enemies, and bring upon ourselves a cloud of darkness which may long hover over our souls. Our life here below is not one of ease and quiet, but a warfare, a conflict, a race, a wrestling not with flesh and blood alone, but with principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places. We have to dread ourselves more than anything or anybody else, and to view our flesh as our greatest enemy. This fear is not a slavish, legal fear, such as that which John speaks of, and of which he says that "it hath torment," but that holy, godly, and filial fear which is the first fruit and mark of covenant grace, and is a fountain of life to depart from the snares of death. Where this fear is absent, or even if not wholly absent, not in full exercise, we are sure to go wrong, for "by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil." How needful, then, is it to pass the time of our sojourning here in the exercise of this godly, reverential fear! And let no one think that this filial fear is inconsistent with faith even in its highest risings, or with love in its sweetest enjoyments. In fact, it is only to those who fear his great name that the Lord manifests himself in his beauty and blessedness, for "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and to them (and to them only) does he show his covenant." Hart, therefore, sweetly says of the men that fear the Lord:

"His secrets they shall share;
His covenant shall learn;
Guided by grace shall walk his ways;
And heav'nly truths discern."

We may observe also that there is a very close and intimate connection between this godly fear and being "holy in all manner of conversation." When do we drop into levity of conversation? When do light and frothy words fall from our lips? When do any of those hasty bursts of temper, or those fretful expressions, or that mere carnal, worldly talk to which we are naturally prone hover upon our lips and break forth, more or less unguardedly, from our tongue? Is it not when this godly fear is not playing its streams as a fountain of life to well water

the soul and soften it into humility and love, and is not springing up in wholesome checks and godly admonitions to keep the tongue as with a bridle and to rule that little member which, though so little, if untamed, defileth the whole body? But if this fear be in exercise it will restrain that levity of speech which not only grieves and wounds our own conscience, but is often a stumbling-block to the world, a bad example to the family of God, and a weapon in the hands of Satan to bring death into their soul. We should do well to ponder over those words of the apostle and to carry them with us when we are brought into conversation with others in the daily walks of life: "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." (Eph. iv. 29, 30.)

But we may observe also the strong ground of obligation under which we are laid thus to act: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot; who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you." (1 Pet. i. 18-19.)

The foundation of a gospel walk and conduct is laid in redemption. We received from our fathers by tradition and example "a vain conversation," in the case, at least, of those of us who had not godly parents, and to whom religion was a thing utterly unknown, even by name, until by a special act of sovereign grace the Lord was pleased to drop it into our hearts. We might have been brought up carefully, strictly, morally, and even been taught certain forms of outward religion. But, viewed in the light of divine teaching, it was "a vain conversation." It began and ended with the world. Every thought, motive, word, and action was bounded by this life; and even if this vain conversation were free from outbreaks into positive evil, still death was stamped upon it throughout. Nor could we have redeemed ourselves from it. Were we even made sensible of the future misery which was entailed thereby, we could not "with corruptible things," the only things which our heart could produce within, or the corruptible things, as silver and gold, without, redeem ourselves from this vain conversation, so as to deliver our souls from the wrath of God due to it.

But O the unspeakable depths of the goodness and mercy of God! O the riches of his superabounding grace! When there was no other way of redemption, God sent his only-begotten Son, that by his precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, we might be redeemed from all the consequences of our vain conversation received by tradition from our fathers; and not only from all its consequences, but what the

apostle is here especially aiming at, from its power and practice. Ye know, he says, that ye were redeemed from this vain conversation not with silver and gold, as slaves are redeemed by man from man. Such perishing, corrupting, and corruptible things, torn out of earth's bowels, as men employ for purposes of redemption, could make no atonement to God for your sins and crimes; but the precious blood of Christ—precious in the sight of God as the blood of his dear Son, precious in the sight of the saints as their full and sufficient ransom, could and did redeem you from all iniquity, and by doing so, laid you under the deepest obligation to walk no more in that vain conversation which you received by tradition from your fathers, but to be holy in all manner of conversation.

It will be observed also that it is a knowledge, a personal, experimental knowledge of this redemption, which lays us under a spiritual obligation to walk worthy of our high calling. And it acts in this way. A view by faith of the bleeding, dying Lamb of God, a seeing and feeling what he suffered in the garden and on the cross to redeem us from hell will ever make sin hateful in our eyes, and holiness longed after as the soul's happiest element. If ever sin is mourned over, hated, confessed, and forsaken; if ever there be ardent desires after a conformity to Christ's image; if there ever be a longing after union and communion with him, it is at the foot of his cross. By it and it alone is the world crucified unto us, and we unto the world; and well may we say that our highest attainment in grace is to have the experience of the apostle: "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Gal. ii. 20.)

But to show the firmness and stability of this foundation, the apostle tells us that Christ was "foreordained before the foundation of the world," and therefore that the whole plan was laid in the counsels of infinite wisdom and grace.

But as the consideration of this point would take up too much of our present space, and as we hope and intend to close our Meditations on the chapter with the closing year, we must defer our thoughts upon it to the next No.

THE belief of eternal pains after death is necessary to teach us to make a fit estimate of the price of Christ's blood, to value sufficiently the work of our redemption, to acknowledge and admire the love of God to us in Christ. For he which believeth not the eternity of torments to come can never sufficiently value that ransom by which we were redeemed from them, or be proportionably thankful to his Redeemer by whose intervention we have escaped them; whereas, he who is sensible of the loss of heaven and the everlasting privation of the presence of God, of the torments of fire, the company of the devil and his angels, the vials of the wrath of an angry and never-to-be-appeased God, and hopeth to escape all these by virtue of his Redeemer, cannot but highly value the price of that blood, and be proportionably thankful for so plenteous a redemption.—*Bishop Pearson.*

Obituary.

ISABELLA PRENTICE.

(Continued from page 324.)

AFTER so glorious a revelation of the Son of God, and such a clear manifestation of pardoning love to her soul, as was recorded in our last No., we should have expected that Isabella, the subject of our present Obituary, would have walked for some considerable time in the light of God's countenance, and would not soon or easily have fallen back into darkness and bondage, as we shall presently find was the case with her. It is a point which I cannot undertake clearly to explain; but I may briefly mention two reasons which may, perhaps, in some good degree account for it.

1. The *sovereignty* of God must be ever borne in mind, who having intimated to her that her days of darkness should be many, might have seen fit, in his infinite wisdom, to give her a speedy and bitter taste of them; and having so signally manifested his favour and love to her, might have seen good, almost immediately afterwards, sharply to exercise her faith and patience.

2. But I think there is another way in which it may be explained. Her lot was at this period, and, indeed, for some years after, cast under a legal ministry, burdened with conditions and creature performances, by which she was ground, as between the upper and nether millstones—the upper millstone of a conditional salvation, and the nether millstone of an unbelieving heart. Indeed, I do not think that I ever heard any person speak so clearly of the misery, the bondage, the darkness, and the confusion which, sitting constantly under such a ministry, and knowing of no other, brings into the mind of a tried and exercised child of God. And what made it in her case more particularly trying was, that for more than seven years of that time she was in the service of a minister of the Scotch Church, in the North of England, whose legal preaching harrowed up her very soul. But I shall here quote her own words. Speaking upon this point some years afterwards, in a letter to a friend, she says:

“Of all the sermons which I had heard or seen, I cannot say that, at that time, God had ever acknowledged any one by his Spirit to my soul but ‘Winter afore Harvest.’ Some which I have heard have made my soul to bleed for weeks together, and I have sunk so low that I thought I should never rise more. All this was by free-will doctrines; nor did I know that there was anything else preached in the world, until May, 1854, when some other of Mr. P.’s sermons fell into my hands.”

It will be seen from the account which she has given of her own experience in our present No., that the chief point on which she was so long and so deeply tried was that of faith. According to the preaching and teaching under which she sat, whilst Christ was held forth as a Saviour, it was always insisted on

that it was by faith in him an interest was obtained in his salvation, and that this faith was, on our part, a mental act, which was more or less in our power to exercise, which it was, therefore, our duty to do, and that unless we did it we could not be saved. Nothing was said about the Spirit's work in convincing the soul of unbelief, or that faith was the gift and work of God, or that when Christ manifested himself to the soul, his presence and power by the operation of his word, through the Holy Spirit upon the heart, raised up and drew forth a living faith upon him. But Christ was placed, as it were, at a distance from the sinner; and the people were taught that it was by a mental act on their part, which the minister called faith, that he was to be made use of; and therefore, that as Christ had done his part, which was to redeem, they had to do their part, which was to believe. This was the preaching under which she sat, and, indeed, knew of no other; and thus for ten years she was under this dark and ignorant, legal and erroneous ministry, without any gracious books to help her, any spiritual friends to converse with, or any of those blessed helps which many of our readers have been favoured with.

I merely offer this as an explanation why, after such a glorious revelation of the Son of God and such a manifestation of pardoning love to her soul, she should have sunk so low as we shall find she did. But I will not any longer by any words of my own detain my readers from the account which she has herself so clearly and sweetly given of her own experience after her signal blessing.—J. C. P.

“O if I could but believe. I sometimes called on a woman who was considered to be very religious. She was a Methodist, and often gave me counsel how to act, which was that I was only to believe; but I felt my ‘could not’ and ‘would not’ were so strong that I might as well take my poor puny arm and bend heaven and earth together as believe. Sometimes I would gather all my evidences together both from creation and what I had felt in my own soul; then in haste I would make the leap to believe, in spite of all the risings within. I felt that believing was the hinge on which salvation turned, and yet I could not or would not do it. I felt my ‘would not’ was as strong as my ‘could not,’ and was afraid I should pine away in mine iniquity (as the sermon said) and die. By this time I had become a public by-word. ‘She is going daft (mad) about religion.’ Tracts and books began to come from different quarters with full and free invitations of the gospel; but I could never taste the least sap out of any of them. One day I heard two women talking about me. The one said to the other, ‘Hasn’t she given up hope?’ Poor wretch, as I felt myself to be, bad as my state was, O how thankful I was I had not done that. One day as I was standing at a wash-tub I seemed to see Christ seated between heaven and earth, when these words pealed through

heaven as if all heaven would hear them: 'There is no salvation in any other but in Christ.' I felt that unless I got hold of Christ I was lost for ever. I saw that every soul that did not get hold of Christ would sink for evermore. Now I saw there was no other way of safety; but O my unbelief! I would not, therefore I could not believe. The only books that seemed to have an edge to them were the Bible and Boston's 'Fourfold State.' But when I began to read them temptations and my wickedness began to rise, and especially when I began to read the Bible. I could read Doddridge's 'Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul,' and James's 'Anxious Inquirer,' which was considered one of the best written books of the day, and all the tracts, without feeling any disturbance within. Satan did not tempt me, nor did any wickedness rise. Sometimes when I have been reading the tracts I have felt, 'O to believe.' I have thrown myself down where I thought no one would see me on the road with my mouth in dust with 'O could I but believe.' Sometimes I had sweet and blessed feelings; but they did not last. No one seemed to know my state or comfort me except that dear man's sermon (J. C. Philpot). One told me that some one had said it was conviction that was the matter with me. I wondered what it meant; but was at last led to understand it. But my unbelief was now my greatest trouble and burden. I could not take comfort in anything I had felt, because I thought I never had believed. I knew that the Father loved me and that his Son had died for me; but that I never had believed of myself. O what trials I had at it. I thought unless I believed myself, I could not or should not be saved, unless the Lord put forth his divine power and saved me in spite of my unbelief; but that I did not look for. O to believe to the salvation of my soul and be at rest. But I could not or would not. And yet I felt if I don't believe in the Son of God I must be lost. No hope for me unless I believe. O if I could but muster strength and master my unbelief and hold on and listen to nothing of what my heart says, even if it should end in the damnation of my soul. I shall be lost if I don't believe; but something kept always rising and strongly objecting to everything, so that I did not feel I had any ground to take comfort from anything I had felt until I managed to believe of myself; and to do that I could not or would not. I never heard any minister say anything about the power, or about an unbelieving heart, and the workings of unbelief. I felt a little comforted once, and it opened my eyes a little in reading Romans viii. 7: 'The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be;' but I still looked into my heart to try to believe of myself.*

* By that blessed revelation with which she had been favoured, poor Isabella knew what a living faith was, and that when Christ manifests himself to the soul he brings faith with him, for he is both its Author

“ One day I was standing in the middle of the kitchen floor, and Satan seemed to stand at my left hand. He said, ‘ You have a precious, never-dying soul ;’ which I felt was a truth. Then he said, ‘ Take care and not lose it.’ This was the only thing I was afraid of. Then he said, ‘ Don’t believe in the Son of God. Many books tell lies, and so may the Bible.’ The pull here betwixt him and me will never be known until the great day. It was like a pound weight put into one scale and a pound weight put into the other. Sometimes one scale was up and sometimes the other. He wanted me to understand that it was all of his kindness towards me that he thus spake. I felt it not easy to resist it. Those who have felt something of it will know what I mean ; but, however, I felt that I could not give up the Son of God. I said, ‘ No, no, no ;’ and he kept pulling stronger than ever. I again said, ‘ No, no, no, until I see some other way of safety.’ Here I seemed so weak and he so strong. I had scarcely strength to say, ‘ No ;’ yet managed it. After this I was in a worse condition than ever, for now I dared not give up my soul to the Son of God, lest it should be lost ; nor dared I give up Jesus, for there was no other way of safety. Here I remained for some time, not daring to give up one or the other. I went to see my friend the Methodist. She asked me how I was. I told her I was no better. She said, ‘ You do not keep your comforts when you have them ; it is only to believe ; and they that believe not make God a liar.’ I felt that that was an awful state to be in.

“ James’s ‘ Anxious Inquirer ’ advises the anxious reader to take it to a place alone where he may have freedom of action. One night, according to his advice, I did so ; but I happened to open first the Bible on the 8th chapter of the Romans. The first verse caught my eye : ‘ There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,’ and all in an instant such a sweetness came with it that I felt it all to belong to me. After this I looked into James’s book. I felt I could get nothing out of it ; it only confused me. Sometimes when I have had the Lord’s presence, and he has withdrawn himself, I have felt like an individual that from long illness is not able to stand on his own feet or to be left alone, lest he should fall against the wall. I felt my spiritual weakness so great, and the places of danger so many, that I have felt to stagger in soul, that I was not fit to be left without the Lord’s special keeping.”

During the time that she was passing through these painful exercises, she was living at Newhaven, near Edinburgh, where

and Finisher. But for want of clearer light she, according to the teaching she was under, was ever looking into her own heart to find faith there, which she was told she must have and exercise or she could not be saved. Many poor souls are held fast in this snare, which is the reason why we thus call attention to it. We are well satisfied that the tendency, if not the end, of all legal preaching is to thrust into presumption or drive into despair.—J. C. P.

she continued for about 18 months; but was obliged, through distress of soul, to leave her place, not being able to attend to her work, and the next six months she spent among her friends. In the summer of 1847 she again went to service, and obtained a situation in the house of a Scotch minister in the North of England, where she continued, with the exception of a year and a half, during which she lived at Jedburgh, until in the mysterious providence of God she was brought to Stamford, which I shall now endeavour to relate from her own papers and my own reminiscences.

“In May, 1854, I first came to a knowledge of the truth being preached in the present day the same as the Lord had taught me. It had been, at times, for nine or ten years my prayer to the Lord, that if his truth was preached anywhere on earth the same as he had taught me, he would open up a way for me to go and hear it. I felt that if I had been the Queen upon her throne, and had to walk barefoot to the ends of the earth, I must have gone there. The first intelligence that I heard about Mr. P. (for till then I did not know that he was alive, but thought he had been dead many years) was, ‘He is a Methodist.’ I answered, ‘If they call him Beelzebub, my soul loves him.’

“But the way in which I first came to know more about him was this: My master’s son, in 1855, had gone up to London, and had either sent, or brought home, some books, on one of which there was an advertisement of sermons preached in London by different ministers, and amongst them were some preached at Eden Street by J. C. Philpot. Upon this I wrote a letter, addressed to Eden Street Chapel, London,* and received in reply the following letter:

“Being now supplying at Gower Street Chapel, London, to which Chapel the friends that did meet at Eden Street are removed, I send you the address you ask for, and I hope you will obtain what you want. Had you mentioned the sermon, I perhaps could have got it for you; but if you send to Mr. Philpot, you will obtain one. You must direct: Mr. Philpot, Stamford, Lincolnshire.

“Yours in truth,
“WM. HATTON.”

“In consequence of this letter I wrote to Mr. Philpot, and received from him the following answer:

“Dear Isabella,—I am sorry that I have neglected so long answering your letter, but my time is much occupied. . . . I have not a copy of the sermon concerning which you have written (“The Heir of Heaven,” &c.); but you can get one by sending six postage stamps to Mr.

* It is one of the marvels of our Post Office that a letter so addressed should ever have reached its destination, for those who know Eden Street will at once recollect what a small, obscure street it is; and at this time, the friends had removed to Gower Street, and Eden Street Chapel was either shut up or in the hands of its present occupiers.

Gadsby, George Yard, Bouverie Street, London. You sit under error, and will only get distressed and confused by it. Salvation is wholly of grace, and there is no power in man to save his own soul. Jesus Christ has finished the work; he gives faith to his elect to believe in him, and they are saved by his blood and righteousness. If you can afford it, take in the "Gospel Standard." It will cost you only twopence a month, and you will find profitable reading in it. Any bookseller will get it for you every month at Newcastle. I send you one of my sermons that I preached lately in London. Read your Bible as much as you can, and ask the Lord to teach you by his blessed Spirit.

"Stamford, April 26th, 1855.'

"Yours sincerely,
"J. C. PHILPOT."

"In the Jan. No. of the 'Gospel Standard' for 1856, I put in the following advertisement:

"A respectable young woman is desirous of obtaining a situation in or near Stamford, where she may have the privilege of attending a gospel ministry. Address, I. E., O——, Northumberland."

Our space will not allow me to enter into all the particulars of her being brought to Stamford, and eventually coming into my service through the medium of this advertisement. I can, therefore, only briefly mention that it caught the eye of a gracious person who lived at that time as housekeeper in a family which attended my ministry, and that there being a vacancy for a servant, the cook having just been hastily and deservedly sent away, she drew to it the attention of her mistress. There were, however, several obstacles in the way of her obtaining the place, such as her being a perfect stranger amongst them, and especially the great distance, as Isabella at that time lived in the extreme North of England; but they were mercifully overruled, as no doubt the hand of God was in it.

But I shall here insert part of a letter written at this time by Isabella to the housekeeper in answer to one from her:

"Dear Miss R.,—I have a great desire to be in Stamford. I think it may be God's will to bless his servant's word to my soul. Were any child of God to ask me what I should like best to enjoy upon earth, I should say first that the smiles of God's blessed countenance might overflow my heart, and next, to sit under Mr. Philpot's ministry. Here I am burdened with duties and conditions, and not a spark of life in the preaching, and my own soul little or no better. I felt a little comforted on Monday in thinking of the Lord's former lovingkindness to me in my distresses, when, so to speak, I could do no longer without him, that he might not cast me off; but my mind is unsettled.

"I am happy to hear Mr. P. is better. I believe it has pleased God to make him a blessing to many whom he never saw nor heard of. The sermon I got had been in the hands of many before I got it, and I was told by the woman who gave it to me it had been already blessed to several.
"ISABELLA ELLIOTT."

To the obstacles to which I have alluded, I may add another,—that her mistress, when she found that Isabella wished to leave her service for the purpose of coming to Stamford to sit under my ministry, refused to give her a character, though she had lived with her eight years, and had had a Bible given to

her "for faithful attention to duty." But the lady to whom I have alluded as attending my ministry most kindly consented to take her without a character, though Isabella stated that she could easily obtain one from most respectable people in the place, and from the last two situations in which she had previously lived.

Matters then being now fully arranged for her to come to Stamford, she wrote to the housekeeper, who had taken great interest in her and ever proved afterwards a most faithful and affectionate friend, the following letter :

"Dear Miss R.,—I feel thankful in looking forward, if it is the Lord's will to spare me to that time, that I shall hear his blessed word according to his will. I have begged for nearly 10 years that he would open up a way for me where I should do so, and, blessed be his dear name, I can almost read his providence towards me in looking back that it is his will for me to come. I did not even know that Mr. P. was in life till the month of May, 1854. I used to think on him with sweetness that he had joined the blessed company. I do feel it kind of Mrs. K. taking me in when cast out. I trust the Lord will give me grace to be faithful to her; and, dear friend, seek for me that this may be for his glory and my good. The reason why I was so long in answering your letter was that I was writing to America. I will give you a hint about it, and it is one thing I think I see the working of providence in. My friends were very anxious for me to go with them, and I may say I have every encouragement to go* and none to stay, so far as I could see. Among some of them are, I believe, God's dear children; but my mind was set against it, and the more I thought about it the more I felt against it. I have had several letters from them wishing me to go; the last I received in January was about that, and to let them know what I was thinking about it. I had told them by letter about dear Mr. P., and that I wished to be under his ministry if I could get, and it would come hard upon me if I had no hope in getting; for my soul is united to him. I have sometimes thought were I a dying, of all the friends on earth I ever had I should like best to speak to him; for he speaks to me as God did when he opened his blessed bosom—the same kind of language. I feel he is God's own sent servant. I trust he will bless his word to my soul and restore me again, blessed be his name. I have found his promise made good, a 'present help in time of need,' and with his blessed presence I fear nothing. *That* runs through everything, makes mountains plains and storms calms. God willing, I shall be with you on the 27th or 28th of May. I shall be at liberty on the Monday, and I think if the day be good I shall walk to Newcastle, which is just 30 miles from here. I can easily do it, if I enjoy my present health and strength.

"ISABELLA ELLIOTT."

There was, however, another obstacle still in the way, giving a fresh occasion to the Lord to appear in his kind providence on her behalf. When she had fully settled all the little claims upon her purse, her funds were reduced so low that she found that even by walking to Newcastle she would yet not have enough money to pay her fare thence to Stamford, and this continued up to 12 o'clock of the very day when she had fixed to

* I have understood that she had at this time a very eligible offer of marriage with one who was going to America with her friends.

start. But upon that very day, about half-past one o'clock, she received a letter from her brother, then residing in America, containing £2; and thus, instead of walking, she was enabled to take the mail gig to Newcastle, stayed there for the night, and started next morning by rail for Stamford, where she safely arrived.

She continued in the service of the lady to whom I have alluded 12 months, when, being considered not altogether suitable for the situation, she was not re-engaged, and thus there appeared a great probability that she would have to leave Stamford. But just at this very juncture the cook's place in my family happened to be vacant, and I suggested, to use Mr. Huntington's humorous expression to "the higher powers," that we might take Isabella into our service. This suggestion was readily complied with, and as the offer was gladly embraced, she passed into my service, in which she continued about six years. She saw, I believe, the marked providence of God in thus giving her a home under the roof of one to whom she felt so deeply attached for his work's sake; for I believe I may truly say that though amongst my many mercies the Lord has given me some most faithful, tried, and affectionate friends, yet amongst them all there have been none who felt more sincere and true affection for me than Isabella.

But I must here for the present stay my pen, as what remains to be told of her in life and death would occupy too much room for our present No.

J. C. P.

(To be continued.)

HE who thus emptied and humbled himself, who so infinitely descended from the prerogative of his glory in his being and self-sufficiency, in the susception of our nature for the discharge of the office of a mediator on our behalf; will he not relieve us in all our distresses? Will he not do all for us that we stand in need of, that we may be eternally saved? Will he not be a sanctuary unto us?—*Owen*.

SUPPOSE God might have pardoned sin, and recovered man by his own absolute prerogative, had not his word been passed, that, in case of man's transgression, he should die the death. As a word created the earth, and cast it into such a beautiful frame and order, so by one word he might have restored man, and set him upon his former stock, and have for ever kept him from falling again, as he did the standing angels from ever sinning. Yet God chooseth this way, and is pleased with no other contrivance but this, and in a way of sovereignty he calls out his Son to be a sacrifice; and the Son putting himself into the state of a Surety and Redeemer, is said to have a command given him on the part of God as a Sovereign, "As the Father gave me commandment, even so I do," (John xiv. 31,) and received by him as a subject, (John x. 18,) and as God owns him as a servant, (Isa. xlii. 1,) so he took upon him "the form of a servant," (Phil. ii. 7,) that is, the badge and livery of a servant; and the whole business he came upon, from his first breath to his last gasp, is called the will of God; and at the upshot he pleads his own obedience, in "finishing the work given him to do," as the ground of his expectations, and the glory promised him. (John xvii. 4.)—*Charnock*.

DECEMBER 1, 1869.

THE
GOSPEL STANDARD.

DECEMBER, 1869.

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

JOY UNSPEAKABLE AND FULL OF GLORY.

ON Thursday, the 29th November (? year), my throat, which for several days before had been uncomfortable, suddenly became worse, so that I could not read the two chapters at our usual evening meeting, which I had in my own mind purposed doing, but was obliged to leave off after reading only one chapter. At night I resorted to the usual means which I expected would alleviate if not remove the unpleasant symptoms; but on Friday instead of being better I was more unwell. This made me quite thoughtful, and led me in some measure to self-examination and prayer that the Lord would speak peace to my soul; for I was conscious that my heart had sadly wandered from him, and that in spirit I had forsaken that strait and narrow way that leadeth unto life.

In the 'afternoon, when sitting in my little room, I felt disposed to read something. Upon the table close by lay a book I had been reading in the morning and a small Bible, side by side; both were open, and turned flat upon the tablecloth, with their covers uppermost. Without thinking, I stretched out my hand and took the former, when a feeling of this kind crossed my mind: "Why not take the Bible?" Acting upon this impulse, I relinquished the book I had been reading and took the Bible instead. I felt myself somewhat condemned for this neglect, and moreover that my reading would be to little or no profit. The first verse that met my eyes was the 7th of Isa. lxii.: "And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." These words took hold of my mind in a very encouraging manner, though mingled with reproof, and raised a spirit of prayer that the Lord would appear for my help. I read the whole chapter, and it strengthened my spirit, and was sweet unto me. But the words I have mentioned abode with me, and were frequently sounding in my (spiritual) ear: "And give him no rest," &c.; "Give him no rest." In mercy I was enabled to follow up this exhortation most of the remainder of the day and all through the next, though the word came again and again: "Give him no rest," &c., to stir me up to renewed prayer.

This exercise of soul continued till Sunday morning, when, finding no answer to my prayer or that enlargement of spirit which I was in hope of enjoying, I was led to ask of the Lord to grant me patience and enable me to wait his time. The first verse of Ps. xl. encouraged me to do this, and those words of the Lord Jesus to his brethren in John vii.: "My time is not yet come; but your time is always ready," also conveyed some instruction. This did not cause me to abandon prayer, but made me willing to wait the Lord's time. David continued his cry unto the Lord, although we are told he waited patiently. In some measure I believe ability was given me to do the same and leave it with the Lord.

In this frame of mind I went into my chamber, and whilst preparing for rest, these words quietly dropped into my mind: "There is no spot in thee." They came so gently that I did not take much heed to them, although they did not entirely escape my notice; but soon after I had retired to my bed, they came over and over and over again, and with such power and unction attending them that I was brought out most fully into the glorious liberty of the gospel, and I could, without the slightest hesitation, doubt, or fear, call God my Father and the Rock of my salvation. For more than four hours these words were continually spoken unto me. Sometimes it was: "Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee;" and frequently it was these words: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee;" and, again, repeatedly: "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine." And often the next verse followed: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." And, again, repeatedly: "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee," &c. There was such sweet communion between the Lord Jesus Christ and my soul that I kept from time to time saying, "Into thy hand I commit my spirit. Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth." And I was answered again and again by the words: "Fear not, I have redeemed thee;" "Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee." The parable of the prodigal son was exceedingly sweet to me; I could enter into it most fully, and I felt truly that the best robe was put upon me, and the ring on my hand. Furthermore, I was greatly indulged with an abundance from that "feast of fat things," and with "wine on the lees well refined," and made to partake of that river "the streams whereof make glad the city of God;" so that my heart was merry indeed with welcome reception and good fare that I received in my Father's house. I could say also with Simeon of old, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Many parts of John vi. were very comforting and confirming. Some of the first verses of Rom. viii., also of the Gospel by John iii., especially this verse: "God

so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." And these words also: "He that believeth on him is not condemned." Many promises and various portions of Scripture kept teeming into my mind which I did not at all think I knew, and all were attended with the power of the Holy Ghost. Having Christ, I seemed to have with him the sweetness of all the promises. Through the goodness of the Lord many times my cup ran over with a sense of his blessing; and one word of encouragement was most abundantly fulfilled at this time which the Lord supported and upheld me with during my first soul trouble,—that I should "yet praise him." Also this promise was repeated, which I had at that time: "I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins. Return unto me, for I have redeemed thee."

As I have said, this blessed visitation was with me more than four hours; in fact, till I fell asleep, between three and four o'clock in the morning. It was at times as much as I could bear. It was "joy unspeakable and full of glory," so that, from the weakness of my body, at last I was quite wearied and asked the Lord to let me have a little rest. With all this joy and love and comfort there was at the same time a very humbling sense of my utter unworthiness; so that the language of Job: "Behold, I am vile," was frequently uttered by me under this feeling.

On looking back upon my past life, it appeared to be one great sin; and this led me to confess it to the Lord; yet the words would still be coming: "There is no spot in thee;" "Thou art all fair, my love." I watered my couch with my tears; but they were tears of joy as well as of contrition of soul. Here the case of Mary Magdalene came before me, and I felt that I was of one spirit with her, and spiritually in the same position, when she washed the Lord's feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head. Several times I was on the point of shouting aloud the praises of the Lord from the abundance of the love of God which was manifested unto me. I had, moreover, a warm feeling of love for all the Lord's people and my friends, and such a spirit of prayer for some that they were individually entreated for at a throne of grace, unto which throne I seemed to have free access without let or hindrance. I thought of Moses when he came down from the mount, how his countenance shone, and I felt it was so with me as I lay with my bodily eyes closed, but still looking up into heaven; and at this time the heavens appeared to open to my mental vision and I beheld what I supposed to be an innumerable company of angels.

From the holy transport which I enjoyed, I could sensibly understand the feeling of some who are permitted to have even in this world, before their departure, a taste of that heavenly bliss which is in store for all who love the Lord Jesus in

sincerity and whose countenances are lighted up with those blessed beams of love which proceed from the Sun of Righteousness.

This is but a faint description which I have endeavoured to give of the operation of the Holy Spirit in my soul last night. It was constant communion and friendly intercourse with all three Persons in the Godhead,—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and I sincerely hope through grace given me it may remain as a high heap or waymark for me to look back upon all the days of my life and constantly impress me with a deep sense of that marvellous lovingkindness and mercy of which I have been an unworthy recipient. Surely I may say with Hezekiah, ‘O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit; so wilt thou recover me and make me to live.’ “Behold, for peace I had great bitterness; but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption; for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day.”

I have had several conflicts in my mind whether I ought to make mention of this mercy; but in the Psalms David speaks of the Lord’s dealings with him in many places, so it is in his fear that I desire to do it, and for the glory of God alone. Not my glory. No, no! L.

MY UNDEFILED.

“My undefiled.”—CANT. v. 2.

UNDEFILED is a high word to be applied to the church of God here; for the church groaning under infirmities to be counted perfect and undefiled. But Christ, who judges aright of his church, and knows best what she is, he yet so judges of her. But how is that? The church is undefiled, especially in that it is the spouse of Christ and clothed in the robe of his righteousness. For there is an exchange so soon as ever we are united to Christ. Our sins are upon him, and his righteousness is made ours; and therefore in Christ the church is undefiled. Christ himself, the second Person, is the first lovely thing next the Father; and in Christ all things as they have relation to him are loved, as they are in him. Christ’s human nature united to his divine Person is pure, holy, and beloved. Then because the church is Christ mystical, it is near to him; and, in a manner, as near as that sacred body of his, both making up one Christ mystical. And so is amiable and beloved even of God himself, who has pure eyes, yet in this respect look upon the church has undefiled.

Christ and his church are not to be considered as two when we speak of this undefiledness, but as one. And the church having Christ, with all that is Christ’s, they have the field and the pearl in the field together. And Christ giving himself to the church, he gives his righteousness, his perfection, and holiness; all is the church’s.

Qu. But how can it be the church's when it is not in the church, but in Christ?" *Ans.* It is safe for the church that it is in Christ, who is perfect and undefiled for us, to make us appear so. And so it is in Christ, the second Adam, for our good. It is not in him as another person, but it is in him as the church's Head, that make both one Christ. The hand and the foot see not; but both hand and foot have benefit by the eye, that sees for them. There is no member of the body understands, but the Head does all for them. Put the case thus: We have not absolute righteousness and undefiledness in our own nature and persons inherent in us; yet we have it in Christ, who is one with us, who has it for our good. It is ours, for all the comfort and good that we may have by it; and thereupon the church of Christ is undefiled, yea, even then, when it feels its own defilements. And here arises that wondrous contradiction which is found in a believer's apprehension. The nature of faith is to apprehend righteousness in the sense of sin, happiness in the sense of misery, and favour in the sense of displeasure. And the ground of it is because, at the same time, the soul may be in some measure defiled in itself, yet, notwithstanding, be undefiled in her Head and Husband Christ. Hence the guilty soul feeling corruption and sin, notwithstanding sees itself holy and clean in Christ the Head, so at once there is a conscience of sin, and no more conscience of sin, as says the Apostle, Heb. x. 2, when we believe in Christ and are purged with his blood. That is, there is no more guilt of sin binding over to eternal damnation, yet, notwithstanding, always there is a conscience of sin, for we are guilty of infirmities: "And if we say we have no sin, we lie, and deceive ourselves." (1 Jno. i. 8.)

Obj. "But how can this be, that there should be conscience of sin, and no conscience of sin, a sinner, yet a perfect saint and undefiled?" *Ans.* 1. The conscience knows its own imperfection; it is defiled and accuseth of sin. And as it looks to Christ, so it sees itself pure and purged from all sin. Here is the conquest, fight, and the victory of faith in the deepest sense of sin, pollution, and defilement in ourselves, at the same time to see an absolute and perfect righteousness in Jesus Christ. Herein is even the triumph of faith, whereby it answers God. And Christ, who sees our imperfections, but it is to purge and cleanse them away, not to damn us for them, sees us at the same time in his own love, clothed with his righteousness, as one with himself, endowed with whatsoever he has; his satisfaction and obedience being ours as verily as anything in the world is. Thus he looks upon us, and thus faith looks upon him too; and together with the sight and sense of sin, at the same time it apprehends righteousness, perfect righteousness, and so is undefiled. This is the main point in religion, and the comfort of Christians, to see their perfection in Christ Jesus, to be lost in themselves and found only in him, not having their own right-

eousness, but the righteousness of God in him. (Phil. iii. 9.) This is a mystery none know but believing souls. None see corruption more, none see themselves freed more. They have an inward sight to see corruption, and an inward faith to see that God takes not advantage of it. And surely there can be no greater honour to Christ than this,—in the sense of sin, of wants, imperfections, stains, and blemishes, yet to wrap ourselves in the righteousness of Christ, God-man, and, by faith, being thus covered with that absolute righteousness of Christ, with boldness to go, clothed in the garments of this our Elder Brother to the throne of grace. This is an honour to Christ to attribute so much to his righteousness, that being clothed therewith we can boldly break through the fire of God's justice and all those terrible attributes when we see them all, as it were, satisfied fully in Christ. For Christ, with his righteousness, could go through the justice of God, and we being clothed with this his righteousness and satisfaction may go through also.

Ans. 2. But besides that there is another respect in which the church is called undefiled, that is, in purity of disposition, tending to perfection. God respects her according to her better part and according to what he will bring her to in due time. For we are chosen unto perfection, and to be holy in his sight; perfectly holy, undefiled, and pure.

In choosing us, what did God aim at? Did he aim at these imperfect beginnings to rest there? No. We were elected and chosen to perfection. For as in nature God purposed that we should not only possess every limb, but grow from infancy to activity and perfect manhood; so no question God intends as much for our souls, that we should not only have the lineaments of Christianity, a sanctified judgment with affections partly renewed, but he has chosen us to grow up to perfection. As the seed first lies rotting in the ground, then grows to a stalk, then to an ear, so God's wisdom shines in bringing small beginnings to perfection. His wisdom will have it thus (his power might have had it otherwise), because he will have us to live by faith, to trust his mercy in Christ, and not to the undefiledness begun in us, but to admire that which we have in Christ himself; indeed it is the character of a judicious believer, he can set a price on and value the righteousness of Christ out of himself, labouring, living, and dying to appear in that; and yet to comfort and sustain himself during this conflict between the flesh and the spirit, that this inherent grace shall be brought to perfection.

And Christ looks upon us as he means to perfect the work of grace in us, as he means to purge and cleanse us. (Eph. v. 26, 27.) The end of redemption is that he might purge his church, and so never leave it till he has made it his glorious spouse in heaven. He looks upon us as we shall be ere long; therefore we are said to be dead to sin, while we are but dying to it. And says he, "You have crucified the flesh with the

affections and lusts thereof" (Gal. v. 24), when we are but crucifying it. But it is so said, because it is as sure to be done as if it were already done; as when a condemned man is going to be executed he is a dead man, so there is a sentence passed upon sin and corruption. It shall be abolished and die. Therefore it is dead in sentence, it is dying in execution. It is done; "They that are in Christ have crucified the flesh with the lusts thereof." It is as sure to faith as though already done. So we are said to sit in heavenly places in Christ. (Eph. ii. 6.) We are with him already; for Christ having taken us so near in affection to himself will never leave us till he has made us such as he may have full contentment in heaven, when the contract between him and us shall be fulfilled in consummation of the marriage.

Thus faith looks, and Christ looks thus upon us. This should comfort us in weakness, that God regards us not according to our present imperfections, but what he means to make us ere long. Until then, that he may look upon us in love, he looks upon us in the obedience of his Son, in whom all good beginnings, though weak and small, shall at last be perfected.—*Sibbes*.

A SCRAP BY THE WELSH AMBASSADOR.

How is my good old friend Naomi? And how does Ruth the younger do? Are they creeping under the skirts of Boaz, or are they gathering ears of corn in his field, or does he do worthily in Ephrata and act famously in Bethlehem? I long to hear from them and to know whereabouts they are. I hope they are thriving, growing, and persevering. I know the kingdom suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force, but this force is not human strength. Their strength is got by standing still; and out of weakness they are made strong,—strong in the Lord, strong in faith; and faith is the substance of things hoped for. She knows they are to be obtained, for she has tasted of them already; therefore it is the evidence of things not seen.

But I cannot preach much. I want light, more light, clearer understanding, better knowledge, and more acquaintance with him who is altogether lovely. My complaints and griefs are great and many, my heart is evil and wicked, full of unbelief; and this is a sore burden to me. I feel every sin and lust striving for the mastery; it is a fountain of corruption and a sink of all uncleanness, and it grieves me that it is so miserable; but I well know there is but one thing that can cure it. I do not want to know what it is doctrinally, but how to apply it, how to get it applied, how to live under the application of it, that I might enjoy constant peace within and be strong to fight the battles without. Peace in him and in the world tribulation and sorrow,—there is such a life as this: "The just shall live by his faith;" but my life is a warfare, a continual conflict; and

not that always, but I get into a parley with my enemies, give ear to them, reason with them, till they get the upper hand of me. I am not in despair neither. I cannot despair, and I cannot obtain victory. It is a continual scuffle, and no side gives way. I grieve, fret, murmur, and often rebel, am sore vexed with this evil spirit which follows me, go where I will; and ten thousand more such things I could tell you.

But I send you this to inquire after you both, and hope soon to hear something from you. What will you say? Begin, then go on and write a long letter with some good and some bad news. Let me have the whole, and forget not to pray for me as I trust I do not forget for you.

J. JENKINS.

A LETTER BY JOHN BERRIDGE.

Dear Sir,—I received your kind letter, and thank you for it. You want nothing but an opened eye to see the glory of Christ's redemption; and he must give it, and will bestow it, when it is most for his glory and your advantage. Had you Daniel's holiness, Paul's zeal, John's love, Magdalen's repentance (and I wish you had them all), yet, altogether, they would give you no title to a pardon. You must at last receive it as a ruined sinner, even as the Cross-thief received it.

No graces or services of your own can give you a right to pardon; you must come to Jesus for it, weary and heavy-laden; and, if you are afflicted for sin, and desirous of being delivered from its guilt and power, no past iniquities in your life, nor present corruptions of your heart, will be a bar to pardoning mercy. If we are truly seeking salvation by Jesus, we shall be disposed, as we are really bound, to seek after holiness.

But remember, though holiness is the walk to heaven, Christ is the way to God; and, when you seek for pardon, you must go wholly out of your walk, be it good or bad, and look only to him who is the way. You must look to him as a miserable sinner, justly condemned by his law, a proper brand for hell, and look to be plucked from the fire by rich and sovereign grace. You have just as much worthiness for a pardon as the Cross-thief had, which is none at all; and, in your best estate, you will never have any more. A pardon was freely given to him upon asking for it freely, and given instantly, because no room was left for delays; and a pardon is as ready for you as for him when you ask for it as he did, with self-loathing and condemnation; but the proper *seasons* of bestowing the pardon are kept in Jesus's own hand. He makes his mercy manifest to the heart when it will most glorify his grace and benefit the sinner. Only continue asking for mercy, and seek it only through the blood of the cross, without any eye to your own worthiness, and that blood in due time will be sprinkled on your conscience, and you shall cry, "Abba, Father."

Present my kindest love to my dear brother, Mr. Romaine. The Lord continue his life and usefulness. Kind respects and Christian salutation to Mrs. Olney. Grace and peace be with both, and with your affectionate and obliged servant,
 Everton, Sept. 14th, 1773. J. BERRIDGE.

[The above letter, with another which we hope shortly to insert, was published for the first time by Mr. Ryle in a work of some interest, though sadly marred by the introduction of the lives of John Wesley, and Fletcher, of Madely, entitled, "The Christian Leaders of the Last Century."

TIMES OF REFRESHING.

"When the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord."—
 Acts iii. 19.

REDEEMER, sinner's Friend,
 Times of refreshing send,
 Our hearts to cheer.
 From thy dear presence, Lord,
 Drop the reviving word,
 And draw us near.

Come, blessed Comforter,
 And on thy church confer
 More life and love.
 Upon us set thy seal,
 And in our hearts reveal
 The Lamb above.

While we are here below,
 In grace we long to grow;
 Our souls then bless,—
 To know the Saviour more,
 And search that boundless store
 Of happiness.

O let us to him live,
 Who did to save us give
 Himself, his all!
 O may we at his feet,
 That place for sinners meet,
 Most humbly fall.

June 3, 1869.

A. H.

TAKE my heart, Lord, for I cannot give it to thee; keep it, for I cannot keep it for thee.—*Augustine.*

"LOVE THAT PASSETH KNOWLEDGE."—Christ's condescension to assume our human nature passes all our comprehension. No man can fully understand the mystery of the assumption of our nature into the personal subsistence of the Son of God. Some dispute whether we shall understand the mystery of the incarnation in heaven. Here we believe it. It is love that passeth knowledge, that the eternal Son of God should take our nature into personal union with himself. It is that we may admire and ought to admire; and, God help us, we are such poor earthly creatures, that we cannot admire it as we ought, though it be much in our nature to admire what we cannot comprehend.—*Dr. Owen.*

MEDITATIONS ON DIFFERENT PORTIONS OF THE WORD OF GOD.

MEDITATIONS ON THE FIRST CHAPTER OF THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER.

(Concluded from page 348.)

It is truly blessed to see by faith the strength and firmness of the foundation which God hath laid in Zion. We have this firm and strong foundation brought before us in those words of the Apostle with which we closed our last month's Meditations, and in which having spoken of Christ as of "a lamb without blemish and without spot," he adds, "Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world." He would thus direct our minds to those eternal transactions before the world itself had birth or being, and to that everlasting covenant in which the whole plan of redemption was laid in the Person of the Son of God. As thus set up in the mind of the Father, and as in due time to assume a nature in and by which all the purposes of grace and love which were in the bosom of God to a guilty race might be accomplished and manifested, he is the Lamb of God slain from before the foundation of the world. (Rev. xiii. 8.) But as we have almost pledged ourselves to close our exposition of this chapter with the closing year we cannot enter further upon this blessed subject. The main point in it to which we would call the attention of our readers is the stability and firmness which were thereby given to all the thoughts of God's heart and all the counsels of his infinite wisdom, goodness, and mercy in the gift of his dear Son. We live in a changeable, ever-changing world. All without us is stamped with mutation, death, and decay; and as regards ourselves everything within us tells us how frail, weak, and mutable we are. Thus, as viewed by the eye of sense and reason, uncertainty and changeability are ever seen to be deeply stamped, not only on every event of time, but on all we are and have in body and soul; and this experience of what we feel in ourselves and see in all around us often wonderfully tries both our faith and hope, for we are apt to measure God by ourselves and judge of our state before him, not according to his word, but according to the varying thoughts and exercises of our mind. But when we can look by faith through all these mists and fogs which, as resting on the lower grounds of our soul, so often obscure our view of divine realities, to the fixed purposes of God as manifested in an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure, and have at the same time some testimony of our interest therein, ground is thus afforded both for faith and hope as resting, not on our ever-changing feelings, but on the word and promise of him that cannot lie. It was thus David was comforted on his bed of languishing when the cold damps of death sat upon his brow. Much trouble had that servant of God had in his house, and much of it, we may add, procured by

his own sins. But what were his last words as he lay upon his dying pillow when the Spirit of the Lord spake by him and his word was in his tongue? "Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow." (2 Sam. xxiii. 5.) In a similar way the Apostle lays the foundation for faith and hope, not in ourselves, but in the oath and promise of God: "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." (Heb vi. 17, 18.) It was then in this "everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure," that even before the world was formed, man made, or sin committed, a Saviour was provided, a Redeemer set up, and the persons of the redeemed chosen in him and given to him. How can we think, then, that any changing and changeable events in time can alter and frustrate what was thus absolutely fixed by firm and sovereign decree, or that any mutable circumstances in ourselves or others can defeat and disannul the eternal purposes of God?

But we should have known nothing of these eternal realities had not these counsels of infinite wisdom and grace been brought to light in the Person and work of the Son of God as manifested in his appearance in the days of his flesh, and here spoken of by Peter as "a lamb without blemish and without spot," in reference to the sacrifice he was to offer, and of which the Paschal lamb was the type and figure. He, therefore, says, "Who was manifest," or, as the word might be rendered, "manifested" (it being a participle, not an adjective, in the original) "in these last times for you."

Of this manifestation of the Son of God, the Scriptures, in the New Testament, everywhere speak. It is, indeed, the sum and substance of that special revelation of God which we call the New Testament, for every line of it testifies to the appearance of Christ in the flesh. How striking, for instance, on this point, are the words of John: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth." (John i. 14.) And what a summing-up of the whole gospel is that testimony of the apostle: "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." (1 Tim. iii. 16.) All the difference, in fact, between a believer and an unbeliever, between being saved and being lost is summed up in the belief in the Son of God as thus made manifest, according to those striking words of our Lord himself: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall

be damned." (Mark xvi. 16.) And how well with this agrees the testimony given by him who leaned his head upon the Lord's loving breast: "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." (1 John v. 11, 12.)

By "these last times" is meant this present dispensation, the dispensation of grace under which we live, and they are called the last times chiefly for two reasons: 1, Because Christ was manifested in the last days of the legal dispensation of the old covenant, which now, as decaying and waxing old, was ready to vanish away (Heb. viii. 13), which it did when at the destruction of Jerusalem the whole of the temple service, including the sacrifices offered there, was brought to an end. But 2, Another reason why the dispensation under which we live is called "the last days" is because it is the final revelation of God. We cannot here enlarge upon this point. Suffice it to say that under this dispensation we now live. It is "the time accepted," the "day of salvation," of which all the prophets have spoken. (2 Cor. vi. 2; Acts iii. 24.) Christ is now upon his throne of grace; the great, the glorious, the only Mediator between God and men is now at the right hand of the Father; the Intercessor who is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them, still lives to plead, as an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, as the great High Priest over the house of God. But he will leave the throne of grace to take his seat on the throne of judgment; and then "these last days" will close in all the glories of salvation to his friends, in all the horrors of destruction to his foes.

But this leads us to a very important question, viz., to show, with the apostle, *who* they are for whom Christ was thus manifested. "For you who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God." Several things here will demand our attentive consideration.

1. Observe, first, the special mark which is here given of those for whom Christ was manifested. It is said of them that "by him they believe in God." If this be their distinctive mark, we may well inquire what is intended by it. It must surely be a very great thing to believe in God with a faith that brings salvation with it. It is easy to believe that there is a God in nature, or a God in providence, or a God in grace, according to the mere letter of the word, and this is what thousands do who have no manifested interest in redeeming love and atoning blood. In fact, it is the great delusion of the day, the religion of that religious multitude who know neither God nor themselves, neither law nor gospel, neither sin nor salvation. All this is a believing *about* God, or a believing *of* God, such as that he exists, or that he is such a God as the Scriptures represent him

to be; but this is a very different thing from believing *in* God. This is a special and peculiar faith, and implies a spiritual and saving knowledge of God, such as our Lord speaks of (John xvii. 3); and as none can thus know him unto eternal life but from some discovery of himself, some personal manifestation of his presence, some coming nigh of himself in the power of his word and the operations of his grace, so none can believe in him without a faith of divine operation. The apostle, therefore, says, "Who *by him* do believe in God," that is, not only through the merits and mediation of Christ as the Mediator between God and men, but by his special grace, as the Author and Finisher of faith. To believe, therefore, in God is not an act of the natural mind, but it is the gift and work of God, bestowed upon us through the mediation of Christ, and, therefore, as the apostle says, "given in the behalf of Christ." (Phil. i. 29.)

2. But observe further, that thus to believe in God is to believe in him as he has manifested himself in his dear Son in all the fulness of his love, in all the riches of his grace, and in all the depth of his mercy. "No man," says John, "hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father he hath declared him." (John i. 18.) God must be seen, not in the terrors of a holy law, but in the mercy and truth of the glorious gospel of the Son of God, and thus be approached and believed in as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our Father in him. How few see and realize this, and yet how sorely exercised are many of the living family upon this point! To believe in God in such a way as to bring pardon and peace into their conscience; to believe in God so as to find manifest acceptance with him; to believe in God so as to call him Abba, Father, and feel that the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are his children; to believe in God so as to find him a very present help in trouble; to receive answers to prayer, to walk in the light of his countenance, to have his love shed abroad in the heart, to be manifestly reconciled to him and feel a sense of his manifested goodness and mercy—this is to believe in God through Jesus Christ. And O how different is this from merely believing about God from what we see in nature that he is the Creator of all things, or from what we may have realised of his footsteps in providence that he watches over us as regards the things that perish, or from seeing in the letter of the word that he is the God of all grace to those who fear his name!

3. But observe, also, the firm foundation which the apostle has laid for this faith in God, and how needful it is that this foundation should be strong and good. We build for eternity. Our faith, if it be the faith of God's elect, rests not upon a notion or an opinion, or what the apostle calls "the wisdom of men," however clear, deep, logical, or refined. (1 Cor. ii. 5.) It rests upon a solid foundation—the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Let us never forget this. Our faith may ebb and flow, it may sink very low

or rise very high; but its ebbings and flowings, its sinkings and risings do not touch or affect the foundation. That foundation is Jesus Christ, "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." (Rom. i. 4.) This is the witness of God as distinct from the witness of men, as John speaks: "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son." (1 John v. 9.) Now, when this witness of God to his dear Son, by raising him from the dead, meets with the witness in our own bosom that this blessed Jesus is the Son of the Father in truth and love, this witness in our own breast to the Son of God as revealed in us, raises up and draws forth a living faith first in the Son of God, and then by him in the Father, who hath sent him. This is the witness of which John speaks: "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself" (1 John v. 7); and by this double witness the soul becomes assured of, and established in the truth as it is in Jesus.

"*And gave him glory.*"—There is a close and intimate connection between the sufferings and death of Christ, his resurrection from the dead, and his entrance into glory. Our Lord, therefore, said to the two disciples journeying to Emmaus: "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" First the cross, then the crown; first "being made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death," then "crowned with glory and honour." (Heb. ii. 9.) This "glory," which God is here said to have given Christ, is his mediatorial glory, the glory which he now has as wearing our nature in union with his own divine Person in the courts of heaven. Our faith, then, has to embrace Christ, not only as suffering and dying on the cross, and thus delivered for our sins, and Christ as risen from the dead for our justification, but as crowned with glory and honour in the presence of the Father. This is that glory of the Lord which we with open face behold as in a glass, that is, the glass of the gospel on which it shines, and by which it is reflected into the heart, and by beholding which we are, says the apostle, "changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. iii. 18.)

Now, if we watch the movements of faith upon and toward the blessed Lord, we shall see that it embraces Christ mainly under these three points of view as revealed in the word, and through the word revealed by the Spirit to the heart: 1, Christ crucified, as putting away sin by the sacrifice of himself; 2, Christ risen from the dead as declared to be the Son of God with power; and 3, Christ in his present heavenly glory as our Mediator, Advocate, and Intercessor above. It is only thus in the actings of faith that we have "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his

flesh." (Heb. x. 19, 20.) Now, it is this faith in Christ that draws forth and maintains both faith and hope in God. Out of Christ God is a consuming fire. Our sins are so great, our backslidings so repeated and aggravated, our nature so vile, our hearts so deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, that as we view the infinite Majesty of God, his unspeakable holiness, purity, and justice, and thus see our sins in the light of his countenance, our heart sinks within us with guilty fear, and we can neither believe in him with any comfort, nor even hope in his mercy with any sweet assurance. It is only, then, as we view God manifesting himself in the Person of his dear Son, and for his sake and through his blood and righteousness pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin, and accepting us in the Beloved in a way of free and sovereign grace, that our faith and hope can so be in him as to enable us to believe that he is our God, our Father, and our Friend.

And surely there is every encouragement for poor, guilty sinners, "self-condemned and self-aborred," thus to believe, and thus to hope in God, as having sent his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life, as all such will, sooner or later, find to the joy of their soul.

Having thus spoken of a living faith and hope in God, and having pointed out the firmness of the foundation on which they rest, through Whose mediation they are bestowed, and by Whose power they are wrought, the apostle goes on to show that this faith and hope will have their attendant fruits: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently." (1 Pet. i. 22.)

Three fruits of faith and hope in God are spoken of here: 1, obedience to the truth; 2, a purifying of the soul; 3, unfeigned love of the brethren. We shall now, then, with God's help and blessing, attempt to show the connection of these fruits with faith and hope.

1. The first is, "Obeying the truth through the Spirit." By "the truth" we are to understand the whole truth of God connected with the Person and work of Christ as distinct from the law or any scheme of the wisdom of man. The word "truth" has often this meaning in the New Testament. Thus, of our Lord it is said: "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." (John i. 17.) Our Lord is himself emphatically "the Truth" (John xiv. 6); he came that he should bear witness of the truth, and every one that is of the truth heareth his voice. (John xviii. 37.) But it is in the gospel, in the word of his grace, that this truth is revealed to us. All truth is in Christ; and there is no truth but what comes from him, testifies of him, and centres in him. But this truth is made known to us only in the gospel, and, therefore, the apostle says: "For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven,

whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel ; which is come unto you, as it is in all the world ; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth." (Col. i. 5, 6.) Now, when this truth is made known with a divine power to our hearts, when, as our Lord says, we know the truth, and the truth makes us free (John viii. 32) ; when we receive it by the teaching and testimony of that Holy Spirit who guides into all truth, then we are said to "obey" it ; for the first act of obedience is to receive it implicitly, and to submit to it. The apostle says of Israel of old, that "they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, did not submit themselves unto the righteousness of God." Submission, then, to the truth, a reception of it into the heart, an embracing of it in faith and affection, a yielding of ourselves to it as exceedingly precious, is an obeying of it, and is, therefore, called by the apostle, "the obedience of faith." (Rom. xvi. 26.) This is receiving the kingdom of God as a little child in humility and love ; and those who do not so receive the kingdom of God cannot enter therein. This is "an obeying from the heart that form of doctrine which is delivered to us" (Rom. vi. 17), by which is meant that the heart obeys the mould of truth in the same way as in casting metal the copy obeys the model. But this obedience which the apostle calls "obeying the gospel" (Rom. x. 16) is "through the Spirit," who, by his secret teachings, not only brings the truth before the eyes, but sealing it upon the heart by his divine power, produces that obedience of faith whereby the truth is received in the love of it.

2. Now, the effect of this is to purify the soul. Speaking of the Gentiles, Peter said in the council at Jerusalem : "And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us ; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith." (Acts xv. 8, 9.) Thus we see that there is a purifying of the heart by faith. This purifying consists mainly in four things. 1. In purifying the *understanding* by the shining in of divine light, so as to cleanse it from error ; 2, in the purifying of the *conscience*, to cleanse it from guilt ; 3, in the purifying of the *will*, to cleanse it from self-will and self-seeking ; and 4, in purifying the *affections*, to cleanse them from the love of all that is evil.

Our space will not allow us to trace out the various ways in which the soul is thus purified, nor how a believer may be said, according to the language of the apostle, to purify his soul by acting in sweet co-operation with the blessed Spirit. The point on which the apostle seems chiefly to dwell in this purification of the soul by obeying the truth, through the Spirit, is the purifying of the *affections* from selfishness, so that the third fruit of which we have already spoken may be brought forth—"unfeigned love of the brethren."

3. Love to the brethren is the first evidence of having passed

from death unto life, and will ever be found to rise or sink with faith in the Son of God and with receiving the love of the truth into an obedient heart. In our day there is little "unfeigned love of the brethren," and the reason is because faith and love in and toward the Lord himself are at so low an ebb. There is a great deal of feigned love, hypocritical love, as the word "feigned" means in the verse before us—many soft, smooth, honied words, but little real, sincere, spiritual affection. In a similar way, says Paul, "Let love be without dissimulation" (Rom. xii. 9), where it is the same word as is here rendered "unfeigned," and in both places means literally, as we have hinted, "without hypocrisy." The apostle, therefore, here bids us put away all this hypocrisy, all this pretence of affection, often worn as a cloak of real dislike and hatred, all these words smoother than butter when there is war in the heart (Psa. lv. 21), all this, "Art thou in health, my brother," before the stroke in the fifth rib (2 Sam. xx. 10); and "to love one another with a pure heart;" that is, a heart purified by grace and the love of God shed abroad in it from selfishness, self-seeking, carnal preferences, and every other corrupt affection which may mar the purity of spiritual love. Nor is he satisfied with a cold, half-hearted love. He says, "See that ye love one another with a pure heart *fervently*." Let there be warmth and fervour in your love to the brethren as well as sincerity and truth. Do not content yourselves with a poor, mean, pitiful, half-dead love, a love that bears nothing, suffers nothing, and does nothing; a love which neither warms your own heart nor anybody else's, and which is so feeble and so faint that, like a fire almost gone out, we can scarcely tell whether it is alight or not, and which neither blowing nor poking will make to burn up. He thus urges on us a love to the brethren which has these two qualities—purity and warmth, or, as the word might be rendered, intensity. Let your love first be pure and then fervent or intense, not slack and loose, like a let-down musical string, but tense and tightened, so as to give out a clear and definite note. Let heart be joined to heart with a tender flame of pure affection; let all impure motives be hated and abhorred, such as loving the rich for what you can get, "having men's persons in admiration because of advantage" (Jude 16), or the respectable as reflecting a little of their station on you, or the amiable because they are so kind and gentle, or the young, the handsome, and the well-dressed because they please the eye, and thus, perhaps, mingle the lust of the flesh with the love of the Spirit. Hate and abhor all this filth of the flesh, and not only so, but let your love be fervent as well as pure, and let the fervour of your mutual love break forth and burst through all those hindrances which so damp and obscure it. Alas! alas! how deficient are we all here! What little real brotherly love there is in the churches! What strife, contention, and division in many! What coldness, shyness, and deadness in nearly all! A few

here and there may seem closely knit together and to walk in love and affection; but taking the churches generally, never was love to the brethren, as it appears to us, sunk lower than now.

But we must not linger here; but as we wish to close our Meditations with the closing year, pass on to the next point dwelt on by the apostle: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." (1 Pet. i. 23.)

It is only those who are born again of the incorruptible seed of the word of God who can and will love one another. All that is born of the flesh is flesh, and therefore corrupt and corruptible; and such ever must be the feigned love of mere professors of religion. It is corrupt in its very birth, has the taint of mortal disease in it from the beginning, and usually manifests itself in its true character as false, dissembled, and hypocritical before it dies its natural death in open enmity and dislike. But that which is born of God, the new man of grace, of which love is the distinguishing feature (1 Jno. iv. 7; v. 1), is, like himself, incorruptible. It is a new, holy, and heavenly nature, and therefore cannot be stained with sin, though it lives and dwells in a body which is nothing but sin; nor can it ever die or see corruption, for as God himself liveth and abideth for ever, so will that which is born of God live and abide for ever, for it lives in death, through death, and after death, and has its eternal home in the bosom of God.

Now, none but those who are thus made partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet. i. 4) are born again, and as such possess a life which can never die; for as their first birth introduced them into this lower world, so their second birth introduces them into the upper world. Our Lord, therefore, said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth in me hath" (not "shall have" hereafter, but "hath" now) "everlasting life." (John vi. 47.) And similarly to the woman of Samaria: "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life." (John iv. 14.) All around us is fading away; but the life which Christ gives to those whom the Father has given unto him is eternal. (John xvii. 2; x. 28.)

He, therefore, adds, "For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away. But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." (1 Pet. i. 24, 25.) All flesh, and everything that springs from the flesh, and is connected with the flesh, is as grass, which, for a time, looks green and flourishing, but touched with the mower's scythe, or scorched by the mid-day sun, soon withers and fades away. Such is all flesh, without exception, from the highest to the lowest. As in nature, some grass grows thicker and longer than other, and makes, for a while, a brighter show, but the scythe makes no distinction between the light crop and the heavy, so the scythe of death mows down with

equal sweep the rich and the poor, and lays in one common grave all the children of men. Nay, all the glory of man, everything in which he boasts himself, all his pride and honour, pomp and power, are but as the flower of grass. You have seen sometimes in the early spring the grass in flower, and you have noticed those little yellowish "anthers," as they are termed, which tremble at every breeze. This is "the flower of grass;" and though so inconspicuous as almost to escape observation, yet as much its flower as the tulip or the rose is the flower of the plant which bears each. Now, as the grass withereth, so the flower thereof falleth away. It never had, at its best state, much permanency or strength of endurance, for it hung as by a thread, and it required but a little gust of wind to blow it away, and make it as though it never had been. Such is all the pride of the flesh, and all the glory of man.

But is there nothing that endures amidst all that thus withers and falls away? Yes, the word of the Lord. We need hardly observe that the apostle here is quoting and commenting on a well-known passage in the prophet Isaiah: "The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth; because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it; surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand for ever." (Isa. xl. 6-8.) The prophet had said, "But the word of our God shall stand for ever." Upon this prophetic declaration the apostle puts his comment: "This is the word which, by the gospel, is preached unto you;" as if he would say, "The word of our God, of which the prophet declared it should stand for ever, is the word of his grace in the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is now preached by us apostles unto you. It was to this preached gospel that Isaiah referred, and you yourselves who hear it are witnesses of its accomplishment."

Now, the same gospel which was preached unto them is preached unto us in the word of truth which we have in our hands; and if we have received that gospel into a believing heart, we have received for ourselves that word of the Lord which endureth for ever. And thus, though all our own flesh is as grass, and all in which we might naturally glory is but as the flower of grass, and though this grass must wither in death, and the flower thereof shall fall away, when the place which now knoweth us shall know us no more, yet we have an enduring substance in the gospel of the grace of God, and, so far as we have received that gospel, and known it to be the power of God unto salvation, when our earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

With these words we close our exposition of 1 Pet. i.; and if we have in any way been favoured and blessed to throw any light upon this part of God's word, or brought forward anything

which may have been for the edification, encouragement, and consolation of our spiritual readers, to the God of all grace be ascribed all the honour and glory.

THE EDITOR.

Obituary.

ISABELLA PRENTICE.

(Concluded from page 356.)

ISABELLA continued in my service for about six years, during which time I, of course, had much opportunity of conversation with her upon the precious things of God, and generally found her words weighty and profitable. She saw, I believe, the hand of God very distinctly in bringing her to Stamford, and under the sound of the gospel. But an extract from a letter now before me, which she wrote to a friend some time after she had come into my service, will show better than I can her feelings on this point:

“I feel my spirit to sink under a feeling sense of God’s goodness toward me, a rebellious, peevish, discontented wretch. How great it has been to give me to see that he loved me with an everlasting love, and gave his Son to die for me, that all my sins were forgiven through his blood, and that it was no matter what my sins were, he was satisfied with me through his Son. And after all, in his kind providence, to bring me to the place where my soul feels satisfied to be, with no desire beyond it below the sky. What goodness! How wonderful to me! It is too much for me! How I do lose myself at times, and lose sight, too, of his goodness and mercy to me all my life long! How highly favoured I feel myself to be where I am! I trust it is not lost, my being brought to Stamford. If I get to heaven I believe it will not be forgotten there. There are two things for which I feel thankful to God above everything—first, for his mercy to my soul, and next, for leading me to hear his dear servant, whose word he attended to my soul with, I believe, something of the same blessed power which rested on his Son when he came up out of the water. I felt my heart to sink under grateful grief this morning, to think what longsuffering forbearance, both from God and his children, I receive, and yet I am what I am.

“ISABELLA.”

On August 23rd, 1857, she was baptized at Stamford by my dear friend, the late William Tiptaft, and on October 18th, in the same year, I had the pleasure of receiving her into the church there, under my pastoral care, of which she continued a consistent and much-esteemed and loved member till her death.

During the period of her residence in Stamford, she wrote various letters to friends to whom she had become much attached, copies of which now lie before me. I shall, therefore, give from them a few extracts, which will serve to show the chequered path in which she was called to walk, and afford, at the same time, blessed evidences how the life of God was maintained in her soul:

“My dear Sister,—What reason I have to be thankful to the God of all grace for his wonderful goodness and mercy to me, a poor, unworthy

Scotch Gentle! I feel him, at times, a stay to my soul, a blessed support. O! To be ever looking to resting and leaning upon Jesus! He 'looked to the joy set before him.' Has there not been something of the same joy set before us? Have we not tasted, felt, and handled that which has taken our whole soul? 'Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me.' How wonderful, yet how true! O what a mercy to have a heart that loves Jesus! How worthy he is; how sweet is his dear name! Nothing to be compared with our dear Jesus; our blessed Redeemer, 'who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver, in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us.' What a holy sensation his blessed presence creates! There's no room in the breast for the world and time when he is there. My dear Jesus, O to be with thee for ever and ever! O to be thine when time shall be no more; and time seems nearly done, and eternity near! And is there not now a sweet, eager desire to feel the dew on the soul—the dew of Hermon, the dew of the morn of an eternal day resting upon us? Do not our souls long for the day—sweet day, the day of redemption?

"I feel myself a great sinner; blessed Lord, thou alone knowest how great. No man knoweth it. Forgive me, Lord, keep, teach, and lead. I feel that a profession of the name of Jesus will do no good unless it end in the salvation of the soul. But O how little the weighty things of eternity lie on my mind, and the things that are coming on the earth! Great realities! I feel that we slumber much in these things. Do we not? Time will soon be over with us. O that we were more delivered from ourselves, and united to Jesus by a living faith—a faith that will lay hold on him, and draw supplies from him, meetening us for himself. My love to all sincere lovers of Jesus.

"Yours in love,

"ISABELLA."

The following letter was written to a friend at Oakham, after a short visit there:

"My dear Sister,—On the Monday after I saw you, my soul kept ascending all the day, uttering, every few minutes, 'My Father, my dear Father, my blessed Jesus; my delight, my sweet Home!' I should have had a very happy day had it not been for my sins at Oakham. Every time that my soul ascended, something that I had said wrong, or some one I might perhaps have offended, kept coming in and troubling my spirit. I wished I had been more careful. What trouble I had that I might have avoided, and what enjoyment I lost by my sins! In the evening I felt a holy delight in looking up and looking forward; yet I felt weak, and a fear that I should lose my feelings; that something would get the better of me. I can hardly describe it, only this—I felt how little would make me fall. Plants in the garden of the Lord only grow under the influence of Heaven; but we are such fools, that as soon as we feel them (the bud) begin to grow, we begin to hug them, instead of looking up to him from whom their life and strength goeth and cometh. Next day I came into the wilderness of sin between Elim and Sinai. I cannot enter into particulars, but one thing I feel, this wilderness-travelling tries one's mettle. No Egyptian ever got through it. No; and no Israelite ever would, were his lungs not helped above nature. He would breathe out his last in it. No mortal can help him. He cannot fly out of it. He needs his heart put right, and that cannot be done by any power below the sky before he cau. A real Israelite cannot fly without his heart. We may and do try to encourage ourselves with the Lord's promises, and former goodness to our souls, and try to fly, but down we drop again. Our heart must be set a-going to

keep us on the wing. That's the main thing. If the Lord and our hearts are in good trim, we need not fear anything either in earth or hell, saint or sinner. No, and we don't. We can see and feel things in a different way then. 'My Father will see to me; all is in his hands.' The sweetest moments I have now upon earth are when I am weeping (breathing) after Jesus. I don't get much beyond that; whom having not seen (naturally*) we love and rejoice in what we hope to enjoy one day. I was thinking this morning, my day of judgment is past, nearly 16 years ago.

"ISABELLA."

In looking over her letters, of which I have many now before me, I find in them such a sweet vein of living experience, and expressed in language so truthful and original, that it is much in my mind to insert some occasionally in our pages. I shall not, therefore, give any further extracts from them, but proceed at once with my narrative.

In the early part of February, 1863, she became acquainted, in one of her visits to Oakham, with Mr. Henry Prentice, a member of my church there, and a widower, from whom, after some time, she had an offer of marriage, which she at once communicated to me. As I had seen a good deal of him during a long and painful illness of his former wife, whom I continually visited on her bed of languishing, and as I was a constant witness of his most patient kindness and affectionate attention to her, and saw how he was supported under his severe trials, I felt much esteem for him, and, therefore, could not but approve of the proposed union. Besides which, it did not take Isabella away from my ministry, and, as I could not anticipate that she could always continue under my roof, I was glad that such a proposal had been made, and could say of her and to her, in the language of Naomi, "The Lord grant that you may find rest in the house of your husband." Fully, therefore, approving of the marriage, I agreed to join their hands; but, as the spring advanced, it pleased the Lord to lay upon me his afflicting hand, and my place was, therefore, taken by Mr. Cooke, of St. Albans, who was at that time supplying my pulpit. My own chapel not being then licensed, the Independent chapel was borrowed for

* An esteemed friend has drawn my notice to a point on which this expression of Isabella's affords me an opportunity to drop a word. It is with respect to that remarkable revelation with which she was favoured, as recorded in our October No., and I wish it clearly to be understood that neither she nor I, when we have spoken of it together, believed it was anything she saw with the natural eye or heard with the natural ear. The natural eye can only see natural things, and the bodily ear can only hear bodily sounds; and though we would not and dare not limit the Almighty, yet when we speak of a revelation of Christ we do not mean any outward revelation to the natural senses, but a spiritual manifestation to the soul; and as this spiritual manifestation is not on the one hand anything revealed to the natural senses, so on the other it is not anything visionary or enthusiastic, but is a divine and blessed reality which is known but not understood, felt but not to be explained, but received by faith, anchored in by hope, and embraced by love.

them, and, in the presence of many of the friends, and most of the members of the church, they were united on Monday, May 11th, 1863.

Speaking of this event, her bereaved husband says, in the account which he has written of her death, "It was evident, from our first acquaintance, that our union was of the Lord, and I always looked upon her as a gift from him." And I have heard him say in conversation that the years of his married life with her were the happiest years of his life.

But it is time for me to come to the narrative of her last days, and I am sorry that our space will not admit the long account now before me from the pen of her bereaved husband, which I must now, therefore, give in an abridged form.

"About six weeks after her last confinement she was awaked about one o'clock in the morning with a severe and most terrible pain in the back, which compelled her to rise. We thought it might go off, and so the day passed on; but the attack returned about the same time the next night, and again on the third. Medical aid was called in, and intermittent fever* was for some time thought to be the cause of the attacks, as they were followed by a cold sensation, not exactly shivering, but approaching to it, so that sometimes she had scarcely an hour's sleep in the twenty-four. As time advanced, the attacks became more severe; indeed, I may say, they were terrible, the intensity of the pain she had to endure being depicted in her face—a mixture of grief and horror. The pain usually began to abate in about three-quarters of an hour; then followed the cold sensation, so that we were obliged to have a large fire, though in the height of summer; and though wrapped up in blankets, warmth could not be derived from either source. Then followed a profuse perspiration, so much so that I have seen the steam from her body rise up through three blankets and a counterpane; nor could she bear any of these to be removed, in consequence of the cold laying hold upon her. These attacks returned every twenty-four hours, and truly grievous it was to see her, and extremely painful to hear her cries, for she suffered agony. Various remedies were tried, but all were of no avail, for the fearful attacks still continued, and the cold sensation seemed to take deeper hold of her, so that I can safely, and with a good conscience, say, she did not average fourteen hours' sleep a week for one year and nine months; for when the paroxysms went off, the restlessness which always followed prevented her either from lying in one position or from falling asleep.

"About three months before her death the torturing and agonising pain was taken from her, but she could not lie in bed, but sat on a chair night and day wrapped in blankets before a large fire. As regards the state of her soul, I never heard any one express such a fear of death, for she certainly was one of those characters of whom it is said that 'through fear of death they are all their lifetime subject to bondage.' Indeed before her illness she always spoke of death as if she would have something very formidable to oppose, and was so averse to go to the cemetery that she would not and did not go there for a long time before she was disabled by affliction. About this time she said, 'I did not think dying was like this. O if I could but read my title clear,'

* A good deal of obscurity rested upon the nature of the disease; but a physician of Stamford gave it as his opinion that it was an affection of the spinal cord.

and at another time, 'O for a look over Jordan.' At this time she was much tried from bed sores which, from her reduced frame, were a source of great pain, but I never heard a murmur escape her lips. She seemed once much tried, but she repeated,

"My dear Redeemer, purge this dross;
Teach me to hug and love the cross;
Teach me thy chastening to sustain,
Discern the love and bear the pain."

"On March 16th she said, 'If I get well I shall be able to say, "It is good that I have been afflicted."' Being asked why, she answered, 'Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I have respect unto thy commandments.'

"On the 18th I asked her how she felt in her mind. She answered, 'Nowhere; I would wait the Lord's will either for life or death.' She then said, 'What do you think about me?' I replied, 'I think you are drawing toward your end.' She said, 'Yes.' I said, 'What a mercy if the Lord should appear for you!' 'Yes,' she answered, 'but I must have patience.' She then spoke of peace and confidence. 'I feel a little of it now.' On being asked which, she replied, 'Confidence; but how my sins of youth and sins since being called by grace have been brought up before my eyes in awful colours.

"Why me! Why such a wretch as me,
Who would for ever lie in hell,
Were not salvation free.'

Then, 'O Lord, have mercy upon me and lighten my darkness. I am thinking of what the Lord said unto me: "What thou doest do to my glory; thy sins are forgiven thee, past, present, and to come, through the blood of my Son; believe in him." I have done nothing to his glory, and that is a great sin, but that's included in the "past, present, and to come" spoken to me when his blessed Majesty had his everlasting arms underneath me, when I could not pray nor knew how to pray. And must he not have his arms underneath me now?"

"March 30. My dear wife said, 'I am much worse. My illness has been but a trifle to what is now; it now is death devouring. O that the Lord would gather together the waste places of my soul—the waste places of Zion—that he would acknowledge me. O mercy, mercy, mercy! I have great need of mercy. I have lived too loosely, but the Lord will hide pride from man. I have been very proud of my experience. The Lord will humble us. Man makes a vain show in religion, but when it comes to all, man has but very little religion.' At another time she said, 'My dear, if I should die under a cloud, don't conclude that I have gone to hell.'

April 5. "Do you think I shall land safe?" (meaning in heaven.)

14th. "O that my Father would take me, take me home in peace."

15th. "No variableness nor shadow of a turn; he is the same yesterday and for ever." "What a base wretch the devil is; he insists that I have slighted the Lord." At another time: "I want to be at home. 'Tis home, 'tis home, 'tis home.

"Soon shall this frame, dissolved in dust,
In death and ruins lie;
But better mansions wait the just,
Prepared above the sky."

At another time:

"We walk by faith of joys to come,
Faith grounded on his word;

But while this body is our home
We mourn an absent Lord.”

“On the morning of the 20th a great change took place in her for the worse. Her niece who was staying with us called me between five and six o'clock. When I came to her bedside I saw that she was in a convulsive fit, her eyes sunk and fixed with every appearance of death in her countenance. I sent for a dear friend of ours (Mrs. S. C.) to come immediately. But my dear wife was brought out of the fit and became sensible. She knew Mrs. C., and after a little began to talk and talked very fast, but owing to a complaint in her throat what she said was almost unintelligible, but she still kept talking. Mrs. C. then caught the words:

“‘My God, the spring of all my joys.’

As she repeated them after my wife they were fully affirmed with, ‘Yes, yes.’ We clearly understood the first verse; and the last,

“Fearless of hell and ghastly death
I'd break through every foe,
The wings of love and arms of faith
Should bear me conqueror through,”

was particularly plain in the then state of her throat, and, I may add, emphatic. After this she seemed unconscious, gave one strong expiration, and then breathed out her soul, so to speak, into eternal rest and peace, about ten minutes to nine in the forenoon of the same day, Tuesday, April 20, 1869.

“On the following Saturday, she was buried by Mr. Knill, in the Oakham Cemetery, and, speaking of the departed, he said, in the course of his remarks, “I have, in conversation with her, had divine life communicated to my soul.”

“HENRY PRENTICE.”

Some of my readers may, perhaps, feel disappointed that her end was not more glorious; but God is a sovereign, and we often find that those who have been much favoured and blessed in life, are not always or often equally favoured in death.

The following record of a conversation with her a short time before her death by one of the Oakham friends, who had seen much of her at various times during her residence there, will form a fitting close to this little Memorial of one who, through much tribulation, entered the kingdom of heaven, and with whom it was my privilege to walk for many years in the mutual bonds of esteem and affection.

J. C. P.

“A friend who felt true soul union with her, went to see her about two days before she departed, and found her lamenting her want of fresh manifestations of the Lord's favour to her soul, and much felt darkness, saying with Job (Job xxiii. 3-11): ‘O that I knew where I might find him,’ &c. ‘Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him,’ &c. But she held very fast v. 10: ‘But he knoweth the way that I take. When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.’ In conversation, she spoke of the Lord's first work upon her soul in convincing her of her lost state as a sinner, and said: ‘I could not work that change. The Lord did it; and he will not deny his own work.’ She spoke of the blessed

deliverance which the Lord gave her—how he embraced her in his arms of love and mercy, and handed her over to the care of his well-beloved Son, in whom he declared she was all fair, and that he was well pleased with her in him. She said, ‘I tell the dear Lord he can never say to me in that great day, “Depart from me; I never knew you;” for he has acknowledged me as his many times, with the sweetest and most endearing words that language can express. He has said, “Underneath thee are my everlasting arms.” I cannot sink beneath them, can I? “My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give unto them eternal life. They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.” (John x. 28, 29.) The Lord cannot deny himself; he is faithful. The devil, with all his craft and all his cruelty, cannot take away that blessed gift of grace, eternal life!’ It was most touching to see and hear her, in the emaciated state of her suffering body, how eagerly and earnestly she was summing up her tokens for good, putting the Lord in remembrance of what he had said unto and done for her, pleading with him for renewed testimonies of his love to put a seal, as she said, upon the whole work which he had wrought, and confronting the great enemy of her soul, telling him, ‘The Lord hath said, and will he not do it? he hath spoken, and shall he not make it good?’ The various Bethel visits to her soul were recounted; she encouraged herself to hope in his mercy, and said, ‘I see a glimmering light in the distance. I believe he will come again and receive me unto himself, that where he is there I shall be also.’ There was a deep, solid vein of spiritual experience in all she said, and a certain conviction communicated of the reality and intensity of her desire after the Lord which he would surely satisfy. She had a great jealousy for his glory, and would say, ‘He will leave the flesh nothing wherein to glory.’ She lamented how slothful she had been in the words he spake to her when he delivered her soul: ‘Do all to my glory.’ She lay self-abased and said, ‘I have done *nothing* to his glory; nothing as I would. I am a debtor to mercy above all he ever saved.’”

THE disciples of Christ, under the afflictions which they meet with in this world, are apt to be troubled in their hearts, to be disquieted in their minds, to be dejected and discouraged. It was so with David. “Why art thou cast down, O my soul? Why art thou disquieted within me?” He was sensible of his afflictions, and that disquieted him, and cast him down. God’s people are subject to such disquietments, because they are flesh and blood, subject to the same passions, made of the same mould, subject to the same impressions without as other men, and their natures are upheld with the same supports and refreshments as others, the withdrawals and want of which affect them as well as others. And besides those troubles they suffer in common with others, by reason of their being called out of the world the world hates them, and they are therefore more exposed to tribulation than others, and so are apt to be cast down and discouraged.—*Bunyan*.

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